Perseverance and Paying It Forward
Redefining Work for Persons with Disabilities

Your Support is Changing Lives
Thanks to your continued support of Goodwill, we’re having another incredible year, and I’m excited to share some recent news to illustrate how your support impacts people in our community. We continue to make great strides on our strategic plan, emphasizing our role in the communities we serve and the steps we take to provide mission services to as many people as possible.

Toward this end, we recently announced that we’re bringing mission services to the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico. This is a unique opportunity to take what we’ve learned over the past 90 years and apply it to a region experiencing many of the same challenges we grapple with every day, particularly for individuals with barriers to education, employment and health care.

In addition to bringing our thrift retail model to the island, we’ll be launching Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP), a maternal health program that pairs first-time moms with a registered nurse who makes home visits from pregnancy through a child’s second birthday. Thanks to additional funding from the state, Goodwill NFP is in the process of expanding from 35 to 61 Indiana counties, ensuring moms across the state will have access to these early childhood services.

We’re also bringing The Excel Center®, Goodwill’s tuition-free high school for adults, to Puerto Rico. This successful, first-of-its-kind educational model has already been replicated in eight other states, plus Washington, D.C., empowering individuals to earn the credentials necessary to increase their independence through expanded job opportunities. Additional funding from the state is also allowing us to open another location right here in southeast Indianapolis, totaling 16 Excel Center campuses in central and southern Indiana.

Another exciting milestone we recently celebrated was the first graduating class of Per Scholas, a technical training program that provides our students, as well as the public at large, with access to critical job skills in the STEM field. Many Excel Center graduates have completed this program and already been placed into information technology jobs where they continue to thrive.

Finally, we are opening two brand new retail stores in Winchester and on Spring Mill Road in Westfield that will provide Hoosiers with even more convenient locations to donate and shop. None of these successes would be possible without committed supporters like you, so thank you for giving back and trusting us to be good stewards of your donations.

Together we are changing lives!

Gratefully,

Kent A. Kramer
President and CEO | Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana
Saja Abbas arrived in the U.S. in 2009 as a refugee. Born in Iraq, her family was forced to flee their home in 2006 to escape war. As a result, Saja missed out on attending middle school and high school.

In 2013, she saw a flier for The Excel Center®, Goodwill’s high school for adults. After discovering that the school offers classes for learning English, she jumped at the opportunity to enroll.

“I needed to improve my English to pass the U.S. citizenship test,” Saja said. “I couldn’t have imagined at the time how many doors The Excel Center would open for me.”

The staff at The Excel Center supported Saja through her unique struggles and provided her with access to resources she wouldn’t have otherwise had. For example, she was awarded a scholarship through Goodwill to help cover educational expenses.

Saja enrolled with zero credits, but in less than three years, she earned her high school diploma and a pharmacy technician certification.

“Math and science gave me confidence because it’s a universal language,” Saja explained. “The Excel Center showed me that I am capable of doing anything I set my mind to.”

Saja went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and pre-pharmacy in 2020 from IUPUI. She is currently enrolled in the Doctorate of Pharmacy program at Purdue University with a specialization in nuclear pharmacy. She is expected to graduate in 2024 and aspires to do nothing less than change the world.

“I want to operate my own drug manufacturing company and create a new drug for treating cancer patients across the world,” Saja said.

She also has some advice for anyone who is thinking about enrolling at The Excel Center:

“Your path is going to be difficult regardless of which you take, so take the one that allows you to earn a living wage and a comfortable life.”

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Excel Center Graduate Honored with International Award

Congratulations to Katie Reigelsperger, a 2014 graduate of The Excel Center, Goodwill’s tuition-free high school for adults, on being honored with Goodwill Industries International’s Graduate of the Year Award! This prestigious award is open to more than 150 Goodwill entities across North America.
When Lacee McCorkle connected to Goodwill Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP) in 2019, she was at a turning point in her life. She had recently graduated from a recovery home after 15 years of drug use and a period of incarceration.

“I was homeless and hopeless prior to sobriety,” Lacee said. “I had no responsibilities and no drive to achieve a better life.”

After learning she was pregnant with twins, her probation officer encouraged her to enroll in Goodwill NFP for additional support. Goodwill NFP is a maternal health program that pairs first-time moms with a registered nurse who makes home visits from pregnancy until the child is two years old.

“I am nearly 5 years sober, a married, stay-at-home mother of two-year-old twins, and will graduate from Purdue University Global this summer,” Lacee said. “One of the greatest things I can attribute to my success is the Nurse-Family Partnership program.”

Empowered through her own hard-earned success, Lacee is eager to pay it forward in her community. “When I was released, I realized there is a lack of rehabilitative services for women,” Lacee said.

She now leads a support group at the Shelby County Jail that prepares women for life once they’re released from incarceration. She also earned a Peer Recovery certification, which allows her to work with individuals struggling with addiction. She couldn't have imagined it at the time, but that turning point four years ago has exceeded her expectations.

“My kids not only changed my life – they saved my life”

–Lacee McCorkle
In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law with the goal of increasing accessibility and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities and requires businesses to provide reasonable accommodations, including in employment.

As one of Indiana’s largest employers of persons with disabilities, Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana has been tapping into this underrepresented workforce for more than 90 years, providing employment to people like Kane Sparks, who has worked at Goodwill for a decade. Kane was born with craniodiaphyseal dysplasia, a rare bone disorder that causes calcium to build up in the skull, disfiguring the facial features and reducing life expectancy.

