



in the

# WORKS

WINTER 2024



Going Green



Serving Area  
Military Families



Achieving a Dream



Making the Most  
of Our Community





## From the CEO

Reflecting on the past six months, I am reminded of the incredible strength and generosity of the communities we serve. Each day, your support helps Goodwill of the Heartland grow and evolve as we work to fulfill our mission. Whether you've donated goods, shopped in our stores or enrolled in a training course, your contributions make a tangible difference in countless lives.

This year has been one of exciting growth and expansion. We're proud to operate a Goodwill Outlet Store as well as 18 traditional Goodwill Stores across Iowa and Illinois. We also operate nine in-person Helms Career Centers, a Virtual Career Center and a multitude of programs to help those facing challenges remain connected to their communities. These resources empower people to build brighter futures, and we're grateful for your role in making them possible.

Sustainability continues to guide our work. This year, we took another bold step by removing plastic shopping bags from a number of our stores. By the end of next year, all stores will meet this goal. It's part of our ongoing commitment to reducing waste and caring for our environment. We've been thrilled to see how warmly this initiative has been received by our shoppers, donors and community members.

Our Coralville oil packaging plant also reached a significant milestone, securing its largest order to date. This operation is a shining example of our mission in action, providing meaningful work opportunities while shipping fortified oil to communities in need around the world.

Goodwill is about more than thrift shopping; it's about creating pathways to independence and success. It's about fostering a sense of belonging and opportunity for everyone we serve. We are deeply grateful for your continued partnership in these efforts and look forward to what we can accomplish together in the months ahead.

Thank you for being part of the Goodwill family. And, as always, rest assured the best is yet to come.

*Pat Ainy*



## Virtual Career Center provides resources and training 24/7

Remote learning is a game-changer for adults in rural areas or without access to reliable transportation. Because these residents often face challenges to upskilling for promotions or accessing required professional certifications, Goodwill of the Heartland launched a Virtual Career Center last year to bridge the gap and allow more people to access the educational and career support they need.

Upon logging into the Virtual Career Center participants are connected with a career professional, a Goodwill team member who helps assess existing skills and set a path toward the participant's short- and long-term professional goals. Participants can sign up for remote learning opportunities, work toward specific certificates, launch a job search and develop cover letters and resumes for new opportunities.

"This is one more way Goodwill of the Heartland can connect with people who need or would benefit from the career services we provide," said Vice President of Mission Services Carmen Heck.

"While we continue to explore additional ways to meet the needs of our communities, the Virtual Career Center is a proven first step that works for everyone, regardless of their current circumstance or location."

The Virtual Career Center was opened last winter and has already assisted more than 200 people in Iowa and Illinois, many of them either residents of rural communities without similar opportunities or people with transportation or other barriers that prevent them from visiting in-person locations.

"Goodwill is leveraging the best technology in partnership with CaseWorthy to give our participants a world-class job-finding and career reskilling tool completely free of charge," added Heck. "I encourage everyone, whether just starting out or hoping to improve an existing situation, to take advantage of this resource."

Anyone with an internet connection and a computer or smart device can visit [www.getstartedwithgoodwill.org](http://www.getstartedwithgoodwill.org) to access the Virtual Career Center.

# Location Directory



## Stores and Donation Sites

<b>Bettendorf</b>	2333 Cumberland Square Dr • 563-484-3745
<b>Burlington</b>	165 W Burlington Ave • 319-208-0290
<b>CR East</b>	5520 Council St NE • 319-739-5055
<b>CR Outlet</b>	8200 6th St SW • 866-466-7881
<b>CR South</b>	2405 Mt Vernon Rd SE • 319-739-5080
<b>CR West</b>	2000 Scotty Dr SW • 319-739-5044
<b>Clinton</b>	1015 13th Ave North • 563-484-3744
<b>Coralville</b>	2551 Heartland Pl • 319-248-4729
<b>Davenport</b>	5360 Villa Dr • 563-484-3732
<b>Fairfield</b>	2005 W Burlington Ave • 641-472-7529
<b>Geneseo</b>	465 E Highway 6 • 563-484-3765
<b>Iowa City</b>	445 Highway 6 East • 319-248-4705
<b>Keokuk</b>	1226 Main St • 319-524-2525
<b>Marion</b>	3202 7th Ave • 319-739-5045
<b>Moline</b>	4805 22nd Ave • 309-736-3039
<b>Mt Pleasant</b>	700 N Grand Ave • 319-739-5084
<b>Muscatine</b>	2001 Cedar Plaza Dr • 563-484-3731
<b>Rock Island</b>	4664 44th St • 563-484-3733
<b>Washington</b>	312 E Washington St • 563-484-3747

