



Achiever Iris Pagan

"I like my job very much and I'm very happy now. Thank you for all you have done for me Goodwill."

Iris moved with her young son from Miami to Naples after her home was taken from her due to circumstances out of her control. She was very lucky that her daughter-in-law was able to assist her once she moved to Naples; but, Iris still needed a job to support her family. She suffered from severe depression, knew very little English and had physical problems that altogether made employment very difficult.

Iris was referred from the WAGES program to Goodwill in June of 2000. She received employment counseling and job coaching. By September of 2000, Goodwill was able to place Iris in a job where she could feel comfortable and more like herself. Iris works for Early Years Preschool where she cares about her job and about the children she looks after. "Iris appears happier and exudes much more self-confidence. She has even gotten herself a car and is just more independent now. She has come a long way," says her Employment Specialist Patti Warren.

In just a short time Iris' life has changed for the better. She is more self-confident, more independent, and even knows a little bit more English! Iris states, "I was glad to have a chance to succeed with the help of the Goodwill program."

Achiever Wendy Pereira



Energetic, funny, intelligent, and positive all describe Wendy Pereira. Looking at Wendy you would never know she had a serious disability and a barrier to employment. Wendy is an epileptic and suffers from seizures. She was referred by Vocational Rehabilitation to Goodwill's employment services program in February of 2000. By February 23rd, Wendy was working for T.J. Maxx in Naples as a cashier and a customer service representative and loving it. "Wendy is a dedicated employee and an integral part of the T.J. Maxx customer service staff. She has a smile for everyone and refers to her co-workers as family", says Employment Specialist Patti Warren. T.J. Maxx has been very supportive of Wendy and has even helped her through many seizures.

"My job coach Patti and Goodwill have been a great source of support and encouragement. I have come to appreciate myself even more and it's nice to be around people with a relaxed heart," says Wendy.

"Each day at work I know I will be happy because of the friends I have and the support they've given me. It all began with Goodwill and I'd like to give them my greatest thanks."



Achiever Christopher Swenson

"I have everything in my life now. I love my work and I have the best co-workers. Thank you Goodwill for my life back!"

A pleasure to work with and a "Can Do" attitude is how Goodwill Employment Specialist Patti Warren describes Chris. Chris has Downs Syndrome and has overcome many obstacles to become a great employee. Chris was referred to the Goodwill employment program from Vocational Rehabilitation in March of 2000. Because he was coming from a sheltered workshop, which meant he engaged in very little outside interaction, Chris needed assistance with job skills and some on the job training.

In April of 2000 Goodwill was able to successfully place Chris with a Walgreens store in Naples. He works as a stock person, helps with customers, and generally helps to keep the store looking good. Chris has a positive attitude and a cheerful approach that makes it a friendly environment for co-workers and customers.

Before entering Goodwill's program, it was said that Chris would never adapt into a mainstream work environment. But with a little guidance from Goodwill, Chris' positive attitude, and a lot of support from family and co-workers, he proved them wrong!

Achiever Linda Thompson



*A*fter a work-related accident in 1996 Linda injured her left knee, and in 1997 had to have her whole knee replaced. Linda is unable to be on her feet for long periods of time and is under several other restrictions. Used to supporting herself for many years, Linda found herself out of work and depending on others much to her disliking. This weighed heavily on her self-esteem and her financial situation.

In October of 2000, Linda enrolled at Goodwill. She received support and employment services and counseling. Because Linda was out of the workforce for several years, Goodwill concentrated on a complete retraining program. "Linda is a wonderful worker. She always goes above and beyond her duties in the workplace and that's such a refreshing quality to find in a person these days", states Dottie Woytow, Goodwill Employment Specialist.

Linda first decided to accept a position in our Goodwill dispatch office where she scheduled donation pick-ups. A few months later she was promoted to the position of Sales Coordinator in the main Goodwill Sales Office where she deals directly with duties related to our stores and our sales personnel.

"I don't believe my 'special needs' could or would have been accommodated by a mainstream employer...I greatly appreciate the opportunity Goodwill has provided me."