

# Goodwill Industries invites public to 70th anniversary opeo house Oct. 6

This year marks the 70th anniversary for Goodwill Industries of Central Michigan's Heartland's (QJCMH) in south-west and spll.h-central Michigan.

In honor of this milestone, Goodwill will be hosting an open house celebration on Friday, Oct. 6 at its Fort Custer Industrial Park location at 4820 Wayne Road. .

The event will begin at 11 a.m. and conclude at 2 p.m.

Food and beverages will be served at approximately 12:30 p.m.

"This will be a chance to meet with the community and talk about Goodwill," said GICMH President and CEO Ken Bauer, who added that there will also be an awards ceremony honoring employees and community partners.

Everyone interested in learning about and celebrating Goodwill's mission and 1ccomplishments is welcome to attend, he said.

T-tf- social enterprise known as Goodwill was started over a century ago by Edgar Helms, a Methodist minister who lived in Boston, Massachusetts, and came up with the idea of collecting used goods for poor immigrants to repair.

Helms' enterprise differed from many charities of the day, emphasizing that donated goods could be sold, and that the money raised would be used to pay the workers who helped refurbish those goods.

Helms hired people in need - many of whom were con-

sidered unemployable - to do this repair work.

With the help of funding from the Methodist Church, Helms went on to help establish Goodwill Industries organizations across the --lJnited States.

By- 1, thre we( 15 G<>odwill -organizations nationwide, but Helms was not content until the Goodwill message could be heard around the world.

In 1926, he began travels that would take him to Australia, China, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, Egypt and several European countries.

Today, in Michigan, there are 10 separate Goodwill organizations; across the country, that number is 155.

Major economic and political crises like the financial crash of 1929, the Great Depression, and World War I solidified the need (or an organization like Goodwill.

In 1934, Helms expanded the mission of Goodwill to include the rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

"His idea was 'a hand up, not a handout,'" said Bauer.

A lot of the focus was originally based on persons with physical disabilities, but as Goodwill matured, it also included helping people with a variety of disabilities and disadvantaged positions in life.

Sometimes it's a lack of a high school diploma, affordable and convenient child-care or reliable transportation, substance abuse or criminal history, a sporadic



Doris Klaussen founded the local organization now known as GICMH in 1953 after having toured the country looking at a variety of Goodwill organizations. Klaussen, a principal at Ann J. Kellogg School, was considered a special education teaching pioneer.

work history, or credit problems that preclude a person from having a mainstream banking relationship that impact an individual's ability obtain and maintain employment.

More often than not, many individuals have multiple barriers hindering their ability to obtain and retain empl@yment. Goodwill tries to help people overcome those barriers. It starts with the idea that a job helps provide a solid foundation.

Doris Klaussen founded the localorgamza1100 now known as GICMH m 1953 after hav- ing toured the country looking at a variety of Goodwill organizations. Klaussen, a principal at Ann J. Kellogg School, was considered a special education teaching pioneer.

Over a span of 44 years, she served as a Goodwill volunteer in various capacities including board secretary, board member, and historian.

She provided the foundation for today's GICMH.

"When Doris Klaussen went out, she saw to it that a significant effort was made to try to help people with disabilities, primarily physical disabilities," said Bauer. "As



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the movement evolves, we continue to look at barriers to employment in a more holistic way."

There are many different issues that keep people from getting and maintaining employment, he added.

"Unless you're able to look at all of them," Bauer said, "you're not going to be quite as successful in getting people back to work and financially stable."

Each separate Goodwill organization has a specific geographic territory and assists individuals in overcoming barriers to employment in their territory based



GICMH President and CEO Ken Bauer on the local need and resources.

Goodwill's m1ss10n statement is bold: "Changing lives

through the power of work."

A big part of what Goodwill does in the community is help people identify and remove barriers to employment.

The organization recently identified 75 barriers to employment.

The most persistent of these barriers are the need for housing, lack of affordable, reliable transportation and child-care as well as clothes for interviews and work, personal hygiene items and driver's licenses. Unmet, these needs have profound effect.

