

Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc.

Date: March 3, 2011

Contact: **Cindy L. Graham, Vice President of Marketing**
Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc.
Work: (317) 524-4212 **Cell:** (317) 459-4162
E-mail: cgraham@goodwillindy.org

Goodwill to celebrate 25 years of employing people with disabilities at Harrison Village Commissary on March 10

Goodwill will celebrate 25 years of employing people with disabilities at the Harrison Village Commissary during a special anniversary celebration at **9 a.m., Thursday, March 10**, at the commissary, 9702 E. 59th St., in Lawrence.

The celebration will include a short presentation from government and Goodwill officials, recognition of employees, and a reception.

At the Harrison Village Commissary, 24 Goodwill employees stock groceries, receive inventory and clean the 56,730-square-foot building under an Ability One contract, a program established by Congress to increase employment opportunities for people with significant disabilities.

"This celebration will recognize the tremendous impact that the Harrison Village Commissary and Goodwill have made in people's lives by working together to provide meaningful work opportunities for people with disabilities," said Jim Humphrey, Vice President, Goodwill Commercial Services. "Over the past 25 years, many individuals who had limited employment options have gained valuable work experience and increased their skill levels through the Ability One contract at the commissary."

Including the Ability One contract at the Harrison Village Commissary, Goodwill employees currently provide services such as janitorial, grounds-keeping and lawn care at 11 federal and state government locations throughout Indianapolis, and those sites employ 208 people, with 78% of the direct labor performed by people with significant disabilities.

Feature Ideas:

Meet four commissary employees whose lives have been impacted by Goodwill's contract at the Harrison Village Commissary:

Bryant Childers

Bryant, who has worked for Goodwill almost 24 years, now stocks shelves at the Harrison Village Commissary. His difficulty reading makes it impossible for him to stock goods as one normally would. In order to make it easier for Bryant to do his job, his supervisor taught him to look at colors and the numbers on the UPC to stock shelves instead of trying to match the words.

Working during the day, Bryant has established a presence in the store. Bryant has become a regular face to the customers at the commissary, and he is happy to have friends who come to see him every week.

"Goodwill has helped me work on my reading and learn new things," Bryant says. "I have my own apartment and drive my own car. Goodwill helped me learn how much more I could do."

Michael Daniels

Site Supervisor Walter Griffin says Michael Daniels is one of the fastest stockers he knows – a guy who "helps hold the place together."

News Release



**Goodwill
Industries
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Indiana, Inc.**

1635 W. Michigan St.
Indianapolis, IN 46222

(317) 524-4313
Fax (317) 524-4519

www.goodwillindy.org



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Michael, who started at the commissary in 1986, worked his way from picking up boxes to performing janitorial work to stocking shelves, the job he currently enjoys. If you ask him how he stocks shelves so quickly, he will tell you he has a strategy to push the product back so he can better see the shelf he's stocking. Michael also says he likes his job.

"I just like to be around people, and I like to help them and teach them how to stock more efficiently," he says.

Michael says he's made new friends at work and is motivated to do a good job for the customers. In his spare time, he enjoys attending activities at his church, where he serves as a Sunday School superintendent and is responsible for cleaning the building.

"Nowadays jobs are hard to come by," he says. "Goodwill gives people opportunities to work."

Steve Reed

Steve Reed's encouragement of others motivates Goodwill employees at the commissary.

"He's been pretty much a leader and an inspiration to us all," says Walter Griffin, site supervisor. "Steve is an energetic employee — always smiling, willing to help anybody."

Steve, employed at Goodwill since 1986, stocks shelves and is known as a hard worker who cares about people and who perseveres with a positive outlook.

"He had cancer twice, and during that timeframe, he was off for a week, and he came back," Walter says. "He continued to work — same smile, same energetic pace."

"One day at a time" is Steve's motto. He is proud to own a home, and he says his family inspires him and his co-workers are like family.

"There have been ups and downs. Sometimes it's been hard, and sometimes it's been easy," Steve says. "I'm proud that I made it this far."

Sonjaki Wilson

For Sonjaki Wilson, the caring people, mutual respect and team atmosphere she had known earlier in her career brought her back to Goodwill in 2010 when she was looking to re-enter the workforce.

Sonjaki began working at Goodwill in 1985 after high school when a counselor helped place her at Goodwill to gain work experience. She worked for several years at Goodwill performing a variety of jobs, including assembly jobs, janitorial work and working at the commissary. She left to have her children and worked a couple of other places but always felt that no place offered the atmosphere that she found at Goodwill.

"I feel like I've learned that there's nothing I can't do," she says. "Goodwill has showed me that."

Sonjaki says she learns slowly, and Goodwill staff takes the time to help her learn and understand her job, which helps her succeed in the workplace.

"I knew there would be people at Goodwill who would help me," she says, "I like working with Goodwill because they take the time to show me. There's nothing like loving your job."

GW Commercial Services, Inc., provides employment, job training and skills development for people who have severe disabilities, primarily through janitorial, grounds-keeping, shelf-stocking, and mailroom service contracts with the federal government under Ability One, a program established by Congress to increase employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities.

For more information about Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, visit www.goodwillbusiness.org or call (317) 524-4313.

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