

December 7, 2021
For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Jennifer Wade, Director of Marketing and Communications
Cell: 630-550-0847
jennifer.rendant@goodwillindy.org

The Excel Center to Honor Hundreds of Graduates at Winter Ceremony
Meet graduates who are impacting our Indianapolis communities

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — The Excel Center®, Goodwill’s tuition-free high school for adults who want to earn a Core 40 diploma, will celebrate hundreds of graduates at its winter ceremonies on Thursday, December 9, and Friday, December 10. According to the U.S. Census, 11% of Marion County residents 18 years and older lack a high school diploma, which significantly limits their job opportunities.

“Despite ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, our students continue to show up and work hard every day for the opportunity to walk across that stage with their high school diploma in hand, as well as industry certifications and college credits,” said Betsy Delgado, senior vice president and chief mission and education officer at Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana. “They’re graduating with new skills, a career plan and the desire to contribute to their communities, while changing the future for their children and themselves.”

Zainab Khawaja immigrated to the U.S. in 2016 and enrolled at The Excel Center as a 21-year-old whose first language was not English. Despite the many challenges she faced adjusting to her new country, Khawaja earned her diploma in 2018 and went on to earn a degree in secondary education from IUPUI. She now teaches English and Beginning Writing at The Excel Center, bringing her educational journey full circle.

“I’m looking forward to the diversity,” Khawaja said. “There is so much to learn from people who are different from me. The Excel Center has such a family-like atmosphere, and I can’t wait to serve students in the same way that The Excel Center served me.”

With expedited curriculum and flexible scheduling, students at The Excel Center can graduate quickly and prepare for a career and postsecondary education. The Excel Center also offers students on-site child care, transportation assistance, dual-credit courses and industry-recognized certification opportunities — all at no cost.

The Excel Center’s winter graduations are ticketed events. Members of the media may RSVP to jennifer.wade@goodwillindy.org.

Dates: Thursday, December 9, and Friday, December 10
Time: 6 p.m.

Place: Indianapolis Metropolitan High School Puma Den gymnasium, 1635 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis

To coordinate an interview with a recent graduate, contact Jennifer Wade at jennifer.wade@goodwillindy.org.

###

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.