



Get to work!

Ten ways to
empower your
community
through this
job training
network

SPREADING GOODWILL

by Barbara E. Walters

Dan Diegel hit bottom two years ago. Once steadily employed, he'd lost his job, was struggling with alcoholism and depression, and had run out of places to stay in his hometown of Traverse City, Mich., USA.

A relative took him to the Goodwill Inn, a shelter that has received \$400,000 in funding from Rotary Charities of Traverse City. It is owned and operated by the nonprofit Goodwill Industries of Northern Michigan.

"At the inn, I was given the time to realize I had to do something differently in my life," says Diegel, 59.

The facility provided counseling and connected him with an array of resources, including Alcoholics Anonymous, affordable housing agencies, and career services. He now rents a subsidized apartment and has finished his fifth semester at Northwestern Michigan College, where he has maintained a 3.6 grade-point average. Diegel now aspires to be a social worker. At the Goodwill Inn, "they try to let people empower themselves," he explains.

Success stories like Diegel's are exactly what Rotary International and Goodwill Industries International are striving for, not just in Michigan but around the globe. From Canada to Russia, the organizations have been officially working together to improve lives since 2001, when they formed a cooperative relationship and signed a memorandum of understanding. The memorandum grew from the vision of 2000-01 RI President Frank Devlyn, a longtime member of Goodwill's board.

"It's a win-win situation," Devlyn says. "When good people come together, big things happen. Goodwill is entrepreneurial and does a top-rate job of training people."

The cooperative relationship builds on Rotary's strength as an association of professionals committed to service and on Goodwill's expertise in education. Goodwill Industries International is a network of 185 independent, community-based agencies in 17 countries that provides employment training and career services to people with disabilities, welfare recipients, displaced workers, and other job seekers. To fund its programs, Goodwill collects donated clothing and household goods, which it sells at more than 2,000 retail stores and at www.shopgoodwill.com. It also offers the labor and skills of its clients to business and government employers on a contract basis. Goodwill is one of only four organizations to have a cooperative relationship with RI. (The other three are the International Reading Association, the United Nations Population Fund, and USAID.)

Given that October is Vocational Service Month on the Rotary calendar, it's the perfect time to team up with Goodwill. After all, projects with the organization are "only limited by the creativity of the people involved," says David Oliver, president of Goodwill Industries of Tulsa and a former member of the Rotary Club of Southside Tulsa, Okla., USA. Here are some ideas to get you started.

01

PROVIDE JOB TRAINING

Sometimes people just need a little professional training to help them transition into the workforce.

Police Captain Craig Littrell, of the Rotary Club of Columbia Valley Daybreak (Kennewick),



Wash., USA, helped four Goodwill trainees get experience with the Kennewick police, primarily in the records department.

"You wouldn't believe how uplifting it can be for people to have a place to go, to have colleagues and the supportive atmosphere in a workplace that helps build self-esteem," says Scott Shinsato, associate executive director of Goodwill Industries of the Columbia and a member of Littrell's club.

02

HOST A CAREER FAIR

Since 2001, Rotarians in Macon, Ga., USA, have been hosting an annual job fair with the area Goodwill. Held at the Goodwill Career and Conference Center, the event allows



Rotarians to get involved as career workshop facilitators and, in many cases, recruiters.

"We had more than 100 people get jobs," says Jim Stiff, a member of the Rotary Club of Downtown Macon and president of Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia and the Central Savannah River Area.

03

HIRE GOODWILL'S CLIENTS OR GRADUATES

Does your business need a bank teller, computer programmer, administrative assistant,

A Rotarian for 37 years, Goodwill's CEO loves Harleys and helping people



GEOERGE KESSINGER, the president and CEO of Goodwill Industries International, and two fellow Rotarians (also Goodwill executives) rode their Harley-Davidson motorcycles halfway across the United States and into Canada in June on a tour of Goodwill agencies.

Kessinger, 65, was born in a three-room, tar-paper house in the Missouri Ozarks and remembers not knowing where his next meal would come from. But he adds optimistically, "We did have an outhouse and a well with good water." His father, who dropped out of high school, was a Methodist minister and a Rotarian. Kessinger worked his way through college, earning a bachelor's degree in sociology and psychology, an MBA, and a master of divinity. "My divinity degree got me into Goodwill," says the member of the Rotary Club of Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Md., near Goodwill headquarters. "My MBA allowed me to stay."

