



PRESS
RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Shannon Boshears

501.372.5100 x 1300 – office

501-258-4907 - cell

sboshears@goodwillar.org

www.GoodwillAR.org

Goodwill Training and Education Center to Open in Little Rock

Unlocking Ceremony Scheduled for December 12 at 10 a.m.

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Dec. 4, 2023) — Goodwill Industries of Arkansas (GIA) is launching the Goodwill Training and Education Center (GTEC) in Little Rock to serve adults looking to earn their high school diploma or obtain industry-leading credentials and certifications. An Unlocking Ceremony has been scheduled for December 12 at 10 a.m. at the Goodwill headquarters on 7400 Scott Hamilton Rd.

Along with a traditional ribbon cutting, the ceremony will feature a short program with notable speakers including Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin, Arkansas Chief Workforce Officer Mike Rogers, and GIA President & CEO Brian Marsh. Tours will be available immediately following the ceremony.

The GTEC campus will house The Excel Center and The Academy, both of which have been located at the Scott Hamilton headquarters but recently have been consolidated into one area to better serve the students and community.

“This campus will allow us to be more efficient and effective in the delivery of our mission of changing lives through education, training and employment in Central Arkansas,” said GIA President and CEO Brian Marsh. “Many of our Excel graduates move immediately into The Academy to earn certifications and credentials that will lead them to meaningful employment in the state’s top industries. With GTEC campuses located in Little Rock and Springdale, we have become a viable pipeline for skilled workers to help address the workforce shortages in Arkansas.” Marsh added, “Our strategic plan includes replicating the GTEC model around the state to unlock opportunities and better empower communities in order to thrive.”

The GTEC facility will also offer a new Opportunity Center where community partners can work from a shared space to offer their expertise in different services to the public, Goodwill

employees and students. From financial institutions to health care providers, this will allow Goodwill to remove even more barriers to the people served through the GIA mission services.

Background

More than 320,000 Arkansans over the age of 19 are without a high school diploma. The Excel Center is the state's only high school where adults 19 years and older can earn a state-certified high school diploma. In 2015, legislation approved in Arkansas paved the way for the first Excel Center in Little Rock to open in October 2017. Until then, passing a General Educational Development (GED) test was the only option for those 21 or older. Since opening, 140 adults have graduated from the Excel Center. In 2022, approval was granted for two additional locations in Arkansas, including Springdale.

Because GIA knows students need more than just access to education, The Excel Center offers flexible class schedules to meet the needs of working and busy adults at no cost to the students. Benefits include free drop-in onsite childcare, tutoring, dedicated life coaching, and transportation assistance. Approximately 84% of The Excel Center's graduates have gone on to college or pursued post-secondary training.

The Academy at Goodwill, licensed by the Arkansas State Board of Private Career Education, provides individuals the training and certifications needed to pursue greater career opportunities and positively affect the workforce in Arkansas. The Academy offers 25 certifications in the top industries in Arkansas: health care, information technology, skilled trades and business and administration. Featured certifications include certified clinical medical assistant, certified pharmacy technician, Google certifications, welding, and construction.

Academy courses are accelerated, and many are either offered at no cost or lower costs offset by revenue from Goodwill's retail operation and financial donors. The Academy also provides several wrap-around services such as resume preparation, career mentoring and job search to help gain employment following graduation.

For more information visit GoodwillAR.org/GTEC.

About Goodwill Industries of Arkansas

Goodwill Industries of Arkansas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to changing lives through education, training and employment. In FY23, our career services program assisted 545 people to find work at companies around the state. Through our various education, training and employment programs, Goodwill Industries of Arkansas provided services to 5,912 Arkansans with 2,524 of those receiving certifications and credentials. Visit GoodwillAR.org for more information.

###