## Career and Support Services

<b>Burlington</b>	165 W Burlington Ave <i>Employment Services • Job Readiness • Occupational Skills • Digital Skills • SNAP Employment &amp; Training</i>
<b>Cedar Rapids</b>	1441 Blairs Ferry Rd NE <i>Employment Services • Day Habilitation • Supported Community Living • Occupational Skills • Digital Skills • World of Work Job Readiness • Helms Career Center • SNAP Employment &amp; Training</i>
<b>Clinton</b>	1015 13th Ave North <i>Helms Career Center • SNAP Employment &amp; Training</i>
<b>Davenport</b>	320 W Kimberly Rd <i>Employment Services • Day Habilitation • Veterans Services • Occupational Skills • Digital Skills • Job Readiness</i>
<b>Iowa City</b>	1025 Wade St <i>Employment Services • Supported Community Living • Digital Skills • Occupational Skills • Job Readiness • SNAP Employment &amp; Training • Helms Career Center</i>
<b>Keokuk</b>	1226 Main St <i>Helms Career Center • SNAP Employment &amp; Training</i>
<b>Moline</b>	4805 22nd Ave <i>Helms Career Center • SNAP Employment &amp; Training</i>
<b>Muscatine</b>	427 Lake Park Blvd <i>Employment Services</i>
<b>Muscatine</b>	2001 Cedar Plaza Dr <i>Helms Career Center • SNAP Employment &amp; Training</i>



## Choosing a **GREENER** Path Forward

Some Goodwill shoppers may have already noticed that their local Goodwill Store no longer provides plastic shopping bags. The shift is a key part of our long-term sustainability plan, anticipated to be in place at all Goodwill of the Heartland locations by the close of 2025.

“Sustainability — recycling and reusing as much as possible — is a big part of our identity as a Goodwill organization,” said Kolbi Jamison, the retail project manager who has spearheaded this initiative.

“Use of plastic shopping bags, especially when we have alternatives, just stood in contrast to that aspect of who we are and what we strive to be in our communities. I don’t think a lot of people realized that each of our 19 stores used, on average, 100,000 plastic bags a year, which added a lot of plastic pollution to the environment.”

Goodwill Stores that no longer offer plastic shopping bags provide shoppers a variety of boxes and bags at no charge that arrive through donation. Those stores also carry

some inexpensive reusable bags for purchase. And, of course, shoppers are always welcome to bring a bag from home, or carry their purchase without a bag.

“Plastic bags don’t come without a price tag,” Jamison said. “We had to purchase all of those bags, which diverted money better spent on our mission services.”

The Goodwill Outlet in Cedar Rapids stopped offering plastic shopping bags last year. So far this year, seven traditional Goodwill Stores have made the shift, with the remainder to follow in the coming months.

Thanks to the generous support of our shoppers and donors, last year alone Goodwill of the Heartland diverted more than 9 million pounds of items from local landfills. That’s a lot of stuff! It’s also proof that when we work together, we can make a positive difference.

We believe this change will have a positive impact in all our communities, and we hope you’ll join us in embracing this eco-friendly shift.



SERVING • THOSE • WHO • SERVED

## Veterans Services Keeps Focus on Military Families

A key facet of Goodwill of the Heartland’s Iowa and Illinois offerings is a small but mighty team focused on the betterment of military veterans and their families.

“I think I speak for our entire team when I say that we are willing to do anything in our power, and to forge any partnership that produces positive results for the veterans we serve,” said Dustin Schubert, Lead Veteran Specialist.

The team, which includes Schubert as well as Career Navigators Brandon McCoy-Conger and Damion Daily, worked with more than 115 people last year and is specifically trained to address the challenges faced by homeless and near-homeless military veterans.

“As a veteran, I understand that asking for help isn’t always an easy task,” said McCoy-Conger. “Veterans are wired to help others, and don’t always recog-

nize that they might need their own hand up.”

Realizing this, the Veterans Services team has developed programs tailored to veterans that help them better their own situations.

“We are incredibly blessed to be part of a community that cares for veterans,” Daily said. “Not only can we find support through Goodwill’s programs and services, but we can partner with other agencies and nonprofits to make sure the veterans we serve are able to access everything they’ve earned as well as what they need.”