Goodwill Industries of

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## GOODWILL Continued from previous page

Central Michigan's Heartland features 13 retail stores and 10 donation centers across its territory that is comprised of eight counties and parts of two others.

Bauer said: "Many of our employees come to Goodwill's retail program to help build their resume. While they are with us, they are learning job skills like customer service, merchandising, inventory management (quality control) and logistics to maximize value of the donations provided to us by donors."

Bauer also pointed out that "Goodwill is a green organization. Collectively, the 155 Goodwill organizations across north America are the largest recyclers of textiles in the world. Last year, Goodwill organizations were responsible for repurposing approximately 2.92 billion pounds of textiles, so the clothing items do not end up in landfills. GICMH contributed approximately 7.3 million pounds of that total."

One area that Goodwill has focused on is providing area youth with opportunities to prepare themselves for the business world after graduation.

Bauer said that, when he arrived at Goodwill in 2009, there really weren't any programs that were specifically designed for youth to learn employment skills or explore careers.

The response was

GICMH's Goodwill Connects program which was initiated to provide youth with the skills to become successful adults.

Goodwill Connects is a six-week paid summer work experience program with the goal of a barrier-free (for example, transportation and interview-ready clothing vouchers are provided) introduction to the workforce for youth at least 16 years of age who attend a Battle Creek-area high schools.

"By the time adults are 35, 40, 45 years old, sometimes the problems are very significant and it's very hard to make progress quickly," said Bauer. "We are never going to abandon that work, but I also asked, 'Can we keep people from getting in this difficult situation to begin with?'"

"That's when we began working with youth and the local high schools to give kids a chance to learn job skills in a supportive environment."

"So, we hired teachers, and those teachers would interface with employers along with the students."

"That really started this idea of giving young people an opportunity in our community and getting employers involved. It's been kind of remarkable."

Once the employers are involved, they see the program as a way for them to give back to the community.

And in the summertime, they may be short-staffed.

So, we've helped them, and they've helped us. A vast number of employers, once they get involved, stay engaged with Goodwill Connects year after year."

Bauer points out that Goodwill has many programs that most in the community are not aware of.

"Most people don't know Goodwill and all the things we do," said Bauer. "They recognize our retail stores and that really drives our success, because without the donations, we wouldn't have the wherewithal to turn those donations into dollars and develop our other programming. We are eternally grateful to those people who see Goodwill as something good in the community and they want to help. But often times, people don't know the other side of the mission work – how we look at problems in our community and how we try to collaborate with other organizations to solve multiple problems so that a person can be successful."

Bauer says an important aspect of helping people get training and employment is the partnerships Goodwill has made in workforce development.

"We interface with a lot of organizations here in the community," said Bauer. "Our focus is on employment, but many of the people we serve have multiple issues

– many of which we are not the expert in. But we can be a one-stop shop and help put participants in touch with those who can best help them. I do believe that we are very good at assessing the lay of the land and working through issues."

Historically, Goodwill is well regarded for its support of people with disabilities.

