

Growing GOODWILL

Goodwill Industries of Wayne and Holmes Counties, Inc.

MARCH 2010

Creating Hopes, Jobs, Futures!

Jesse Kassler

"We always knew Jesse had it in him; Jesse just needed to believe that," is Employment Development Specialist Kim Yost's initial reaction when Jesse Kassler's name is mentioned. Jesse, who participates in Goodwill Industry's Workfirst Training Program, has taken responsibility for his own success and, according to Case Manager Pam Porter, has become an inspiration to many of the other Workfirst trainees. "He's focused, working hard and trying to make a change," Porter notes. "He's matured and wants more out of life."

Jesse wants more out of life not only for himself, but for his family: four-year-old son Brenton, two-year-old son Ladimir and girlfriend Jill. Having been together for six years, "she's very proud of me and supports me in what I'm doing," says Jesse.

There are many reasons for Jesse's family to be proud of him. After two months at Goodwill Industries, he is

well on his way to obtaining his GED and has his consistently improving practice test scores to prove that he can do it. He is scheduled to take the GED exam this month, and Pam has already voiced her support for Jesse. "We think he is going to do very well," she said. Jesse is looking forward to taking his diploma and using it to obtain employment in one of the many fields in which he is already experienced, including plumbing, land-scaping, carpentry and greenscaping.

Jesse's motivation to come to Goodwill Industries was to gain additional education and skills, but he has also gained the feelings of pride that come along with those achievements. "I've come to the realization that you need education in order to do something worthwhile," he said. He is especially looking forward to graduation. "Some people may not think it's a big deal, but it is to me. I've never graduated from anything before."



Jesse Kassler

Coming from a past of negative choices and their consequences, Jesse is comfortable with the lessons he's learned and determined to use those experiences to make his future better. "I'm not embarrassed of my past; it's what I did. But, all you can do is change the future."

Planned giving enables donors to make substantial gifts in ways that can complement their personal financial planning while furthering the mission of Goodwill Industries. A planned gift to Goodwill brings financial benefits to the donor as well as the knowledge

that your gift will make a lasting impact on someone from our community. Feel free to contact Sue Gorman, Vice President of Administration, at 330-264-1300 ext. 222 to talk about how your gift to Goodwill could benefit Wayne and Holmes counties.

Rising to the Challenges of 2009

As I reflect on 2009, it is with memory of great challenge and success. We are often told that we need to do a better job of informing the general public that Goodwill is more than a store. Yes, Goodwill is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit, but we aren't just an organization that sells low-cost clothes to poor people. We are probably one of the most unique nonprofits around. For 108 years we have been providing support and training opportunities for people with disabilities and barriers to employment. I certainly could cite our mission statement to you; however, I have decided to put it into just a couple of words: "we put people to work."

Goodwill is very similar to a three-legged stool, and quite frankly, one of our legs has been missing this year, which brings forth one of the challenges I spoke of earlier. Two years ago our Industrial Services division, which does subcontract work for several area employers providing such services as packaging, sub assembly and refurbishing, employed or trained over 100 people each day. Today we employ 15 individuals. When we found out in October of 2008 that our largest customer was going to be forced to pull all of its work in-house, we knew we needed to make some tough decisions to ensure the organization remained viable and prepared to serve the many clients that needed us. In my 13 years with Goodwill, we have never been forced to lay off employees in either the Industrial Services or Retail legs of our organization. In January of 2009 we laid off approximately 25 employees and an additional 25 people later in March. I am sure you can imagine how difficult it was for an organization that is all about work to be responsible for taking it away. At this time I would remiss if I didn't thank our board of trustees and the staff for their foresight in making and supporting the decisions that needed to be made.

The next challenge arose as we began to see an increase in the number of people we served who were unemployed. This brought with it a need for increased work experience training spots, and with the Industrial Services division without work, we were suddenly forced to be very creative in integrating all of those individuals into our retail operation. This in itself brought forth many challenges, as the retail stores are much smaller and had traditionally been used to provide additional revenue to support the needs in our Workforce Development area, such as case managers, job coaches, clerical staff and transportation. Certainly it was much easier to provide the training in our Industrial Services location with established work and supervisors, along with our case managers in the same facility to deal with any issues.

However, our Retail division and Workforce Development stepped up and worked together, finding a way to make it happen. Another aspect of the economy that is affecting our organization is the lack of jobs in which to place people after they have completed their training. Our staff has had to be very creative in keeping them motivated to continue their job searches.