Daily understands that making the shift from military life to civilian life can be difficult.

“Moving from such a structured environment to one with few guardrails is a profound change and, without the right support in place, the situation can lead to anxiety, depression and other challenges,” he added.

Smoothing out the edges and relieving points of stress is made possible through expert guidance, peer support and dynamic resources.

“I’m very proud of the fact that we’ve been able to build a support network for our veterans,” Schubert said. “There are opportunities for them to sit with us and discuss their individual concerns, and also opportunities for them to socialize with other veterans.”

For those that need to take smaller steps forward, Goodwill Veterans Services offers interim opportunities for veterans to enter the workforce and begin building soft and hard skills. Skill classes offered through Goodwill can provide a framework for new opportunities.

“No matter the situation, if you’re a veteran, we can help,” Schubert said.

Visit [goodwillheartland.org/veteran-services](http://goodwillheartland.org/veteran-services) for more info.



## A Place of Their Own

# Goodwill Grads Open Muscatine's First Puerto Rican Restaurant

With authentic recipes straight from Puerto Rico, passed down through generations, each dish at Jibaro de Puerto Rico reflects the true flavors of the island.

When married couple Ramon Rentas and Wanda Medina Rodriquez decided to open Muscatine's first Puerto Rican restaurant, they turned to Goodwill of the Heartland for the training and certifications they needed to help make the venture a success.

"We love Muscatine and like living here," explained Rentas, who moved to Muscatine with his family in 2006. "But the culture surrounding the food we knew and loved — like the way meat is prepared — just wasn't present in the local culture."

Initially, the couple traveled to access and share the cuisine they loved.

Once back home, they began preparing dishes for local family and friends. "They liked the food," he said. "So, from there, the dream of opening our own restaurant began growing until we finally hit a limit and knew it was time to go and do it."

The couple, who understood they'd need to be certified in food safety, reached out to a local friend and mentor, Duane Williams who owns and operates Big Cat's Cafe.

"He didn't even hesitate and immediately put us in contact with Goodwill for the training we needed," Rentas said.

Career Navigator Mario Lebron was the couple's primary contact at Goodwill.

"After Ramon and Wanda moved here from Puerto Rico they were working in a factory, but they really wanted to open a restaurant," said Lebron, who also has family and friends in Puerto Rico. "I've been

in Muscatine for more than 20 years and knew we didn't have this cuisine, which I also love, so I was more than happy to help them access the training they needed to open the restaurant."

The couple completed ServSafe Food Handler training, and Rentas also completed the ServSafe Food Manager certification.

"When I met with Mario the first time, I came out feeling good," Rentas said. "He was very focused on us and making sure we had all of the certifications we would need. He walked us through the process and we felt very confident that we were going to get what we needed."

And, with the help of the Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a ribbon cutting in October marked the official opening of their restaurant, Jibaro de Puerto Rico, located at 201 W. 2nd St.

Business has been booming since the first day. In fact, the restaurant had to temporarily close its doors after just a few days because they ran out of food.

"My wife is absolutely incredible in the kitchen," Rentas said. "She can make anything and continues to expand her offerings through connections with family and others who are experts with the cuisine. It was her talent that gave me the confidence to take those next steps and know we could do this and it would be a success.

"Now I just follow her; whatever she tells me to do. You know: Happy wife, happy life."

Rodriguez said she is proud of

their accomplishments, but understands the restaurant is still a fledgling business.

"I am grateful to have a community that understands this is a new venture and that we will only improve with time," she said through Rentas, who served as her translator. "The very best part is watching people smile when they take their first bite."

Rentas says they are both thankful for the support Goodwill and the local community provides.

"I want to encourage others who have a similar mentality and want something better for themselves to reach out to Goodwill. They will help," he said.

"This community has also been spectacular. You see a local walking into the restaurant and then, the next day, you see that same local back for more. It's just so wonderful and satisfying. It's exactly what we wanted when we first began dreaming of this restaurant."

**"I want to encourage others who have a similar mentality and want something better for themselves to reach out to Goodwill. They will help."**

**Ramon Rentas**  
Co-Owner, Jibaro  
Puerto Rican Restaurant



# Taking Opportunity on the Road

Community is a large part of Goodwill of the Heartland's mission to help people reach their full potential through education, training and the power of work.

In Muscatine, for instance, our organization operates a traditional Goodwill Store, an employment services office and a Helms Career Center. All three provide a multitude of services for local residents that are designed to lift up as many people as possible.

