Former Goodwill employee gives back through employment

The path to success hasn't been an easy one for Alfred Thompson, but his determination and drive have taken him farther than once expected.

“In February 2000, I was shaking hands with a prison warden,” said Alfred. “Ten years later, I was shaking hands with the Governor of Kentucky.”

Despite being drafted by and attending rookie camp and training camp with the Dallas Cowboys, the Eastern Kentucky University graduate was inspired to teach and coach rather than play football. Alfred landed a job as a special education teacher at a Lexington, Ky. school in the 1970s. After spending some time teaching junior high, he achieved Rank II certification in education and returned home to Owensboro. Unable to find a job in his field, Alfred became a real estate developer for rental properties and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) projects.

Life took an unexpected turn when he accepted a plea deal for a drug charge in 1999. As a result, he spent 19 months in prison but didn’t let the experience break his spirit. He passed the time by teaching GED classes and reading more than 300 books to keep his mind sharp upon his release. Unfortunately, he didn’t receive much structured support for rebuilding his life when he was sent to a Louisville halfway house.

“I was handed a phone book, bus tickets, and a newspaper with ‘help wanted’ ads,” said Alfred. “Residents of the house really helped each other out when we heard about job leads.”

Alfred began working at a convenience store, and as he was cleaning the restroom one day, he could hardly believe where his life had taken him.

(continued on page 6)
People & Places

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For your nearest donation location, visit www.goodwillky.org.

Legislators in Frankfort gather for Goodwill expo

Legislators from across Kentucky enjoyed a lunchtime meet-and-greet with Goodwill Industries of Kentucky employees on March 7.

Goodwill hosted a drop-in lunch and informational expo to educate legislators about the numerous programs and initiatives that Goodwill is spearheading throughout Kentucky. Representatives of the donated goods program, Goodwill Cars to Work, GTS Staffing, Independent Industries, Nandino Books, and GoodShred were available to answer questions and share their latest successes in helping Kentuckians with disabilities or other disadvantages find and maintain employment.

“With the House and Senate in session, this was a great opportunity for us to bring Goodwill to the legislators in one central location,” said Dr. Carl Metz, government affairs specialist for Goodwill Industries of Kentucky. “It’s important that our lawmakers see the positive impact of a standout nonprofit in the Commonwealth, especially for people who face the most significant barriers to employment.”

A letter from the President & CEO

Friends of Goodwill:

While the winter wasn’t very severe, it seemed to last a long time. Spring is a welcome sight.

Spring is good to your Goodwill as you generally go about that yearly spring cleaning and getting rid of those items you no longer find useful in your home, especially your closets. Why did you save that blouse since last spring? I would have to weigh how much to wear that! Your Goodwill continues on a path to again exceed helping more than 2,000 Kentuckians gain employment this year. I note with interest that while indicators suggest an improving economy, we are finding it more challenging to get people into the job market.

While we are facing the possibility of cutbacks in our three federal contracts to provide cleaning services for federal facilities, we still are capable of increasing the payroll for people with disabilities or other disadvantages. Mission-related wages are on track to be at record levels this year.

We are grateful to all our supporters across the Commonwealth for helping Goodwill continue to provide counseling, training, placement services, and jobs for people with various barriers to competitive employment. Goodwill wants to use your support whether you donate money, goods, or help obtain legislation, as Goodwill is able provide services that change the lives of Kentuckians in noticeable ways.

Thanks for your support,

Roland R. Blahnik
President & CEO
Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, Inc.

Maximize your tax deduction...

Donate your car!

(502) 583-CARS
Goodwill Cars to Work

Welcome, Legislators!
Lunch & Expo
11 AM - 1 PM
sponsored by Goodwill

Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, Inc.
• Member of Goodwill Industries International
• Accredited for vocational evaluation by CARE
• The Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission
• Member of Kentucky Association for Community Employment Services
• In partnership with Jefferson County Public Schools Adult Education and Literacy, Cabinet for Workforce Development

An Equal Opportunity Employer EEO/V
Goodwill recognizes companies, employees who support mission

On March 2, 2012, as a tornado destroyed Stephanie Decker’s home in Henryville, Indiana, she shielded her son Dominic, then 8, and daughter Reese, then 5, with her body. Though parts of her legs were amputated, Stephanie accepted and even embraced her new situation with a spirit of thanksgiving to be alive. She was recently inducted into the International Mothers Hall of Fame and received the 2012 Ralph Gabbard Distinguished Kentuckian award. The Stephanie Decker Foundation helps children with prosthetics learn to play sports and continually improve technology for amputees.

Keynote Speaker—Stephanie Decker

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Goodwill recognizes companies, employees who support mission

A number of companies and employees were recognized at Goodwill’s annual meeting and awards luncheon on Friday, February 22.