After serving Goodwill for more than 30 years, including 24 years as president of its Orange County operations in California, he took the helm in 2001. He recently talked with *The Rotarian* about his life and Goodwill's relationship with Rotary.

Why didn't your early poverty defeat you? My folks just knew that our family was going to escape the poverty in which we lived. "You are going to college" was just a simple, stated fact.

How and when did you start working at Goodwill? I came out of graduate school in '69 with a degree in theology. At that time, though, I was searching for something different from working at a church. So I took a job in Galveston in 1970 as branch manager of the Houston Goodwill. Goodwill seemed to be the coming together of my two sides. I had a divinity degree, but I am also a hands-on, practical kind of guy.

You joined the Rotary Club of Galveston in 1970, when you were 29. Why did you join? As I began my career in Goodwill, I knew that the Rotary club was the place to meet community leaders who supported the values of Service Above Self, honesty, and being compensated for hard work. These were and are my values and those of Goodwill, and the values of the people we serve, people who are in a life circumstance of need that generally is not of their own choosing. So Rotary was a place to serve the community as well as to be with people with the same values.

How does Rotary's objective complement Goodwill's mission? Rotary is the place where commitment to community and service come together with people who are in positions of leadership and power to make Service Above Self a reality. Many are employers who can help Goodwill fulfill its goal of bringing work to more people. More important, through Rotary you can get access to strategic thinkers of the community. So it serves as a link between the mission and vision of Goodwill and the mission of the community. Both Goodwill and Rotary are essentially community based. They are both nonprofit and work oriented. Rotary clubs are working to employ people in their community, and Goodwill is looking to get folks employment.

What is the Goodwill Industries 21st-Century Initiative? When we turned 100 in 2002, we accepted an initiative to help 20 million people by 2020 reach self-sufficiency through employment. To accomplish that, we are training people for careers in the 21st-century workforce, focusing on the whole family, since there can be a whole host of issues, such as caring for somebody elderly, that block a person from working. The initiative also calls for developing business opportunities that offer good jobs to people who have been considered unemployable in the past. Rotarians can play an important part in those strategies in their communities.

groundskeeper, janitor, food server, or equipment operator? Your local Goodwill may be able to help. The organization placed about 150,000 people in competitive jobs in 2006, and its training and career services have been tailored to meet local employers' needs. Goodwill can also connect companies with information about tax benefits and special funding opportunities that may be available if they hire workers with disabilities or low incomes.

04

DONATE COMPUTERS

In poor areas of Louisville, Ky., USA, impoverished students have to wait up to two hours at public libraries to use a computer to do homework, says Bernard Strennecky, of the Rotary Club of Prospect/Goshen. So members of his club collected used computers, had university students repair them, and donated them to Goodwill. Goodwill then came up with a way for the machines to benefit needy students who were attending literacy and computer skills training with their parents. When the adults completed the course or passed their high school equivalency exams, they could take the computers home.

05

TAP INTO GOODWILL'S RESOURCES

Four years ago, the Rotary Club of Oxnard, Calif., USA, needed warehouse space and workers for its major Christmas wreath fundraiser, and the local Goodwill needed books and computers for its clerical skills training program. Now, in a partnership that benefits both organizations, the club gives up to \$3,000 a year for books and computers to Goodwill Industries of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. In turn, Goodwill helps the club with its fundraiser. (Its clients assemble about 300 wreaths, and Goodwill provides the warehousing and delivery dispatching.) It's a perfect match of resources, says Katherine Leahy, president and CEO of the agency and a member of the Oxnard club. "There are not that

many Rotarians who have a 44,000-square-foot building, and I do," she says.

06

ORGANIZE AN INTERNATIONAL PROJECT TOGETHER

To provide desperately needed medical supplies around the world, Rotarians in District 6220 (Michigan; Wisconsin, USA) and Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin have collaborated to ship supplies to countries including Jamaica, Nicaragua, and Russia. They've also given equipment to a clinic on a Native American reservation in Wisconsin that was damaged by fire. The Goodwill agency supplies trucks, warehousing, and packaging and finds the best price for shipping. Rotarians ask hospitals to donate items such as sterilizing machines, surgical gloves, and incubators.

