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**For Immediate Release**

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**Like Mother, Like Son: The Excel Center Delivers Generational Impact**

*The Excel Center celebrates winter graduates*

**INDIANAPOLIS**, Ind. — The Excel Center®, Goodwill's tuition-free high school for adults, is proud to honor its winter graduating class on Thursday, February 22, and Friday, February 23. Designed to empower individuals to overcome adversity and reach their potential, The Excel Center provides a unique opportunity for adult learners to earn an Indiana Core 40 high school diploma.

Amidst the challenges many residents face in Marion County, where more than 10% of adults lack a high school diploma, The Excel Center offers individualized support and a path to success. The Excel Center has celebrated thousands of graduates who have joined the workforce or are continuing their education at local universities.

"I'm constantly in awe of our students, many of whom overcome significant challenges to walk across that stage on graduation day," said Betsy K. Delgado, senior vice president and chief mission and education officer at Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana. "Hearing their families cheer with pride as they accept their diploma is a special experience. We're just grateful to be a small part of their journey."

Children whose parents didn't complete high school are twice as likely not to graduate themselves, but The Excel Center offers adults, like Tammi Burrus, a chance to return to high school and break that generational cycle.

Burrus, a graduate of The Excel Center, had her high school experience cut short when she became pregnant at the age of 16.

"I was working at a job where I knew I could do well and move forward, but I didn't feel worthy," said Burrus. "I didn't even have a diploma, how could I be a supervisor?"

She recalls sitting at graduations for family members and friends and feeling proud of them but also filled with grief for never experiencing it herself. Her turning point came

after hearing about the experience of her niece – a graduate of The Excel Center. She was initially apprehensive and nervous, but she quickly felt seen and welcomed.

“The teachers are so in-tune with students,” said Burrus. “They know how to work with students to ensure lessons are understood, and there is never any judgment.”

Not only did Burrus earn all of her credits early, she also completed a pharmacy technician certification and was invited to speak at her graduation.

“I finally felt that feeling that I had been missing,” she recalled. “I even had a woman stop me after the ceremony to tell me I had inspired her to go back to school.”

And she wasn’t the only one. Burrus’s oldest son, Brendan, also graduated from The Excel Center, and like his mother, he was selected as the class speaker.

With 16 campuses across central and southern Indiana, The Excel Center has graduated nearly 8,000 adults. Join us to celebrate our 2024 winter graduates:

**Date:** Thursday, February 22, and Friday, February 23

**Time:** 6 p.m.

**Place:** Puma Den  
1635 W. Michigan St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46222

Or

**Date:** Friday, February 23

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.

**Place:** Decatur Central High School  
5251 Kentucky Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN 46221

To coordinate an interview with a recent graduate, contact Jenny Kakasuleff at [jennifer.kakasuleff@goodwillindy.org](mailto:jennifer.kakasuleff@goodwillindy.org).

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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 40 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.