



Cori Takemoto Williams/The Arizona Republic

Eduardo Hernandez, an instructor in Goodwill Industries' Career Preparation Services program, teaches a four-week course providing job skills to individuals on welfare so they may become more marketable.

A century of Goodwill

Charity marks 100th birthday

By Georgia Geis
The Arizona Republic

Goodwill Industries turns 100 years old this year.

The organization that has a nationwide reach and has touched thousands started as the dream of Methodist minister, the Rev. Edgar J. Helms. Helms (1863-1942) carried large burlap bags into the wealthy neighborhoods of Boston and asked people to donate their used household items and clothing. He then hired poor people to repair and mend the used items to be resold or given to the needy.

"Some ideas I guess are meant to last," said Laurie Thomas, director of marketing for Goodwill Industries of Central Arizona.

Valley residents can see an exhibit honoring Goodwill in the lobby of the state Capitol from Feb. 22 through March 3.

Goodwill opened its doors in Arizona in 1947 with 12 employees and one small building on East Sherman Street in central Phoenix. It has grown to 600 employees across the state and provides services to more than 3,000 people a year.

Although Goodwill Industries is no longer faith-based, its mission is still to provide a "hand up, not a hand out."

Luz Terrazas, 23, a single mother of three living in Phoenix, wasn't sure where she could get her next job. After years of being a stay-at-home mother, she was forced to join the workforce.

Her first job was at a meatpacking plant where she cut and prepared raw meat at minimum wage. "That was a really bad job," Ter-

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Luz Terrazas
Goodwill career preparation program participant

razas recalls with a laugh.

The job market seemed intimidating to her as a Mexican immigrant on welfare who learned English only five years ago.

Now, after recently completing a four-week career prep program through Goodwill, she said she believes that she can build a career she will enjoy and has several job interviews scheduled.

"What I got from the program was self-esteem," she said.

The career prep program is one of many that Goodwill offers.

"Goodwill is not what you think it is," said Janel Jeras, director of youth services for Goodwill Industries of Central Arizona. She says many of the agency's programs are underused because people are not aware that Goodwill is more than a chain of thrift stores.

The agency has training facilities in Peoria, central Phoenix, Avondale and Yuma that offer ongoing computer training and customer service classes, job coaches for people who wish to enter community-based employment, reliable transportation to work through the Wheels to Work



Goodwill Industries

Methodist minister Edgar J. Helms started Goodwill in Boston in 1902.

program, and job training and placement for individuals with physical and mental disabilities.

Many program participants receive Goodwill gift certificates so that they can shop for professional clothing at any of Goodwill Industries of Central Arizona's 21 stores in the Valley, including a 62,000-square foot store at Grand and 85th avenues in Peoria, the largest thrift store in North America.

Goodwill also provides a placement service with Valley employers, who get a tax credit for participating.

At the central Phoenix office at 16th and Van Buren streets, an employment resource room open to the public has computers with Internet access that can be used for job searches. In the East Valley, students from Hamilton High in Chandler are learning about job responsibilities by volunteering twice a week at a Goodwill store.

"We are extremely pleased with them. They are great volunteers," said Juanita Dean, director of volunteers.

Volunteers are an important part of the Goodwill operation, from large-scale corporate service projects to individuals helping out at fund-raising events.

An area expanding rapidly at the local Goodwill is the youth services program. Under the federal Workforce Investment Act, youths ages 14 to 21 with multiple barriers to employment are offered classes in basic job skills, assistance with schoolwork and attaining a high school diploma or a GED.

This year, Goodwill officials hope to provide the youths with adult professional mentors who are willing to make at least a six-month commitment.

Founder Edgar Helms will be the first U.S. citizen to be honored at the Extra Mile Points of Light Volunteer Pathway, a one-mile memorial path adjacent to the White House and U.S. Treasury Department building. He will be keeping company with 100 other notable figures, including civil-rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and women's rights activist Susan B. Anthony.

For more information about Goodwill's programs, volunteer opportunities and fund-raising events, call (602) 254-2222, Ext. 172, or go to www.goodwillaz.org.



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This 1958 file photo shows (from left) Goodwill's cafeteria, chapel and office at 910 E. Sherman in Phoenix.

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