

Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce Submission
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The Other Side of Goodwill
w/ photos

When most people think of Goodwill, they think of the place to donate items they no longer need or as the place to shop for incredible bargains. But there is a whole other side to Goodwill that few realize. Founded in 1948, Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey & Philadelphia is a community-based, nonprofit organization with a mission of putting local residents with disabilities and disadvantages to work. When you donate a pair of too snug jeans to Goodwill, you jump start a cycle that helps a person on welfare, someone with a physical disability or even a displaced worker transition from tax user to tax payer.

Through its high caliber job training and career services, Goodwill helps clients obtain the marketable job skills needed to secure competitive employment in the community. Goodwill offers many types of training ranging from computer skills to Commercial Driver's License-Class b (CDL-B) and light industrial training. Clients receive comprehensive case management and job coaching, development and retention services. The ultimate goal of all of Goodwill's services is to help individuals get to work so that they can experience the dignity and financial independence that accompany meaningful work.

One program, in particular, has garnered much media attention lately. In early spring, Goodwill partnered with the Philadelphia Mayor's Office for the Re-Entry of Ex-Offenders (MORE) to launch a Prisoner Re-Entry Program designed to help ex-offenders get back on their feet and get to work. It is funded by a three-year, \$1.4 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The program operates out of Goodwill's 19,472 square foot Contract Services Center located at 455-473 N. 7th St.

Here, clients referred by MORE receive hands-on light industrial job training in a "sheltered workshop" setting while earning a weekly paycheck and building their resume in preparation for outside employment. Clients work on jobs that include recycling computers as part of Goodwill's Reconnect recycling partnership with Dell; packaging remote controls for Comcast; assembling promotional bags for Destination Maternity; and processing clothing donated to Goodwill. When considered job ready, clients are placed into competitive jobs in the community. Tax credits are offered to companies that hire ex-offenders. Once hired, they continue to receive follow-up services including a case manager, a life coach, a faith-based mentor and a retention specialist.

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and Deputy Mayor Everett Gillison recently presided over the official ribbon cutting ceremony for Goodwill's Prisoner Re-Entry Program. During his remarks, Mayor Nutter said, "Ex-offenders are more invested in their community and less likely to re-offend if they have a job. This program finally stops the revolving door of the criminal justice system."

Goodwill President & CEO Mark B. Boyd added that this program needs the support of the local business community to achieve maximum impact. "Outsourcing

light industrial work, hosting clothing drives, donating computers, and hiring our clients are just a few ways businesses can help ensure ex-offenders get a second chance at success. Meaningful work truly does have the power to transform individuals, families and communities one job at a time."

PHOTOS:

Official Ribbon Cutting 2 PHOTO: Goodwill CEO Mark B. Boyd (l.), Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter (c) and Board Chair Andrew Swinney (r) of The Philadelphia Foundation at the official ribbon cutting ceremony.

1st paycheck Photo: Participants in Goodwill's Prisoner Re-Entry Program receive their first paychecks from representatives of Goodwill and the Mayor's Office for the Re-Entry of Ex-Offenders.