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For Immediate Release

Contact: Jenny Kakasuleff, Communications Manager
Cell: 317.524.4212
Jennifer.Kakasuleff@goodwillindy.org

Carmel Goodwill Employee Values Inclusion in the Workplace
National Disability Employment Awareness Month highlights equity in employment

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. - October is [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) (NDEAM), and Goodwill is proud to be one of the largest employers of persons with disabilities in central Indiana, providing jobs to more than 1,600 individuals with one or more disabilities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly 80% of persons with disabilities in the United States [are unemployed](#).

“Goodwill employs more than 4,700 Hoosiers – one-third 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 provide accommodations to support a more inclusive workforce.”

National Disability Employment Awareness Month's roots go back to 1945. In recognition of the important role persons with disabilities play in a diverse and inclusive American workforce, the theme for NDEAM 2023 is “Advancing Access and Equity.” This topic is crucial for people like Madi LaFollette, a current employee at the Goodwill Store on Keystone Way in Carmel. LaFollette is a cashier – a role she enjoys as a self-described “people-person.”

“I had a friend in college who recommended working at Goodwill,” LaFollette said. “He said that Goodwill is very helpful to people who have disabilities. So far it's lived up to my expectations.”

Due to her disability, LaFollette is unable to reach some of the clothing and wares racks on the sales floor. However, she is able to lean on her co-workers for assistance.

“My co-workers are super nice and friendly,” she said. “They help me when I need it – everyone is very accommodating.”

In June 2023, store staff contacted the Goodwill facilities team to prepare accessibility accommodations for LaFollette. In two days, they installed a platform for her cash register, providing her with a better transition between the sales floor and register.

LaFollette was surprised by the effort to make her workplace more supportive, inclusive and accessible.

“When I first saw it, it was not what I was expecting – it was more than that,” she said. “I’ve never had someone make sure I had the accommodations I needed. It was very generous and made me cry a little bit.”

With her new platform installed, LaFollette has been able to check out and interact with customers more effectively – and it’s quickly becoming one of her favorite parts about being a cashier. Because of her disability, social interaction had been a barrier for her. By working at Goodwill, she has the opportunity to practice her skills and turn socialization into a passion.

“I haven’t been able to interact with many people growing up, so working at Goodwill has been a good opportunity,” LaFollette said.

If you’re interested in interviewing LaFollette, please contact Jenny Kakasuleff, marketing and communications manager at Goodwill, at jennifer.kakasuleff@goodwillindy.org or 317.345.4176.

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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 contract manufacturing services, charter schools for adults and youth, a maternal-child health program, a child care center and more.