President’s Message

In 2010, we designed and launched a high school for older youth and adults who had dropped out of school. We did this in response to a request by the mayor of Indianapolis to see if we could find a way to help adults who lacked a high school diploma. There are a lot more people in that situation than I had imagined — over 15% of the adult population of the United States, including more than 100,000 in Indianapolis — and because existing adult education programs left a lot to be desired, those individuals have had very limited options. We designed the school to fit the life circumstances of the prospective students. The Excel Center is open year-round, and schedules can be arranged to accommodate students’ work or family obligations. Supports are available to help keep students on track and to address factors that might hinder education attainment. There’s a free child care center for the children of our students while they are in class, and many of our students are able to take post-secondary courses for dual credit and begin working toward a post-secondary credential that will increase their employability and earning potential.

We opened the first Excel Center in September 2010. Although we did little advertising, by the following spring there were over 2,000 prospective students on the waiting list. Nothing we have ever done has resonated so quickly with so many people. We are growing to meet the demand, and we now operate four Excel Centers in Marion County and one in Anderson. Total enrollment now exceeds 1,600 students. Three more sites are planned for 2013.

Fifty-eight percent of our students are 24 years of age or younger. We also have many parents who are in their 30s and 40s. We have even had a few students who were in their 60s. Many of the parents have told us they are doing this so their kids won’t have an excuse not to finish school. Some of our students and their school-age children even do their homework together around the kitchen table.

We know our graduates will benefit from earning their high school diplomas and obtaining post-secondary credentials, as they will then qualify for better jobs than they’ve typically had. But we believe their children will benefit even more, as they have seen their parents going to school, doing homework, and, in many cases, having a renewed sense of purpose and excitement in life.

There are many reasons why students in our Excel Centers didn’t finish high school when they were younger. Some admit they just made a mistake. As we’ve seen, though, there are a lot of adults eager for another chance to improve their circumstances and those of their children.

Congratulations to our Graduates!

This summer, we celebrated graduations at Indianapolis Metropolitan High School and The Excel Center.

Indianapolis Met, Goodwill’s public charter high school for grades 9-12, honored the accomplishments of 90 graduates, its largest class to date. These graduates had the highest percentage of technical and academic honors of any class in the school’s history. Students were engaged in rigorous technical and academic post-secondary tracks, including industry-recognized certifications.

“This school is for kids who really want to learn and take the time out of their day to care about their education,” said graduate Chelsea Arnold. “It’s for students who want to open their doors to more opportunities and be better than the statistics.” Arnold plans to attend Vincennes University for two years and then transfer to Indiana State University or Ball State University to pursue a bachelor’s degree.

The Excel Center, which offers adults an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education tuition free, was proud to recognize a class where more than two-thirds of its 88 graduates plan to pursue post-secondary degrees or vocational training.

Twenty-five graduates have already earned certifications in areas such as IT, accounting, and health care; COMP TIA or pharmacy tech, while others are working towards certifications in health care, emergency medicine and more.

“When I started, I was just getting my diploma to do what I would call ‘grunt work’ because that was all I thought I was capable of doing,” said Aaron Viehe, a top student at the Excel Center’s Decatur site. “Now I have plans, and I am excited about going to college.” Viehe plans to attend Ivy Tech and later transfer to IUPUI to study business.

New “GW Value Store” Offers Training Opportunities

Employees gain new skills in a simulated retail environment

Employees of Goodwill’s Commercial Services division now have access to a new incentive and training opportunity. At the GW Value Store, employees can purchase items such as water bottles, flash drives and T-shirts, using a special currency — Goodwill Bucks, which they earn for going above and beyond in their daily responsibilities.

Just as important, the Value Store offers a training opportunity for employees enrolled in New Beginnings, a program that helps individuals transitioning from the corrections system gain work experience and build other life skills.

“We wanted to come up with a way to add more value for our employees,” said Trellies Evans, Training and Development Manager.

“The incentive of Goodwill Bucks was the first idea. Then we said, ‘Let’s have a store, but who’s going to run it?’”

The answer came quickly. Commercial Services employees could shop at and run the store. “We have different positions: Store Manager, Inventory Specialist, Cashier, Housekeeper and Shipping/Receiving,” Evans said. “Employees learn about responsibility, money management and leadership, too.”

John Keeve helped set the store up prior to opening, and he’s worked several shifts as a Cashier and Inventory Specialist. “It says a lot about Goodwill, that we can take these products and get something out of them,” he said. “It’s a nice thing to have for people.”

Bringing Clean Water to Haiti

Indy Met students’ life-changing trip to help children

This past June, eight Indianapolis Met students and three teachers journeyed to Haiti with Fountains of Hope, an organization dedicated to bringing clean drinking water to developing countries.

“It’s a life-changing experience. I can tell you as much as I can and show you pictures, but it means nothing unless you go and experience it for yourself, and see what we went through and what we saw,” said Tyler Mitchem, an Indianapolis Metropolitan High School junior.

The idea for the trip followed a class discussion on waterborne diseases, when members of the student group HOPE (Helping Our People Everywhere) became interested in ways to help provide clean drinking water for children in Haiti. Two sites were selected to receive purification systems, each of which treats 1,000 gallons of water in just 20 minutes.

“I’m really proud of what we did in Haiti,” said junior Melissa Horn. “It far exceeded my expectations. I didn’t know how important it was until we got there, and saw what they were drinking and how they were living.”