"Muscatine is our home," said Mario Lebron, a Career Navigator who works out the Employment Services office on Lake Park Boulevard. "Advancing Goodwill's mission means advancing our community through better opportunities, a stronger workforce and higher quality of life for everyone."

Lebron often partners with Stephanie Torrance, Outreach and Engagement Specialist, to attend community-based events and discuss Goodwill's services.

"A large part of my job is partnering with local business owners and helping them meet their workforce goals," Torrance said. "They need an opportunity to know me and to understand why this is important to me and important to Muscatine. And, for the general public, I think it is important for us to be accessible in walkable locations like our downtown area."

The most recent addition to this Muscatine team is Margaret Pieper, a Career Services Advisor who oversees the Helms Career Center located within the Goodwill Store. She has continued an outreach partnership with the Musser

Public Library to provide free employment services at the library.

"Not everyone is aware of the career center and all we offer," Pieper said. "So it is important to meet people where they are, whether that is at the library or a local event."

The team hosts Scott County Public Health for monthly HIV testing at the career center, and partners with Trinity Public Health Muscatine for community support and outreach. They work with local shelters, and will help deliver free turkeys and hams this holiday season.

"Not only do I get to live somewhere I love, but I get to love the place where I live," Lebron said. "Helping someone understand everything Goodwill and Muscatine can offer is the best part of what I get to do."



## How You Can Get Started With Goodwill Today

Not all job seekers or career advancers know exactly what they want to do or where they want to land. That's OK! Career professionals at Goodwill can help you navigate your next steps — including assessment of your existing skills.

In addition to our 24/7 Virtual Career Center and regular office hours at our in-person Helms Career Centers, our employment experts often appear at various community events or in locations open to the public.

A few of those as well as the general services provided are listed below:

**Marion Public Library:**

digital skills, job search assistance.

**Cedar Rapids Public Library Opportunity**

**Center at the Ladd Library:**

workshops, job search assistance.

**Moline Public Library:**

periodic workshops.

**Center for Worker Justice:**

digital skills.

Goodwill also partners with a variety of groups to offer assistance specific to their members' or clients' needs. For instance, we work with treatment centers, corrections facilities, senior centers and immigrant support organizations throughout our 19 county service area in southeastern Iowa and west-central Illinois.

If you work in such an organization and have clients who might benefit from Goodwill's programs or services, visit our website and fill out the contact form.

Goodwill also has a fresh slate of certification courses and job training programs launching in the new year. These classes tend to fill up quickly, so reach out as soon as you see something that would benefit you.

In early 2025 we are offering ServSafe food safety courses, including food handler and manager. Hospitality as well as custodial courses begin in January. We're also partnering with Google to offer an assortment of certifications, including IT Support, UX Design and Cybersecurity. Visit [certifiedforsuccess.org](https://certifiedforsuccess.org) for course descriptions and more.

If you want to expand your skills or receive help with a job search, but are unsure how to get the ball rolling, we encourage you to visit our website — [goodwillheartland.org](https://goodwillheartland.org) — and submit the Get Started With Goodwill form.

# Oil plant receives largest order to date

Heartland Goodwill Enterprises has received its largest order for fortified vegetable oil since its packaging plant was opened in Coralville. Not only does this order exceed the plant's production goals for 2024, but it keeps the local team busy into 2025.

The nearly \$6 million contract was awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in September. It is one of several federal orders fulfilled by the team, which operates as part of the AbilityOne program, providing family-sustaining jobs to people with significant disabilities. Completed orders of fortified oil are shipped worldwide as part of U.S. Food Aid to people marginalized by war, famine, drought or natural disaster.

"I am so proud of our local team," said Jessica Schamberger, vice president of operations. "Despite leadership shifts, they have risen to this challenge and are committed to producing a quality product for our federal partners. The magnitude of this order is testament to their dedication and continued expertise. They have maintained a 100 percent on-time delivery record since the plant launched."

The plant packages the cooking oil in four liter cans. Oil from this contract, which includes more than 775,000 cans, will ultimately be shipped to Bangladesh and Sudan.

The Coralville facility, which is inspected annually by the USDA and FDA, offers 65,000 square feet of production space. It was designed to create jobs and training opportunities for people with disabilities through the AbilityOne program.

"This is a state-of-the-art facility that can store, process, blend and package liquids with efficiency and accuracy," Schamberger said. "We hope to expand our business through contract or private label packaging to create more training and employment opportunities in the local community."



