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Shelbyville Resident Receives International Award

Goodwill Industries International Names Jacob Barrett its 2022 Achiever of the Year

SHELBYVILLE, Ind. — Jacob Barrett epitomizes the adage, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.” For Barrett, who has a visual impairment, is deaf and has a disability, the added layers of challenges never prevented him from reaching for and achieving his goals. That is why Goodwill Industries International is proud to honor Barrett as its 2022 Achiever of the Year. Barrett was honored recently at the annual Goodwill Delegate Assembly.

Barrett attended the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, where he earned a certificate of completion when he was 22 years old. That wasn’t the end of his educational career, however, because he dreamed of obtaining his high school diploma. He got his chance when he learned about The Excel Center® while he was employed as a part-time book scanner at Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana (Shelbyville). The Excel Center is a tuition-free adult high school operated by Goodwill where adult learners can earn an Indiana Core 40 high school diploma and industry-recognized certifications.

As one of the first students to enroll when the school opened in Shelbyville, Ind., Barrett entered the high school program with few credits. Over the course of two years, he earned his diploma and a certification in IT Fundamentals. It wasn’t easy. He struggled with math and worked with a tutor for additional instruction. He says he took the end-of-course math assessment three times and finally passed on the fourth attempt.

Today, Barrett is a Shopgoodwill.com® product specialist. He is responsible for identifying, selecting and shipping high-value items to Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana’s ecommerce facility to support the growth of online sales. He continues to work with his Goodwill Mission Coach to set future goals, including going to college and becoming an IT support specialist.

With the help and support of The Excel Center, he enrolled at Ivy Tech Community College. So far, he has completed the Comp TIAA+ Core 1 certification, and he is working toward achieving the Core 2 certification.

“When I first went to Ivy Tech, it was thrilling and exciting, because I never dreamed I’d be in college,” Barrett said.

“Jacob’s most prominent qualities are his grit and determination. For Jacob, it’s not a matter of whether he can do something, but rather what steps will he take to get there,” said Kent Kramer,

president and CEO of Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana. “His resilience and ability to bounce back again and again after failure is laudable and something few are willing to do. He carries within him a deep-rooted sense of optimism and hope that he can overcome any challenge he chooses to commit to and work for.”

In addition to his full-time job at Goodwill, Barrett also participates in multiple Special Olympics sports, including basketball, swimming, softball and corn hole.

“At Goodwill, we are committed to helping people reach their full potential through learning and the power of work,” said Steven C. Preston, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries International. “Jacob demonstrates every day through his actions and effort that anything is possible, and we’re pleased that Goodwill is able to play a role in helping people like Jacob move into and advance through the workforce.”

About the Award: Goodwill Industries International's Achiever of the Year is a person who has shown great progress and accomplishment in overcoming challenges to finding employment, and who still benefits from the Goodwill work environment or receives services to support employment at a community site.

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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. Goodwill 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.

ABOUT GOODWILL INDUSTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Goodwill Industries International is a network of 155 community-based, autonomous organizations in the United States and Canada with a presence in 12 other countries. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit that helps people find employment, Goodwill is recognized with GuideStar’s highest rating, the Platinum Seal of Approval.

Local Goodwill organizations offer employment opportunities, job placement and training services, and other community-based programs, which are funded by selling donated clothing and household items in nearly 3,300 stores and online at ShopGoodwill.com.

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