Several organizations received honors for their efforts to employ Goodwill program participants, including the Kentucky Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development, Mesa Foods, Keeneland, and Pioneer Logistics Group. Ruth Frey was presented the John L. Fort Crystal Award for her support of Goodwill’s mission, while William Vaughn was named Volunteer of the Year for the time he has dedicated to tutoring students at Goodwill’s Adult Learning Center in Louisville. Mr. Sterling Goodwill employee Hillary Williams received the Lily Banerjee Trust Scholarship to advance her education and improve her future employability.

Goodwill also recognized the Paducah and St. Matthews donated good centers with the J.D. Robins Mission Award. The award, named after the late Goodwill executive J.D. Robins, Jr., who served a number of Goodwill organizations from bankruptcy recognition Goodwill centers that meet a number of criteria. The two winning centers experienced growth in donor value, achieved a healthy expense-to-revenue ratio, demonstrated a willingness to hire and promote people with disabilities or other disadvantages, used Goodwill’s workforce development department to improve job performance and retention, and paid 75% of total wages to employees with disabilities or other disadvantages.

Nearly 70 Goodwill employees received service pins for 10 or more years of employment, including one in Louisville who was recognized for 35 years of service. The luncheon attendees were treated to an inspirational speech from keynote speaker Stephanie Decker, survivor of last March’s tornado outbreak in Indiana and Kentucky. She lost both of her legs as a result of the disaster, but she has prosthetics that allow her to remain an active part of her community and inspire people across the country who face barriers to employment and quality of life. Most recently, Decker has rallied Kentucky’s legislators to encourage improved insurance coverage for recipients of prosthetics.

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In addition to several new programs that are expected to flourish in the
my work."

“I hated to think about how far I’d
in the
near few years, Goodwill set five goals that will influence future decisions about
planning, staff, and board direction:

- Expand our leadership position in entrepreneurial
devotees through use of a critical focus.

- Be a “game changer” in employment, job
creation, placements, and training.

- Communicate the importance of Goodwill and its
programs, values, and culture among target
communities.

- Expand support retention and succession capacity.

- Recruit, engage, and educate board members in
Goodwill’s governance and strategy.

Goodwill anticipates that its newest subsidiary, Goodwill of Kentucky
Cars to Work, Inc., will be able to provide hundreds of vehicles per year
for people who face transportation barriers in finding and maintaining
employment. With a vehicle purchase price at 80 percent of the NADA
value and a no-interest loan, participants will have the opportunity to
build or build their credit while improving their quality of life through
employment and access to reliable transportation.

The continued construction of new donated goods centers, as well as
the expansion and renovation of existing centers, will create more jobs for
Kentuckians with disabilities or other disadvantages. With every new
location comes an increase in the amount of mission-related wages that
Goodwill pays to employees each year.

Kentucky’s Goodwill looks forward
to the next five years and the impact
that will be made on thousands of
Kentuckians who seek to improve
their lives through the power of work.

You may view an electronic version
of our strategic plan summary at
www.goodwillky.org, or if you’d like
to receive a copy mailed to you, please email
heather.hise@goodwill.org.

The following is a list of financial donors from December 22, 2012 through April 13, 2013. We recognize these contributors for their ongoing support of Goodwill Industries of Kentucky.

Former Goodwill employee gives back

Alfred began attending job
search classes at Goodwill. He
quickly developed a rapport
with the instructor, who had
been a schoolteacher by trade,
and obtained some respectable
interview clothes. When a position
worked with a foster children’s
organization. In subsequent employment,
he worked with a foster children’s
home and the Louisville Urban League. Through that job, he
made connections that led him to
Kentucky Job Corps and his current
career as a business relations specialist
and job developer. He works with
employees across the state to help
find vocational and academic training
opportunities for young people aged 16-24.

"I’m proud of myself and very
appreciative of Goodwill," said
Alfred. "If it weren’t for the
opportunity with GTS Staffing, I
might still be working at a
shopping center."
Goodwill sees progress at two construction sites

Goodwill’s 63rd donation and retail center in Kentucky, located on Scottsville Road in Bowling Green, is progressing towards its scheduled late spring/early summer opening. The 10,000-square foot center will create jobs for 12 people, with an emphasis on hiring people who have disabilities or other disadvantages. It is the fourth Goodwill location in Bowling Green. Goodwill’s former office building in the city is being reconfigured to house workforce development programs. Goodwill anticipates a late spring or early summer opening for that facility as well.

In Louisville, renovation and upgrades at Goodwill’s Broadway campus are ongoing with construction now moving indoors. The Adult Learning Center expansion is mostly complete, and new flooring, lighting, and office/break room space is being installed in the donation and retail center. This summer, renovations will begin on the second and third floors which house a variety of employment counseling and job placement programs.

Stay informed by following Goodwill Industries of Kentucky on Facebook and Twitter!