



Success Story

Kim Yape

Celebrates 40th Anniversary with
Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida, Inc.

Kim Yape has worked for Goodwill for so long she remembers when she used to ride her horse to work.

Seriously.

"I lived down the road so I would ride him right here," Kim says.

Goodwill was Kim's first job, and it has also been her only job. Kim celebrated her 40th anniversary with Goodwill at the September employee meeting, when she was honored with a cake, a certificate, and a longevity bonus check.

As Goodwill's longest-tenured employee, Kim has seen a lot in four decades. "There have been a lot of changes," Kim says. "I've seen so many people come and go. Co-workers, supervisors, CEOs. I've made so many friends over the years."

"I have my family," she adds. "Then I have my Goodwill family."

Kim was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. As an infant, she lost vision in her left eye after receiving too much oxygen in an incubator. A head injury later on in life caused her to lose her hearing as well. Kim lived in Michigan until 1969, and moved to North Fort Myers at the age of 14.

As a senior in high school, she was referred to Goodwill by her school counselor through the school-to-work transition program, a Vocational Rehabilitation initiative that helps students with disabilities train for a job, continue their education, or find a job after high school. Over the years, she has worked in upholstery, on the back dock, and even filled in for supervisors when needed. Today, she prepares and bales textiles for salvage.

"I learn so much from her. She has such a great attitude," says coworker Maria Magdaleno. "When I was new, she taught me how to do everything. Her disability doesn't stop her."

"She is my hero here, my best friend," Maria adds.

"There have been a lot of ups and downs over the years," Kim says about the challenges she has faced, including her husband's death earlier this year.

When asked to name her biggest high notes, she says her family is at the top of the list. "My daughter is 37, I have two grandkids," she says. "I also like to swim, and paint the house."

Kim is both excited and nervous about the upcoming move to the Opportunity Center.

"I'm going to miss it here," she says. "There are a lot of memories here, but I look forward to new ones."



ACHIEVING IS BELIEVING!