Judy Delaney
President

Now, on to the success part I mentioned earlier. First of all, with the lack of work and relatively flat funding, our Workforce Development Department was able to increase the number of people we served by 33%, or 294 people. I know some individuals have questioned our move of the Wooster Store to the north end of Wooster, but I must say that if we hadn't moved in 2009, I don't think I would be here writing a letter about any successes. Without that move, we would have not been able to serve the increased number of clients, and the revenues would not have supported any of the services and staff I mentioned earlier. The Retail division was able contribute an additional 6% to the mission of the organization by the increased revenue from all stores, with the majority coming from the Wooster location. Overall, while decreasing expenses, we increased our customer count by over 21,000 and our donors by 626.

Out of a year of challenges and hard work, we have positioned the organization to be able to respond quickly to future changes in the economy. Our solid base of retail stores, an excellent and creative Workforce Development staff and a contracts group ready and able to complete quality contract work place this organization in a unique situation. We can maintain the balance we have shown this year, but we can grow quickly when opportunities are encountered.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy Delaney".

President

Goodwill Industries Job Club

The Workforce Development Program, in conjunction with the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, has developed a job club to assist consumers in learning how to construct and implement an effective job search plan. Consumers meet on a weekly basis for approximately eight to ten weeks where they work from the *Career Exploration Journal*, network with others and share job leads.

The *Career Exploration Journal* is a comprehensive journal to assist job seekers in finding employment. Created by Goodwill's Employment Consultant, Jason Black, the journal provides consumers with information and tips that give insight into how job seekers should prepare and what employers look for when hiring new employees. Throughout job club, consumers and staff will read from the text, complete worksheets and have open discussions about past experiences. Consumers are given copies of the *Career Exploration Journal* to keep and refer back to throughout their careers. This helps each consumer learn the skills needed to find employment, rather than relying on others. During the completion of the journal, consumers will focus on sections of the book such as skill identification, goal setting, overcoming barriers, successfully completing an application, résumé writing, interview skills, using technology in a job search and various other topics relative to the job search process.

At this time, Goodwill has implemented four job clubs with graduation rates of about 70%. Consumers who have participated in job club have the opportunity to return to job club to review the material and participate in group



Job Development Specialist Darrell Mosley leads Job Club participants through an activity.

activities as often as they want. There are a few consumers who have participated in each group to keep their job seeking skills fresh and up to date. Making our job club and staff available on a recurring basis helps consumers become more familiar with the material.

Job club not only helps our consumers with learning about job seeking, but helps with socialization, anxiety/stress and communication skills. There are often a lot of emotions and pressure when looking for employment. By practicing proven methods in our job club, consumers are becoming more confident and prepared to find suitable employment throughout their careers.

Goodwill Starts Preferred Shopper Program



On January 1, 2010, Goodwill of Wayne and Holmes Counties started a Preferred Shopper Program at its retail locations. Says Goodwill's Vice President of Administration and Retail, Susan Gorman, "We are responding to our customers' requests for such a program. We appreciate the feedback we get from our customers and upgrade our programs and services accordingly."

The program offers shoppers discounts on all purchases over \$15.00 and other special promotions throughout the year. To participate, visit any of our locations in Wooster, Orrville, Rittman, Millersburg or Loudonville, and ask the store personnel for a sign-up sheet.

Good People at Goodwill

Throughout Sherri's eight-year tenure at Goodwill Industries, she has been successful in a variety of positions, including Millersburg store clerk and manager, Retail Manager and her current position, Retail Director. Close to 70 employees rely on Sherri every day to support and guide them as they keep the five retail locations running smoothly. When she's not at work, she enjoys spending time with her two sons and her five-year-old granddaughter, whom she describes as "the apple of my eye." When Sherri craves a rest from the bustle of Wooster, where she lives with her 14-year-old dog Gidgit, she enjoys outdoor activities, especially camping. While Sherri has developed some close relationships throughout the agency, most of her colleagues probably do not know that she likes to sing country music!



Sherri Clark

Outsource to Goodwill and Save Time and Money!

For quotes, call
Steve Apple at
330-264-1300
Ext 232.



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of Wayne and Holmes Counties, Inc.

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Mission Statement:
*To help people reach their
highest level of independence
and success through training and
employment-related services.*

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