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Goodwill Celebrates Centennial

100 Years of Changing Lives
Through the Power of Work



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GOODWILL PROGRAM AREAS

Workforce Development | Industrial/Janitorial | Retail and eCommerce | Temporary Staffing



Goodwill Celebrates 100 Years, Plans for the Future of Work

BY LEAH COLES

BEFORE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT was an industry, a statute, or even a formalized concept, Goodwill was delivering skills training and creating jobs for people with barriers to employment – the disabled, veterans, the homeless and the disenfranchised – across the United States.

The Goodwill model of collecting, restoring and then selling donated items in order to provide job skills and meaningful work to disadvantaged citizens started with Reverend Edgar J. Helms, who founded the first Goodwill in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1902. Another Methodist minister, the Reverend J. H. Beauchamp, visited Helms' operation in Boston and brought the concept back to Delaware, founding the Goodwill Industries of the Wilmington Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Inc. in March of 1921.

Not Charity, But a Chance

At the time of its founding, the mission of Delaware's Goodwill was to provide for the religious, educational and industrial welfare of the poor... "by the encouragement of thrift and healthful conditions of living and labor..." Following the precept of Goodwill Industries of Boston, the mission was accomplished by sending the then infamous "Goodwill Bag" to wealthy communities in and around Wilmington for the collection of clothing, shoes and household items that needed repair or were no longer being used. These goods were refurbished and placed for sale in the Goodwill workshop and store at 214 Walnut Street in the city of Wilmington. The men and women who worked for Goodwill earned their wages through the repair of these goods, by driving trucks and collecting bags of donations, and for work performed in the store.



Left: With 48 years of service, Mike DeRemer is Goodwill of Delaware's longest tenured team member. Above: Old Asbury Methodist Church was the first home to Goodwill of Delaware.

Goodwill Programs

Goodwill of Delaware & Delaware County's programs include:

- Retail and eCommerce
- Goodwill Industrial/Janitorial Services
- Goodwill Recycling Center
- Goodwill Staffing Services
- Workforce Development (mission)
 - Employment Supports
 - Family Strengthening
 - Goodwill Digital Career Accelerator®
 - Goodwill Job Resource Centers (2)
 - GoodWorks
 - Train to Gain
 - Stand by Me Financial Coaching
 - Supported Employment

Guide to Workforce Development



Delaware's Goodwill became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 1951, dissolved its religious ties in 1968, and absorbed Delaware County, Pennsylvania, into its territory in 1992, becoming Goodwill of Delaware & Delaware County, Inc. Through the years, programs have included newspaper recycling, computer recycling, auto auctions, and a cashier training program with Kenny Family ShopRites. Each of these programs were established to align with Goodwill's mission, to improve the quality of life for people with barriers to self-sufficiency, through the Power of Work!



Clockwise, from top left: Furniture repairing in Wilmington circa 1970; Wilmington newspaper recycling circa 1933; Clothing, shoes and household items were collected using "Goodwill Bags."



Serving Communities in Response to a Pandemic

Mention the Goodwill name and most people think of donating old clothes and toys the kids have outgrown, and the place to score designer suits for a fraction of the price. Many people have

a general idea about the nonprofit's mission

of providing work opportunities, but very few know about Goodwill's business services and how these programs sprung into action to serve Delaware communities from the onset of the pandemic that upended, well, everything in 2020.

Take Goodwill Industrial Services for example, a team of 75 men and women, in full- and part-time roles who clean more than two million square feet of space daily. They've also done final construction cleaning on some of northern Delaware's most notable building projects this century. Recognizing the need to keep essential workers and immunocompromised pediatric patients and their families healthy, and to help businesses, including Goodwill, reopen safely, Goodwill's Industrial Services team added disinfectant deep cleaning to its roster of offerings for clients that include the Ronald McDonald House of Delaware, the New Castle County Courthouse, and numerous county and state buildings.

In March 2020, Goodwill Staffing already had dozens of team members working in temporary roles at multiple Delaware state agencies. Facing

The Goodwill Mission at Work

For many, Goodwill is a first employer, or a first employer after a second chance. "Goodwill helps people in our community gain valuable work experience and often provides their first paycheck. People learn, or relearn, what it means to have punctual, consistent work attendance, and perform their duties as part of a team – everything that goes with earning a paycheck," shared Goodwill of Delaware & Delaware County's president and CEO, Colleen Morrone. Once employed, team members are encouraged to continue to improve their soft skills and digital skills to become more competitive in the job market.

Morrone went on to say, "Most employers strive to retain their employees. We do that as well, to an extent, but we're unique in that we want to prepare our team members for opportunities beyond our doors. We're thrilled when we learn of Goodwill team members who land jobs in area banks, health care systems, transportation and logistics companies, and small businesses. That means we did our job, preparing people for employment and self-sufficiency – and that is our mission at work!"



Left: Goodwill team members and current board chair at the Goodwill Center. Below: The Goodwill Center on Lea Blvd, Wilmington houses administrative offices, a Job Resources Center, eCommerce, and the Goodwill Home Store.

a crush of unemployment claims, then Secretary of Labor Cerron Cade called upon Goodwill Staffing to help manage the deluge of calls and emails flooding his teams in the Division of Unemployment Insurance. Goodwill placed 61 temporary professionals in the Department between March and December 2020. Over the same time, the Goodwill Staffing team also recruited and placed 118 people into temporary assignments at the COVID-19 testing sites hosted by New Castle County.

What's Next for Goodwill?

Speaking on the nonprofit's strategy and future, Marvin Hargrove, chair of Goodwill's volunteer board of directors offered, "Our strategy isn't complex, we aim to be a mission driven, operationally excellent organization. Simply put, we want to continuously improve our business model to maximize the support and impact we provide to the communities of Delaware and Delaware County. Ultimately, we seek to be a preferred partner in all efforts to improve the lives of Delawareans." During his tenure on Goodwill's board, Hargrove recruited several new board members to guide the organization's advancements in community integration, education and training, and workforce development, among other areas.

Going into its next 100 years, Goodwill's work will focus on two areas. First, expanding its capacity to meet the evolving needs of communities in Delaware and Delaware County as an organization driven by the mission and belief in the power of work. "By surveying individuals and families, nonprofits, government agencies and private businesses, we'll gain a deeper understanding of how Goodwill can bridge gaps to position people and employers for even greater success," stated Morrone.

Goodwill's second area of focus will be identifying ways to operate more sustainably by transforming unsaleable donations into usable materials. "Individually and collectively, Goodwills across the country are looking at opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint," shared Morrone who serves on a national Goodwill sustainability committee. "For us here in Delaware, that means exploring opportunities with businesses, student innovators,



and researchers to turn our trash into things like shoe soles, park benches, and even asphalt and jet fuel."

As a human services organization, serving others – whether by providing training and work opportunities to individuals, or through upskilling and reskilling an entire workforce – is at the core of Goodwill's mission, and it is how they intend to remain a regional leader in workforce development, advancing the growth of communities throughout Delaware and Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Learn more about Goodwill and their centennial celebration at www.GoodwillDE.org/100-Years. ■



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