A Decade of Empowering Adults at The Excel Center®

Indy Met Earns Praise for Unique Behavior Model

Middle-Income Housing Now Available
For 90 years, Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana has helped Hoosiers gain employment. Through our work, we learned one of the primary barriers to employment is the lack of a high school diploma, which significantly limits a person’s options.

In an effort to tackle this challenge head-on, we opened our first high school in 2004, but we soon realized older teens and adults often face obstacles that are difficult to address in a traditional high school setting. They need an education model that can accommodate their various challenges.

Opened in 2010, The Excel Center, Goodwill’s high school for adults, is designed to accommodate these challenges through additional resources and support, including flexible scheduling, accelerated coursework, transportation assistance, onsite child care, college credits, job certifications and more — all at no cost to students.

Now in its 10th year of operation, The Excel Center has expanded to 15 locations in central and southern Indiana and helped nearly 5,000 Hoosier adults earn a high school diploma. The model is so successful that it’s been replicated in four other states and Washington, D.C., with even more expressing interest.

In this issue of Achieve, you’ll learn about two Excel Center graduates whose lives were significantly changed after they earned a diploma. This wouldn’t be possible without the support of Hoosiers who donate and shop at Goodwill, as well as the financial support of our donors and community partners, so thank you for believing in our mission.

Sincerely,

Kent A. Kramer
President and CEO
Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana

Introducing Ivan Cropper
Vice President of Marketing

Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana is pleased to announce that Ivan P. Cropper, an advertising, marketing and communications professional with over 25 years of experience, has been hired to lead the organization’s marketing and communications functions. Cropper brings a diverse set of skills and accomplishments to Goodwill.

“I’m excited to be back in the not-for-profit sector, especially to be working for a social enterprise with the decades of proven success that Goodwill has,” Cropper said. “We have a great story to tell, and I look forward to sharing the many stories of those we support.”
Betsy Delgado, Vice President of Mission & Education, describes the evolution and impact of The Excel Center.

**Why did Goodwill open a high school for adults?**

Through our history helping connect people with jobs, we learned that limited education was a significant barrier to employment. In fact, more than 460,000 working-age Hoosiers lack a high school diploma, and prior to The Excel Center, there were few options for adults who wanted to earn one. Many adults continue to experience challenges that make it difficult to complete their education; for example, pregnancy or parenthood, poverty, homelessness, lack of support, criminal history and more. By understanding the barriers that adult students face, The Excel Center is able to offer the additional support they need to be successful in their education and beyond.

**How is The Excel Center model different?**

At The Excel Center, we offer support for common barriers like child care, which is available onsite for parents of young children. Accelerated coursework and flexible hours accommodate adults with jobs, families and other responsibilities. In addition to a diploma, students can earn college credits and job certifications. Life Coaches, College & Career Readiness Specialists and other staff work with students to ensure they have the tools they need to be successful. Goodwill’s talented job placement team will even help students find a job. All of these services and more are offered to students at no cost.

**What about The Excel Center makes you most proud?**

What makes me most proud is seeing how many lives have been changed, especially the multi-generational impact. Parents are returning to high school to set a good example for their children, even when those children are themselves adults. A hunger for knowledge can change the trajectory of a person’s life. We want to awaken that in each student who walks through our doors and show them that despite any challenges they’ve faced, there is a path to a better tomorrow.

**Where do you see The Excel Center 10 years from now?**

Since 2010, The Excel Center has grown from a single location to 18 in Indiana and 26 nationally, with more in the planning stages. Nearly 5,000 students have earned a diploma, with 92% earning college credit or a job certification, preparing them for graduation and beyond. I expect The Excel Center will continue to grow and serve as a path for many more students who want a second chance to complete their education.
Katie Reigelsperger was 13 years old when she learned she was pregnant, resulting in her withdrawal from school. She went on to work a series of jobs that had no advancement opportunities, little financial security and no benefits. Katie knew the first step to growing professionally was earning a diploma. In 2014, she enrolled at The Excel Center in Anderson.

Katie used the school's free, onsite child care for her sons, and in just eight months, she completed all of the required coursework, graduating with a 3.8 GPA, college credits and a Pharmacy Technician Certification. Next, she began her career at Riverview Health in Noblesville, where she has now been employed for five years. As the Pharmacy Technician Supervisor, Katie oversees a group of 19 and has significantly increased her income. She also teaches a Pharmacy Technician Certification course, bringing her journey with The Excel Center full circle.

“The Excel Center helped me find a purpose and set an example for my children, which I am proud of,” Katie said.