One of the systems was installed at the House of Hope Children’s Orphanage, previously home to Indianapolis Met student Rodeline Holcomb. It was Holcomb’s first trip to Haiti since her adoption by an Indiana family several years ago. In the trip blog, Holcomb wrote: “If I had to choose the best day of my life, it would be today! I just saw my family for the first time in six years. And seeing how our group fell in love with the kids was amazing!”

Kristen Engle, a science teacher who accompanied the students, noted how the students came to appreciate having clean drinking water at their fingertips. “I think the students took away an immense sense of gratitude for what they have in the United States.”

The trip was made possible by the students’ own fundraising efforts and a grant from the Goodwill Foundation.

See more of the trip at the students’ blog: http://hope-haiti-trip.posterous.com
Individuals seeking to improve their quality of life often need access to multiple support systems. This is especially true for those in poverty — whose families face a wide variety of challenges. Because we focus on employment, education and health, there are a number of ways in which people can grow and succeed with Goodwill.

Every family, employee and student is unique. Services can include nurse wellness coaching, health screenings and education, and hunger prevention.

Education, skills and training are essential. Goodwill’s high schools, as well as other services, help youth and adults stay on track.

Employment is a critical step toward self-sufficiency. Goodwill employs many people who otherwise might not be working.

Children who are physically and emotionally healthy have a better chance for success. Adults who stay healthy do better, too. Goodwill supports the health of its employees, students and families.

The needs of the whole person and whole family are what drive the services that can be of most benefit. The paths on which individuals and families travel with Goodwill — and the ways in which they overlap and intersect — are as unique as their own circumstances and needs.
The Career Readiness Center gives students the opportunity to explore career pathways in an interactive and engaging way. As the story continued, the center was made possible by a generous $500,000 gift from the Reubens' estate, part of gifts totaling $8 million directed to a variety of central Indiana organizations, including Goodwill.

Year-End Giving to Goodwill

The time between Thanksgiving and the winter holidays is special. Our thoughts turn to family, what we accomplished during this period. Here are some not-so-subtle ways you can avoid holiday stress, potentially improve your tax situation and help others help themselves.

Top Reasons to Donate to Goodwill at Year-End:

1. Avoid spending too much on rich foods this holiday season, and save your health. You might also help improve the life and health of a first-time mother and her baby.
2. Don’t spoil the kids and grandkids with too many toys and gifts. Instead, give the gift of transportation to an individual working hard to be economically self-sufficient.
3. Lose the worry about how much certain stocks have appreciated. Donate them to Goodwill, take a tax deduction, avoid capital gains tax and help students earn a high school diploma.
4. Stop the losses from depreciated securities. Sell them, and donate the proceeds to Goodwill. You can take a capital loss on your tax return, and high school dropouts can earn a diploma and move toward self-sufficiency.
5. Manage your time by donating online at our secure site. Consider making a monthly gift on a credit card that will help fund a college program. Your parents supported Goodwill.

Honor Gifts

In Honor of Malcolm W. Applegate Anonymous
In Honor of Nancy Ayres Anonymous
In Honor of Elaine Bedel Anonymous
In Honor of Justin P. Christian Anonymous
In Honor of Mark Denien Anonymous
In Honor of Lori Elnorymphon-Aguilera Anonymous
In Honor of J. Scott Enright Anonymous
In Honor of Cindy L. Graham Anonymous
In Honor of the Marriage of Eric and Anne Lange Andrea Neal
In Honor of the Meyer Family Lucinda Meyer Kropf
In Honor of Marjorie Meyer Anonymous
In Honor of Ralph R. Meyer Anonymous
In Honor of Keith Reissa Anonymous
In Honor of Steven C. Robinson Nan E. Girk
In Honor of Muribeth Smith James M. McClelland
In Honor of Jeffrey S. Tan Anonymous
In Honor of Richard A. West Anonymous

Honor Funds

Susan B. Hetherington Honor Fund William F. Hetherington Anonymous
Bruce Jacobson Honor Fund Anonymous Nancy J. Meier
Thomas A. King Honor Fund Anonymous H. Jean Kyle Honor Fund Anonymous
James M. McClelland Honor Fund William A. Courtney Thomas H. Sams Honor Fund Anonymous

For contributors and more donor listings: www.goodwillindy.org/community
End-of-Year Donating
As much as we’d like to be a part of your New Year’s plans, if you gather up that stuff in your house and head to Goodwill now, you won’t have to wait in line at your nearest Goodwill store or donation center on December 31. Stop by soon, and get ahead of the curve. We’re grateful for your gently used donations any time of year! And thanks to Goodwill Rewards, it’s easier than ever to get a receipt and track your donations online.

Expanding Donor Services
Tippecanoe County residents have a new option for large donations. Goodwill is currently piloting home pickups in the area. If donors have a large quantity of clothing or household goods, or if they have larger items such as furniture, they can call 1-855-GW-PIK-UP for an appointment.

Happy Anniversary!
November 11 marks the first anniversary of Goodwill Rewards! The customer loyalty program has exceeded expectations, resulting in more than 220,000 members to date. Rewards members receive exclusive rewards for birthdays, special holiday rewards, surprise rewards and more. They can even track and itemize their donations online for a quick and convenient tool for tax season! It’s easy to join. Visit your nearest store store or learn more at www.goodwillindy.org/rewards.

A New Location for the Avon Store
Goodwill’s new Avon store had its grand opening on October 30. Located at 193 Avon Village Parkway (at the intersection of U.S. 36 and Avon Village Parkway), the store is 3,000 square feet larger than the original Avon location. It features six checkout lanes, a double donation drive-thru center and has tens of thousands of items — modern and vintage designer clothes, household items, books and toys — for sale. The former location at Shiloh Crossing opened in 1998 and closed on October 27.