



Press Release

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GOODWILL PARTNERSHIPS EXTEND REACH IN COMMUNITY
Teaming up with other service providers helps Goodwill connect participants to healthcare, job training, financial strengthening

SAN ANTONIO – There’s more to Goodwill than retail stores and donation stations. Behind the retail storefronts are many innovative programs to help people become as independent as possible through employment. In fact, everything that Goodwill does supports its mission to help change lives through the power of work.

But while Goodwill specializes in finding job opportunities for its clients, the agency acknowledges many other factors that affect an individual’s ability to seek and sustain employment – health, education and training, even financial literacy.

To help individuals deal with those issues on their path to self-sufficiency, Goodwill has formed strategic alliances with other organizations in the community to deliver services that support shared goals of keeping people employed. Goodwill created an Alliances Unit last year to more effectively pursue vital relationships that help both organizations to further their mission and increase services to the community.

“We understand the many challenges facing the unemployed and underemployed, and we know we have to address them to help fulfill our mission. Through our alliance partnerships, we’re able to focus on our own competencies and supplement them with the expertise of others, all to better serve the community,” says Bob Dugas, president and CEO of Goodwill.

STAYING HEALTHY WITH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM

One of the main issues affecting a stable workforce is the incidence of poor health; poor health among workers and their families results in high absenteeism rates and can make it difficult for them to keep a job. To make health care accessible and affordable to families, especially in

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medically under-served neighborhoods, Goodwill created its “Good Health at Goodwill” initiative in 2007, partnering with health care providers such as the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District to provide health care clinics and mobile screenings within some of its stores.

Until now, most of the program’s efforts have focused on preventive health care services such as children’s immunizations and screenings for diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol.

This year, Goodwill and the University Health System (UHS) are expanding to offer the first on-demand health care clinic. The Good Health Clinic, opening in April, will be staffed by UHS healthcare professionals and located in the Goodwill store at Fredericksburg and Vance Jackson Roads. Services start at only \$15, providing a low-cost, convenient option for the uninsured or underinsured.

“Health care is not a core competency of Goodwill, but we know the people we serve need those services,” Dugas says. “By making sure our clients have access to affordable healthcare, we are contributing to our mission in a significant way.”

TRAINING FOR HIGH-DEMAND CAREERS

To identify other workforce needs in the community, Goodwill called together a panel of local business leaders for a brainstorming session. From that discussion, the idea for affordable career training programs to prepare students for high-demand, well-paying jobs combined with case management was created.

Through an alliance partnership with the Alamo Colleges, Goodwill now operates the Good Careers Academy, offering affordable training for certifications in information technology, health care and business office skills. Program costs range from \$500 - \$3,500, significantly less than other career training schools in the area.

The Alamo Colleges provide instructors and materials for most of the academy’s training programs. Goodwill provides the classroom space within its stores and also supports students with services within its area of expertise, including career coaching, job search assistance and case management services, such as child care referrals, transportation, even uniforms, to enable them to complete their studies.

The Good Careers Academy now has two locations in San Antonio at the Goodwill stores at DeZavala and IH-10 and at Hwy. 281 and Bitters Road, with more in the works.

FINANCIAL STRENGTHENING WITH generations federal credit union

Another alliance partnership helps address the financial issues facing many of Goodwill’s clients. Many individuals in underserved areas are “unbanked” or “under banked,” lacking access and affiliation with a mainstream financial institution. They often rely on expensive alternatives to traditional banking such as payday loans, check-cashing and other predatory lending practices.

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To address this problem, Goodwill teamed up with generations federal credit union to open a branch within its store at Fredericksburg and Vance Jackson Roads. The partnership and business model is only the second of its kind for Goodwill stores nationwide, and now includes a second location at the Goodwill store at Hwy. 281 and Bitters Road.

Through generations, Goodwill participants, customers and team members have access to low-cost and no-interest alternative banking products and services. In addition, generations is committed to financial literacy, helping clients obtain assets and become financially independent.

In addition to providing space for the credit union within two stores, Goodwill has trained team members to serve as ambassadors for the credit union, educating shoppers, donors and others on the benefits of using generations.

Financial strengthening is an important part of Goodwill's mission, especially since many jobs now require credit checks as part of the application process, Dugas says.

"The kind of financial services that generations provides help break the cycle of poverty," Dugas says. "Providing the financially disadvantaged with easier access to traditional and affordable financial services will ultimately increase an individual's chances to become financially stable."

The credit union's dedication to educating and helping clients aligns well with Goodwill's mission and makes it an ideal partner for Goodwill. The non-profit organization seeks partnering organizations who demonstrate a strong commitment to serving the needs of the community.

As it embarks on more community partnerships, Goodwill's Alliances Unit has created a selection process to help identify prospective alliance partners. One of the core tenets is that partners align with Goodwill's mission and culture of serving individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

"We want to make sure that each alliance partner who works with us has the same values that we do and are as dedicated as we are to empowering people to become self-sufficient," Dugas says.

About Goodwill Industries of San Antonio:

Celebrating 65 years of community service, Goodwill is helping to change lives through the power of work. Each year, Goodwill provides employment services to nearly 50,000 San Antonio-area individuals who face employment barriers. In addition to operating 16 retail stores, over 25 donation stations and 11 Job Help Centers/Good Career Centers in San Antonio, New Braunfels, Seguin, Laredo and surrounding areas, Goodwill handles almost 40 contracts for services, ranging from document management to grounds maintenance.

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