Started after an African Group Study Exchange team's visit to Wisconsin more than a decade ago, the project has shipped 324,000 pounds of supplies, including toys and clothes for African children orphaned by AIDS. The Rotary Foundation has awarded several Matching Grants to support the effort.

"None of it would have happened without Goodwill," says project coordinator Carol Busey, of the Rotary Club of Appleton, Wis.

Rotary and Goodwill have formed a "natural partnership," according to Bob Pedersen, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin and a member of the Appleton club. "It's been really inspirational how little old Appleton can make a difference in the world," he says.

07

START A PROGRAM WITH GOODWILL

Perhaps your community isn't meeting the employment needs of people with physical disabilities. Or maybe no one is helping

illiterate adults in your town. If that's the case, consider starting a program with your local Goodwill. The Rotary Club of Houston tried this idea back in 1945, only it went a step further by helping to create an entire Goodwill agency: Goodwill Industries of Houston.

Then in the early 1990s, Houston-area Rotarians got even more ambitious and visited Mexico City to start a Goodwill agency there. The thought arose because Past RI President Frank Devlyn, of the Rotary Club of Anáhuac (Mexico City), was involved with Goodwill, says Steven Lufburrow, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries of Houston and one of the Rotarians who made the initial trip to the Mexican capital.

"We became quick friends with Rotarians there," Lufburrow recalls. "We asked them, 'Can we get together in the future to discuss this?' They said, 'How about tonight?' They hosted the whole group for dinner, and the plans began to form."

With help from a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant, Rotarians in Houston raised money to build the facility and train the first administrator. Launched in 1993, the Mexico City Goodwill is thriving today, says Hans Burkart, its vice president and a member of the Rotary Club of Ciudad Universitaria. All board members, including Devlyn, are Rotarians.

"Most of the clubs – about 90 from our Rotary District 4170 – give us their help in various ways constantly," Burkart says. "By now, we've helped more than 1,000 persons to get a job, and they are doing well. So, we are proud and happy for all of them."

08

GIVE A GOODWILL GIFT CERTIFICATE

Each holiday season, the Rotary Club of Southside Tulsa, Okla., gives its adopted school \$1,000 to use toward gift certificates for Goodwill stores, a donation that's matched by



Goodwill Industries of Tulsa. The school's 20 most needy families, as determined by the school counselor, receive the certificates.

"When we hear the stories of families who would have had nothing to give their children at Christmas, I tell you, it's priceless," says David Hughes, 2007-08 club president and a former coordinator of the project.

09

BUY PRODUCTS MADE BY GOODWILL'S CLIENTS

The sweet smell of success is the result of a partnership between the Rotary Club of Tyler Sunrise, Texas, USA, and the local Goodwill. Club members buy and sell scented candles made by Goodwill clients with disabilities. The proceeds help fund two \$3,000 college scholarships for needy high school seniors and a \$500 contribution to one of the town's elementary school libraries.

10

GET OUT THE CHECKBOOK

The Rotary Club of Los Angeles has contributed more than \$350,000 toward Goodwill Southern California's job training, placement, and career resource centers since 1959, says Peggy Smith, the agency's senior director of major gifts and gift planning.

Farther up the West Coast, the Rotary Club of Tacoma, Wash., has also opened its wallet. In June, the club announced it would give more than \$100,000 to Tacoma Goodwill for a youth career development center.

"This grant is Rotary's way of providing a significant gift to participate in Goodwill's mission to help change lives through work," says 2006-07 Tacoma club president Pete Taylor. ■

Barbara E. Walters joined the Rotary Club of Kalamazoo, Mich., USA, in 1993, a year after traveling to Belize with a group of Michigan Rotarians to report on their service work there.

MISSION OF GOODWILL INDUSTRIES INTERNATIONAL Goodwill Industries will enhance the quality and dignity of life for individuals, families, and communities on a global basis through the power of work, by eliminating barriers to opportunity for people with special needs, and by facilitating empowerment, self-help, and service through dedicated, autonomous local organizations.