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Shelbyville Man Overcomes Adversity to Defy Odds
Goodwill empowers people with disabilities through employment

SHELBYVILLE, Ind. — Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana announced today that it will highlight several employees for [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) during the month of October, including Jacob Barrett, who has worked at the Shelbyville store for three years.

Jacob graduated from the Indiana School for the Blind where he pursued a life skills path that focused on achieving independence rather than a high school diploma. In addition to his visual impairment, Jacob has mild autism and a learning disability. He is also deaf with bilateral cochlear implants.

“I wanted a promotion at Goodwill and knew the first step was earning a diploma,” Jacob said. “I learned about The Excel Center [Goodwill’s high school for adults] through an in-store radio ad while I was working.”

In June 2018, Jacob earned his high school diploma. He is currently enrolled in an Information Technology Fundamentals certification class at The Excel Center and plans to earn a college degree in computer science.

“I would like to eventually work for Goodwill’s IT department,” Jacob said.

According to the [National Federation of the Blind](#), only 31% of adults in the United States with visual impairments have attained a high school diploma or GED, limiting their ability to advance beyond entry-level employment.

“Goodwill employs more than 4,000 Hoosiers – 34% of whom have a disability,” said Kent A. Kramer, president and CEO of Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana. “We encourage other employers to consider the many ways that they can help employees overcome their individual challenges.”

National Disability Employment Awareness Month's (NDEAM) roots go back to 1945. This year’s theme is *America’s Workforce: Empowering All*.

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About Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana

Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana changes lives every day by empowering people to increase their independence and reach their potential through education, health and employment. The organization serves 39 Indiana counties and operates more than 70 retail locations, as well as charter schools for adults and youth, a maternal-child health program, a child care center and more.