# Store Spotlight KEOKUK



**L**ocated at 1226 Main Street, the Keokuk Goodwill Store is more than a place to shop – it’s a hub of community connection and support. Every purchase helps fund programs and services that strengthen the local area, including the on-site Helms Career Center. This resource provides free employment services to people and area businesses, helping connect job seekers with meaningful opportunities.

“Our store is committed to giving back to the community that supports us,” said Store Manager Jessica Keller. “We reinvest 88 cents out of every dollar we receive in programs and services that help people reach their full potential. The remaining revenue covers our operational costs, such as wages for our team members and utility bills.”

The Helms Career Center recently updated its walk-in hours. While the store is open seven days a week, the career center is open Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Thursday and Friday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Stop by to see how your purchases can make a difference while scoring great finds!



## You Do What At Goodwill? Unexpected Career Opportunities

**A**s a full-service nonprofit organization with a self-run revenue stream, Goodwill of the Heartland has a wide variety of career opportunities within and beyond its traditional retail and mission services operations.

Employing more than 700 people, Goodwill of the Heartland and Heartland Goodwill Enterprises provide opportunities across a wide swath of skills. There are, of course, jobs traditionally linked with Goodwill, such as management roles in our 19 retail locations or direct support personnel across the counties we serve in Iowa and Illinois. But to maintain a nonprofit that encompasses retail and mission operations, Goodwill also employs a variety of people in supporting roles such as human resource professionals, finance experts, logistics and project managers.

“One of the greatest things about Goodwill is how much of the community we touch,” said Kris Lehman, vice president of human services. “Of course, this encompasses our retail and mission operations, but it also includes our own payroll and facilities. Not only do we provide hundreds of people across Iowa and Illinois with good-paying jobs, but we actively create and nurture pathways for advancement within our organization.”

In recent months, as members of senior leadership announced retirement, people within those departments were either immediately elevated or took intermediate roles in anticipation of the transition.

“We not only offer jobs, we help people launch careers,” Lehman said. “Many people within our organization started at one place and are now in another. As people working at Goodwill do better, our entire organization does better”.

### Jessica Bump, Retail Communications

From one day to the next, Jessica Bump isn’t always sure what she’ll be doing at work. She could be leading a meeting with a local retail team, helping craft training documents or circulating policy updates. Some days she distributes new signage, finds new solutions to logistics pressure points or helps install new equipment at the stores.

As Goodwill’s Retail Communication and Training Specialist, Jessica follows the needs of the retail teams and offers possible solutions. She works closely with senior management to ensure everyone is working on the same page.

“This isn’t where I began with Goodwill,” she said. “What Goodwill was able to do was recognize my skills and talents and shift me into a role where I could shine. Not every day is easy, but I’m confident in my ability to support and assist the retail teams.”

“I enjoy the variety of tasks that are part of my role, and I get to work with absolutely amazing people — no matter how the day unfolds.”



### Kayla Dusenberry, Success Coach

Kayla Dusenberry has always known she wanted to work somewhere she could help others. That desire is what brought her to Goodwill several years ago as she was still working on her degree.

Currently a Success Coach with THRIVE, Kayla works alongside other Goodwill team members to help them reach professional and personal goals. Traveling from location to location, Kayla not only connects individual team members to the community and internal resources they need to be successful, but connects the organization to the expertise of other nonprofits and local business people.

“THRIVE is Goodwill’s unique benefit for all team members that helps support individual journeys to achieving both personal and professional goals,” Kayla said. “It’s here to help team members navigate their journey to success whether that be setting financial goals or purchasing a first home. The best part of my career is knowing I can make a difference in the lives of my colleagues. A little support can go a long way and helps achieve great success.”



**Check Out The Career Paths At Goodwill**

As a full-service nonprofit with a self-run revenue stream, Goodwill offers a variety of employment opportunities. These range from traditional retail and mission services to administrative support professionals.

*Visit [www.workatgoodwill.com](http://www.workatgoodwill.com) to view available opportunities and to learn more.*



# Goodwill OF THE Heartland

Goodwill Industries of the Heartland  
8200 6th Street SW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

We help people reach their full potential  
through education, training and  
the power of work.

## *Did you know?*

Last year, Goodwill of the Heartland responsibly recycled 9.4 million pounds of goods.



THAT'S MORE THAN  
**9 MILLION**  
POUNDS OF STUFF  
**DIVERTED**  
FROM LOCAL LANDFILLS