

The History of Goodwill

The Rev. Edgar J. Helms opened the first Goodwill Industries in 1902 at Morgan Chapel, a church and community center in Boston. The people in that neighborhood, many of them immigrants, all of them poor, needed help. Most of all, they needed jobs.

Helms collected discarded clothing and household items. He employed people who needed jobs to repair the donated goods, which were sold to provide wages. From this simple idea, the principles which guide the growth of Goodwill were developed.

Goodwill Comes to Indianapolis in 1930

The Rev. Albert Spaulding established the first Goodwill program in the basement of Fletcher Place Methodist Church in 1930. In 1934, the Rev. Howard Lytle came to Indianapolis and became the driving force behind the development of the organization. In his 35 years of leadership, he brought Goodwill out of a church basement and into the forefront.

Donated Goods Rebuild Lives

In the 1930s and 1940s, Goodwill developed aggressive strategies to collect donated goods. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts volunteered in city-wide collection drives, and schools distributed Goodwill bags. The drives collected materials for processing and sale and taught young people to share.

In the 1950s, the Goodwill truck was a regular visitor to homes throughout central Indiana. Collection boxes, installed in the 1960s, became increasingly important, and in the 1970s, Goodwill implemented the attended donation center concept.

Commercial Services

During World War II, many Indianapolis employers had more work than workers. Goodwill's Commercial Services Division employed workers to perform contract jobs with Indianapolis businesses.

The Commercial Services Division enjoyed steady growth in the 1950s and 1960s and entered a new scope of operations in 1974. Under provisions of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, Goodwill received a major contract to manufacture wooden file boxes for the federal government. Indianapolis was the first Goodwill to manufacture a commodity under this program. The Commercial Services Division has successfully completed hundreds of contracts. Businesses have learned that Goodwill offers a flexible, creative source of motivated, capable workers. In 2006, Goodwill's Commercial Services moved to a new 80,000-square-foot facility at 413 N. Tremont St., Indianapolis, and assists local, national and international companies with their production and assembly needs.

Pioneering Methods of Service

In 1945, Indianapolis became the first Goodwill in the nation with a full-time psychologist. Over the next 24 years, Dr. Maurine Miller and her staff pioneered a process of vocational rehabilitation to provide training and job placement for people with disabilities. In 1969, Indianapolis became the first Goodwill in the country to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

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The History of Goodwill (Cont'd)

Headquarters Moves to Michigan Street in 1960

By the late 1950s, Goodwill was outgrowing its old facility at Senate and Washington streets. The community responded by contributing \$1 million to fund construction of a headquarters on Michigan Street, west of White River. This was the first facility in the country built expressly for a Goodwill operation.

Alan McNeil President, 1969-1974

Alan McNeil worked to ensure the long-term financial stability of the organization. McNeil improved financial controls, computerized the accounting department and guided Goodwill's re-incorporation. In 1971, he helped create the Goodwill Industries Foundation of Central Indiana, Inc. The foundation helps establish new services and provides internships for students interested in careers in human services.

Re-incorporation as a Regional Agency

Over many years, Goodwill gradually expanded its involvement outside Indianapolis. In the 1950s, local coordinators collected donated goods in communities throughout central Indiana. People traveled to Indianapolis to work or to shop at Goodwill. In 1971, Goodwill opened its first retail store outside Indianapolis in Anderson.

To better reflect Goodwill's assigned territory, the organization was re-incorporated in 1974 as Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc.

James M. McClelland, President 1974-Present

Jim McClelland, who earned an undergraduate degree in industrial engineering and a master's degree in business administration, entered the Goodwill executive training program in 1970. He came to Indianapolis as vice president of operations in 1973 and was named president in 1974. Under his leadership, Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana has become one of the finest organizations of its type in the country.

Funding

While Goodwill teaches people to be self-supporting, tax-paying citizens, the organization also tries to earn its own way. Through the sale of products and services, Goodwill is able to earn nearly 98 percent of the money needed for day-to-day operations. United Way provides less than 1 percent and other donors provide the remainder. Goodwill relies on additional contributions for major capital needs.

For more information about Goodwill, contact Cindy Graham, Vice President of Marketing, at (317) 524-4212.