

Mission Video for Goodwill of SWFL

Information about this video

This video highlights how **Goodwill of Southwest Florida** goes far beyond its retail stores to fulfill its core mission of helping people with disabilities and disadvantages achieve independence and a better quality of life. Leaders, staff, and family members describe programs such as workforce development and training, community resource centers, and the **microenterprise** small business program, which have helped launch hundreds of businesses. They also showcase **Pathways to Opportunity**, a program that supports young adults with special needs as they transition out of school by building social, life, and work skills. Throughout the video, speakers emphasize Goodwill's role as a training ground, its collaborative partnerships with local government and community organizations, and its vision to expand into a new, unified campus so it can deepen its impact. The overall message is that donations of time, skills, and resources stay local and directly empower people to overcome barriers and thrive in Southwest Florida.

Speaker 1 0:21

So Goodwill's mission at its core is to help people to be independent to help them overcome their barriers, so we as an organization always look for ways to bridge gaps between those services and the people that need them.

Speaker 2 0:40

I like to describe the mission of Goodwill as helping people with disabilities and disadvantages become their better self and have their best life possible. We do that through providing them with direct services or helping them find resources within the community that already exist, or working with some of our other partners in the nonprofit world.

Speaker 3 1:00

When I first learned that Goodwill was more than just retail stores and the primary purpose was to help individuals overcome barriers in their lives, whether it was employment, education, living a more independent life, I knew I had to become part of this organization. That mission just spoke to me,

Speaker 2 1:22

I although the stores also provide great value to the customers and great products and things for the community, the stores serve as a training ground for our own employees. We also employ 1200 people here in the southwest Florida area, many of which have a disability or disadvantage, and many of them work in our stores. One of the successes of a Goodwill operation is when we have one of our employees that we've trained and helped along the way be able to parlay that training into a job in what we call the regular world. We call that transitional employment, and that's a big part of our mission.

Speaker 4 2:00

Well, I see that impact every day. We have an employee who's been with us like for 30 plus years. She enjoys coming to work, and she does have some barriers, but she doesn't let that stop her. There are some employees who they just love coming to work just to be there, maybe it's me or another associate, and just an all-around good day.

Speaker 5 2:24

When I wake up in the morning, I want to go to work. Happy associates, happy customers, fabulous sales, a great store environment, compliments about the store. I like people coming in and say, 'Wow, this is great.

Speaker 3 2:40

Goodwill is about people. We have individuals that they don't think they can do anything in life. They come to Goodwill and it blossoms because we give them the training. We help them to see that they have potential in doing so much more.

Speaker 1 2:55

Times are always changing, and right now what we're finding is that there are new jobs out there, and our mission right now on the forefront is workforce development and training, and our job, and our passion, and our vision is to help people be ready for those new jobs

Speaker 6 3:20

in our community resource centers, people could be coming in, maybe just for the things you would think of online job search or updating their resume, but so much more happens there. They may come in for something job-related, and they don't realize all of the different things that they can do, like increase their skill set from learning and connect to other resources in the community that we can refer them to.

Speaker 2 3:47

Another program that we have is our micro enterprise program, which is exciting. It's a small business development program, and someone will come to us and they have a dream of what they want to do, and we'll sit them down. We'll go through a six week program with them almost develop a business plan, just short of a business plan, and find out if their idea could be turned into something that would be profitable for them. So, we've had over 1000 people go through that program. We've started over 600 businesses,

Speaker 7 4:15

so they're creating opportunity not only for themselves but opportunity for other people in the community, and they're showing that they can do it, and they can succeed, and they can overcome, and they can break down barriers. As

Speaker 8 4:31

a parent, you're, and you have a child who has special needs, you never know what the future is going to hold once they finish private or public schools,

Speaker 9 4:45

pathways to opportunity was created because there was a gap between the individuals leaving high school and their next step, so sometimes some folks are ready to work right after high school, and that's great for those individuals, but there's also a large amount of. People who aren't quite ready, they need to master some of those social skills, and that's where Pathways to Opportunity fits in.

Speaker 8 5:06

Pathways is about growth and opportunity, and to continue learning. I don't know that there's a day that he's here that he doesn't come home telling us about something he's learned, whether it's an ingredient in something he cooked in cooking class, or a book he read in book club.

Speaker 3 5:25

Anytime we walk around campus, and you go to Pathways to Opportunity, even to the outlet, people are there to help other people, and they're helping them to meet their needs and fulfill their goals. It's really exciting,

Speaker 1 5:40

you know. We have an amazing community, and collaboration is key, and so with that being said, and the amazing community partners that we have, we are making true impact in the community, and right alongside that is our local government, who we work very closely with, and who recognize that with just a little bit support from them we're able to help the community tenfold.

Speaker 2 6:11

The future of this Goodwill is very exciting. We're doing great things in the community already, but we do have capacity issues. We have some limitations on our current campus, and we have auxiliary facilities to support what we do. We need to get everything under one roof, so we're in the process right now of trying to develop a new campus in a very prime location in Fort Myers, over off of Interstate 75 and Martin Luther King Boulevard. We can only do that with the support of the community. One thing I've seen here since in my time here is that we get tremendous support. Everyone understands what we do, they enjoy what we do. What we do is very important. So I think the future for us is very exciting.

Speaker 6 6:51

I'm here because I actually believe in what we do. These, when you see the faces of someone whose life has been changed, it's hard to walk away from that.

Speaker 1 7:00

And so when we look at Goodwill, when I look at Goodwill, and I say, you know, what have we done at the end of the day, you know, our job well done means just more opportunity for us to help people.

Speaker 10 7:13

We have a saying here at Goodwill Southwest Florida: to know us is to love us. Every contribution of your time, your skills, and your treasure will stay local and help us empower those with disabilities and disadvantages in Southwest Florida. So we invite you on this journey as we build a more resilient, more inclusive, and brighter future for all in our community.

Speaker 6 7:42

Thank

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>