She is currently working toward a business degree at Ivy Tech Community College.
When Dylan Snell connected with Goodwill in 2012, he faced a number of challenges. At 18 years old, he was homeless and had dropped out of high school. A criminal history left him deeply in debt and with limited job opportunities. His transportation was unreliable, and he had little support. With the guidance of staff at The Excel Center in Anderson, Dylan didn’t just earn his diploma — he gave the commencement speech at graduation, and eventually accepted an employment offer from Goodwill.

After several promotions and four years working at Goodwill, Dylan began considering external opportunities with the assistance of the Goodwill Guides program, which helped him create a resume and prepare him for job interviews, and TalentSource®, Goodwill’s team that connects qualified candidates to jobs with employer partners.

Dylan’s qualifications and experience were a great fit for Kirby Risk Electrical Supply, where he accepted a position in August 2017. He has since been promoted to Project Manager and continues to thrive in his new role.

“The people I’ve met at Goodwill have been life-changing,” Dylan said. “I’ve grown more than I ever anticipated.”

Learn more and enroll at excelcenter.org.
Indy Met Addresses
Racial Disparities in Discipline

In a recent investigative report, WRTV’s Kara Kenney revealed that many Indiana schools have racial disparities in their disciplinary practices, with black students suspended and expelled at higher rates than white students. The report also highlighted Goodwill’s Indianapolis Metropolitan High School as one institution that is bucking this trend. The school’s restorative approach to behavior management helps students learn new ways to cope with stress and anger.

Kiersten Manuel enrolled at Indy Met in August 2018 after being expelled from a previous high school for fighting.

“I got into a fight a few weeks into school at Indy Met,” Kiersten explained. “But instead of kicking me out, a bunch of adults at the school talked to me.”

Indy Met provides various social and emotional supports, including onsite trauma-informed counselors for students, using conferences to help individuals share their perspectives as well as learn how to discuss their emotions in healthy ways. Since then, Kiersten has not been in any fights.

“Indy Met is very student-oriented,” Kiersten said. “Teachers pay attention to you, and there are lots of options to keep you on track, like certification and college classes, activities and field trips.”

Since implementing restorative practices, Indy Met has reduced out-of-school suspensions by 51% and expulsions by 81%. Graduation rates have also never been higher, with 83% earning a diploma last school year.

Kiersten expects to graduate in spring 2020. She hopes to become a firefighter and personal trainer due to all she’s learned about health from her Certified Nursing Assistant certification classes.

“You can do anything you put your mind to,” Kiersten said. “You just have to believe in yourself and work hard.”

Learn more at indianapolismet.org.

NOW PRE-LEASING: Housing for Middle-Income Professionals

Riverview Apartments, a brand new housing development overlooking the Indianapolis skyline, is now pre-leasing to professionals whose income falls in the $33,600-$67,200 range, with rents below the downtown average. Goodwill is proud to have partnered with Strategic Capital Partners to bring this first-of-its-kind workforce housing development to Indianapolis.

Learn more at homeisriverview.com.
Goodwill invites you to our 2020 Awards Breakfast

2019 was a big year for corporate partnerships at Goodwill. From volunteer groups to event sponsorships, local businesses of all sizes stepped up to make our mission possible.

To get your company involved this year, contact Nick Ison, Corporate Giving Manager, at nison@goodwillindy.org.

Thank you to Goodwill’s Corporate Partners

Join us as we celebrate our extraordinary honorees, and see how your support makes their achievements possible.

Friday, May 8, 2020
8-9:30 a.m.
JW Marriott
10 S. West Street
Indianapolis, IN

Register online by April 27 at: goodwillindy.org/breakfast

Sponsored Table of 10 — $1,000

Table sponsorships include 10 tickets, preferred placement in the room, name/logo displayed at the event and other recognition. A portion of the sponsorship will be considered a tax-deductible contribution to Goodwill.

Single Seats — $50 each

Thank you to the many companies and individuals who made our 2019 event a success. To learn more about our sponsorship opportunities for 2020, contact Nick Ison at nison@goodwillindy.org.
upcoming events

Nurse-Family Partnership® Graduation
Wednesday, April 15, 6-8 p.m.
The Children’s Museum
3000 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis

New Beginnings Graduation
Friday, April 17, 3-4 p.m.
Goodwill Commercial Services
413 N. Tremont Street, Indianapolis

Annual Awards Breakfast
Friday, May 8, 8-9:30 a.m.
JW Marriott, 10 S. West Street, Indianapolis

The Excel Center Spring Graduation
June 4 and 5
Times and locations vary by campus

Indianapolis Metropolitan High School Graduation
Saturday, June 13, 11 a.m.
1635 W. Michigan Street, Indianapolis

RSVP at goodwillindy.org/events.