When Rose Marie graduated in June from The Goodwill Excel Center (Excel), she was honored to be the student commencement speaker. Just two years earlier, she had attended her sister’s graduation from Excel and was inspired by the Class of 2019 student speaker. “I remember thinking to myself, ‘That’s going to be me someday!’” Not only was Rose the student speaker for her class, but she also was named Salutatorian and the proud recipient of the Winnie McIver Gage Scholarship and the Dr. Billy Harden Student Leadership Award.

But the road to these accomplishments wasn’t easy. Although Rose Marie was active in extracurricular activities, she dropped out of high school twice. The first time was the result of her own decisions not to prioritize her education. The second time, a teacher noticed that she was in an abusive relationship, and Rose Marie was so embarrassed that she left school. She eventually found the supportive personal partner she was looking for, but as years went by, she realized she needed to do something meaningful, like getting her diploma. “I wanted to be an example for my nieces and nephews and show them that if I can finish high school, then they could, too.”

When Rose Marie went to Excel, Ms. Wendy became her Life Coach. A personal situation made it difficult for Rose Marie to continue her second year, but Ms. Wendy gave her the support she needed to graduate.

“MS. WENDY MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU WANT TO BE IN SCHOOL AND THAT YOU HAVE REASON TO BE THERE.”

Rose Marie plans on attending a local university and studying communications, with the career goal of becoming a counselor. She hopes to return to Goodwill Central Texas and “pay it forward” by working as an Excel Life Coach. “When I started realizing what Goodwill means to me, it was a happy-sad feeling. I’m just so thankful for everything and it makes my heart so happy, I want to cry.”

For more of Rose Marie’s story, watch her video at bit.ly/GCT21Rose

KEEP THE GOOD WORK GOING!

You can help empower more people like Rose Marie through education, career training, and work. Consider making a tax-deductible contribution to Goodwill Central Texas at goodwillcentraltexas.org/donate
Welcome to Fall, Central Texans!

With the support of community donations and contributions, we are proud to serve the people of Central Texas — transforming generations by empowering people through education, career training, and work. As we grow our service to the community, we are growing our team, securing people in roles who possess the expertise, experience, and passion essential to advancing our mission. We’re excited to announce some exciting additions to our senior leadership team. Our own Jennifer Tucker has accepted the role of Chief Mission Officer. With almost 20 years of experience with Goodwill in Michigan, Georgia, and Texas, she is poised to continue championing our workforce development programs.

We’ve also promoted three team members into Vice President roles: Scott Hillman (Retail), Jason Stewart (Commercial Services), and Keith Sommer (GSG Talent Solutions/Business Solutions). I’m confident that these changes will result in even more positive outcomes for the community.

In early June, we held our 7th commencement ceremony for The Goodwill Excel Center. The graduation ceremony for the Class of 2021 took place outdoors at the Kelly Reeves Athletic Complex in Austin. During the ceremony, our 1,000th graduate since the school’s inception in 2014 crossed the stage. It was a joy-filled morning, with many well-wishers cheering on our graduates. Thank you to all our teachers, staff members, and the Central Texas community for your donations, financial contributions, and support. Your assistance in guiding, educating, and supporting our students from their first day of class through graduation is helping create a better future for Central Texans.

With your support, we hope to celebrate many more successes in our community by fostering a Central Texas where everyone has opportunity to thrive. I’m humbled by my team and by individuals like you who value our vision.

With gratitude,
Kenny Hill
President & CEO
Goodwill Central Texas

Goodwill Central Texas and Salvation Army Scholarship Program

Longtime real estate developer and philanthropist Dick Rathgeber and his wife Sara recently established the Goodwill Central Texas and Salvation Army Scholarship Program. Made possible by a grant awarded from the Dick & Sara Rathgeber Fund, graduates of the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center may apply for a Goodwill Career & Technical Academy (GCTA) scholarship and train for a new career.

Reentering society, reuniting with family, and resuming day-to-day life can be a challenge after rehab. Getting career training at the GCTA can help ease that transition by preparing participants for a new and sustainable career in a variety of industries including healthcare, skilled trades, and technology.

This collaborative partnership between Goodwill and the Salvation Army capitalizes on both entities’ strengths and ensures that scholarship recipients receive the skills training and comprehensive support that’s essential for a long-term career. Mr. Rathgeber recently pledged $500K to the program, and we are so grateful for his ongoing support as we welcome Salvation Army grads to our career training courses!

For information about upcoming GCTA courses, go to gctatransition.org

Left to right: Captain Brett Cundiff, Captain Kimberly Cundiff, Sage Sanderson, Dick Rathgeber, Alexis Denny, Allison McKissack, Kenny Hill
A Year-to-Date Glimpse of the Goodwill Career & Technical Academy

Career training is in full swing at the Goodwill Career & Technical Academy (GCTA). Many students who have recently completed courses are working toward taking their certification exams and actively job searching. The GCTA team provides students with a multitude of supportive opportunities designed to boost their employment journey, from resume retooling to connections with potential employers.

A Closer Look at Our Most Popular Courses

**PHLEBOTOMY**
- 100% course completion rate
- 100% certification rate

**MICROSOFT OFFICE AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS**
- 100% course completion rate
- $15.50 average hourly wage of employed grads

**COMMERCIAL VEHICLE OPERATOR**
- 98% course completion rate
- $18.33 average hourly wage of employed grads

---

Meet Mojdeh Gharbi

Goodwill Central Texas Board Member and Certain Affinity Co-Owner
VP of Marketing & Operations

**What made you decide to become a board member in 2018?**
I’m extremely passionate about giving back and supporting our local community. Finding an organization that had the same alignment with my passion was super important. Goodwill Central Texas has an incredible reputation for the work that’s being done to help empower people through education, training, and work. I’m honored to be part of this organization and help contribute so we can make a real difference locally.

**What excites you about our shared mission?**
More than ever, our community needs us as we continue to see how the pandemic has impacted everyone, especially the most vulnerable individuals in our area. So many people facing homelessness, lacking opportunity, lacking education, and other obstacles to thrive STILL need help here. Our mission hasn’t changed - if anything, it’s become more critical than ever.
GSG Talent Solutions (GSG), our staffing firm, has achieved 425 job placements for Central Texans in 2021, with an average wage of $18.55/hour. This is a huge win in helping empower people to overcome employment challenges such as having a criminal background.

Recently, an individual came to GSG in need of second-chance employment after being released from jail. First, he qualified for support services, such as assistance with work clothing and transportation. Then he began a new job with help from a GSG Recruiter, and quickly worked towards a goal of purchasing his own vehicle so he would no longer have to rely on assistance. He now owns a truck, which he uses for daily transportation to his job. This participant is extremely thankful to GSG for helping him get back on track and successfully reenter the workforce.

New Store Alert!

On July 8, we celebrated the grand opening of our newest store, Teravista (677 University Blvd. Round Rock, TX). Goodwill Central Texas President & CEO Kenny Hill shared congratulatory remarks, as well as Goodwill Central Texas Board Member Margaret Moten. Swing by Teravista when you can and check out our selection of budget-friendly new items, as well as deals on gently used clothing, home goods, and more. All of this, and the Teravista store created over 25 new jobs in the community.

IN THE WORKS

FALL 2021
Remodel!
NORTH LAMAR
5555 North Lamar Blvd.
Austin, TX

EARLY 2022
Grand Opening!
LAKE AUSTIN
2411 Lake Austin Blvd.
Austin, TX

YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECT?
GOODWILL SAVINGS!

BACKPACKS & JEANS
STARTING AT $2.99