

Donors help Goodwill expand in St. Thomas stocking an entire store

Goodwill Industries, Ontario Great Lakes is one of seven, non-profit, regional Goodwills in Canada serving Southwestern Ontario, and one of 160 worldwide.

A \$9.6 million social enterprise headquartered in London Ontario, Goodwill employs 300 people many of whom face disability and disadvantage.

Goodwill provides a full continuum of employment services and last year served more than 7,000 individuals seeking to transition to meaningful work.

Goodwill helps families facing poverty by providing access to affordable goods.

Many small enterprises thrive by purchasing and re-selling goods carefully selected from Goodwill Community Stores.

Goodwill collects 15 million pounds of goods annually, thereby diverting from landfill.

Collectively across North America, Goodwill is the largest employer of persons facing disability and disadvantage, employing 88,000 people.

St. Thomas, Ontario – The citizens of St. Thomas have provided incredible donation support to help Goodwill Industries grow to a second location in the city's south end. Within minutes of hanging a temporary sign on the former Red Apple Store front at 321 Elm St. in early October as construction was about to begin, donors started giving.

And hundreds upon hundreds of donors followed. Contributions of clothing, shoes, books, linens, household items, sporting goods and accessories have completely stocked the store set to open officially this Friday October 2nd 2009 at 9:00 am.

“The response was somewhat unexpected; overwhelming really” says Scott Louch Goodwill Vice President of Operations. *“We are able to open on the basis of the local community, a great example of people helping people and community exchange.”*

Goodwill did not have to import goods from other regions outside of the community as originally planned achieving great efficiencies and early signs that the donation centre and store will be a success.

Donors will have convenient access to drop off goods at the Elm St. site seven days a week from early morning into the evening. A drive by donation centre, attended at all times by a staff is located at the front of the retail store adjacent to the entrance.

A few years ago Goodwill closed all of its bins in favour of operating staffed donation centres. Donors are greeted within seconds and assisted with unloading. Goods are sorted immediately and moved to the retail floor improving quality and keeping merchandise fresh.

Goodwill is a social enterprise that provides jobs, employment services and training to help people get ahead. At the core of Goodwill's success are the hundreds of thousands of donors who fuel the mission by donating clothing and household goods. Every time a donor gives to Goodwill they are creating jobs for those who need one most; generating revenue to support the mission of helping people gain work; and diverting from landfill.

Every donor contribution to Goodwill generates **1.4 hours of sustainable work**. Goodwill helps divert millions of pounds from landfill each year.

A grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting is scheduled for Friday October 2nd at 9:00 a.m. ...and then doors open to shoppers for the first time. The two Goodwill locations in St. Thomas will employ 35 people.

More about Goodwill

Since the beginning of the last century Goodwill has existed to create work opportunities, skills development and social integration for people facing disabilities and other barriers to employment.

Today Goodwill is one of the largest operating charities in North America, the largest employer of persons facing disability and disadvantage and the largest non-profit provider of employment services. This \$3.2 billion social enterprise has over 200 member Goodwills which last year collectively employed 88,000 people and served more than one million individuals – **placing someone in a job approximately every 53 seconds.**

Goodwill employs and serves those hardest to employ with an emphasis on building and strengthening the abilities of persons challenged by physical, mental, developmental, sensory, learning, addictions and other disabilities; and also workers in transition, the chronically unemployed, youth at risk, the aged, Aboriginal people, and newcomers.

New St Thomas Elm St. Location Hours

<u>Store Hours</u>	<u>Donation Centre</u>
Mon to Fri 9 am to 8 pm	8am to 8 pm
Sat 9 am to 6 pm	8 am to 6 pm
Sun 11 am to 5 pm	9 am to 5 pm

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