Upon graduating high school, he had a desire and willingness to work, but he was met with disappointment by several employers who declined to hire him. He began to wonder if these denials were related to his disability.

He contacted Indiana’s Vocational Rehabilitation for help, and in 2013, he was matched with Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana’s Janitorial Training Program (JTP), designed for individuals with barriers to employment who are interested in commercial janitorial work. Upon completing the 480-hour training, Kane accepted a role at Goodwill's Commercial Services location on Indy's west side.

Throughout his time with Goodwill, Kane has been provided accommodations tailored to his needs, such as assistive technology to help with reading and testing. His supervisors have been understanding of his barriers and made additional accommodations for his mental and physical wellness, including anxiety, depression and severe headaches.

“Goodwill has been incredibly accepting of my barriers,” Kane said. “I am truly grateful for the support Goodwill has given me day in and day out.”

Nearly 2,000 of Goodwill’s 4,700 central and southern Indiana employees report living with a disability. As we reflect on the last 33 years of progress, we encourage employers to recognize the contributions of persons with disabilities and to consider how we can further develop a culture of inclusion while meeting Indiana’s workforce needs.
It is with great enthusiasm that we announce Goodwill Industries International has selected Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana to bring its unique mission services to the United States territory of Puerto Rico beginning in 2024.

Across Puerto Rico, thousands of adults and families live on the margins and are often overlooked. Goodwill’s evidence-based mission programs address many of the barriers these individuals face. We have provided critical mission services to our most vulnerable Hoosiers for over 90 years, developing and refining our mission to include employment, job training, adult education, maternal health care and more. This expertise was central to the decision for Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana to bring mission services to Puerto Rico.

“Over the past 10 years, our Goodwill has expanded its mission programs outside of our established Indiana territory. This includes The Excel Center which is now located in Arkansas, Kentucky, Arizona, Washington, D.C., Maryland, South Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri and Texas; and Nurse-Family Partnership which is now being serviced across the state of Indiana,” said Mark Denien, Chair of Goodwill’s Board of Directors. “As a board, we are in full support of this expansion into Puerto Rico as it is consistent with Goodwill’s overall mission and provides an opportunity to increase impact.”

Organizations that support Goodwill’s mission in lots of ways always make the best partners, and there’s no better example than CBRE! Executive Vice President Andrew Morris and Managing Director Kimber Kinsley serve on the Goodwill Foundation and Young Leaders Boards, respectively. CBRE’s charitable giving has led the way at sponsored events like Goodwill: UNBOXED. And recently, employees from across the firm rolled up their sleeves and jumped in to help out at the Keystone Store.

Thanks CBRE!
Established in 2014, the Goodwill Young Leaders Board (GWYLB) formed to engage a new generation of leaders to further the mission of Goodwill. The GWYLBs are professionals aged 22-40, outstanding in both their accomplishments and potential, who exemplify diversity across race, age, gender, background, and profession. They impact Goodwill’s mission through direct volunteer service, philanthropic giving and the facilitation of new relationships.

Recently, they hosted Gather for Goodwill, an annual fundraising event that engages individuals who are interested in making a difference in their communities. This year, the GWYLB raised over $15,000 — a new record for the event! Each year, Goodwill’s mission program managers may submit an application to request funds from the GWYLB for resources to support the people they serve that otherwise would not be available.

In the past, these funds have been used to purchase laptops for Goodwill’s Senior Community Service Employment Program, which supports seniors aged 55 and over who are seeking to acquire new job skills. Funds have also been used to support a food pantry for The Excel Center, Goodwill’s tuition-free high school for adults as well as a Doula certification program for Goodwill’s Nurse-Family Partnership, a maternal health program that pairs first-time moms with a nurse home visitor who provides support from pregnancy through their child’s second birthday.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining the GWYLB, contact Cameray Vican at cameray.vican@goodwillindy.org.

I Support Goodwill Because ...

**Alex Swider:**
Goodwill values teaching a person to fish rather than just giving them a fish by empowering them to increase their independence, which is the most sustainable way to steward gifts, because it helps people develop skills and confidence.

**Kofi Barko:**
Goodwill invests in people at all stages and across all walks of life to ensure they have access to the resources they need. When I give to Goodwill, I know that there is someone at the other end who is able to move closer to the life they envision.

**Genevieve Horton:**
Goodwill is spearheading initiatives to empower people in all aspects of their lives. Everyone is given second chances. In turn, Goodwill creates lasting positive change within our communities.
upcoming events

**Goodwill: UNBOXED 2023**
Thursday, September 14, 6-10 p.m.
The AMP at 16 Tech
1220 Waterway Blvd., Indianapolis
Visit goodwillunboxed.org for tickets

**Goodwill New Beginnings Fall Graduation**
Friday, September 22, 12-2 p.m.
Goodwill Corporate Office
1635 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis

**Legacy Club Cocktail Reception**
Thursday, November 2, 5:30-7 p.m.

**Goodwill New Beginnings Winter Graduation**
Friday, December 15, 1-3 p.m.
Goodwill Corporate Office
1635 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis

**The Excel Center Winter Graduations**
February 22-23, 2024 | Locations vary
Visit excelcenter.org for details