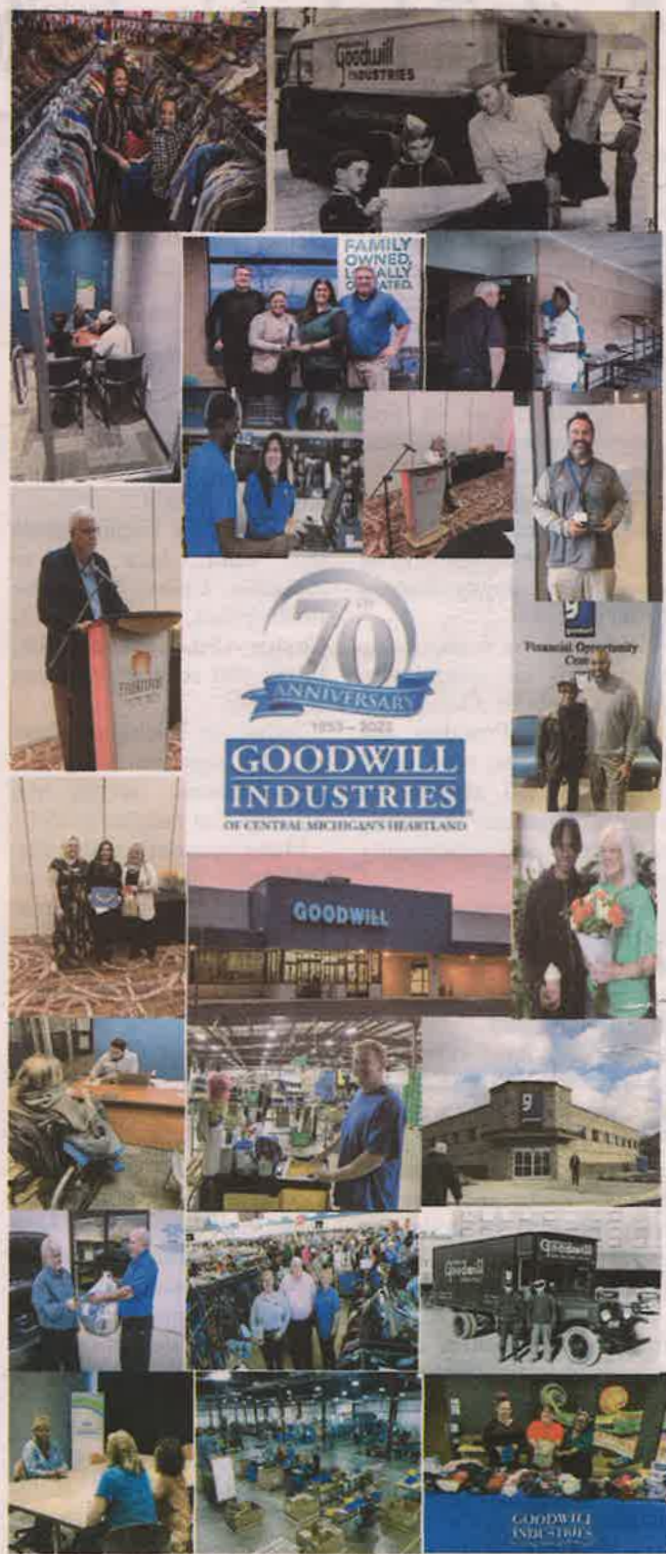
In 2011, Goodwill opened its Financial Opportunity Center located at 15 Capital Avenue NE in Battle Creek.

This office has helped over 22,000 individuals and an attendant number of households through financial literacy, free tax preparation, employment services, and family and youth programs free of charge, he said.

A more recent program that changes lives, he said, is the partnership with Battle Creek Central High School Career Academies.

"Goodwill's workforce development programs have the greatest impact upon individuals who have determined that they want a better life and have the will to change behaviors. Once an individual determines the need to change and makes that critical commitment, anything is possible," said Bauer. "Our mission work is core to our existence. We thank our 150 plus business partners, longtime volunteers, retail and workforce development teams. We offer special thanks to partners such as the Charitable Union, all the local High Schools, and generous support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, United Way and IRS."

Goodwill's Battle Creek presence includes a headquarters and manufacturing facility in Fort Custer Industrial Park, the Battle Creek Financial Opportunity Center



This collage provided by Goodwill shows a variety of services and activities provided and performed by Goodwill Industries of Central Michigan's Heartland.

(FOC), and a subsidiary Center and Fort Custer named Navigations Education Center. Incorporated located at the Hart-Dole-Inouye Federal

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Alexis Rembert Small was born and raised in Charlotte, NC. Alexis graduated from North Carolina A&T State University with a degree in Marketing. She married her college sweetheart, Lorenzo Small, they relocated to the Twin Cities in MN, and she began her professional career. Alexis worked as a pharmaceutical sales rep for 13 years and eventually transitioned into recruitment, where her most recent role was an Executive Recruiter with Atrium Health.



Alexis has been happily married to Lorenzo Small, Sr. for 25 years and they have three sons - Antray, an IT professional; Lorenzo Jr., a Junior at Battle Creek Central and the Battle Creek Area Math & Science Center; and Alexander, a Sophomore at Battle Creek Central and the Battle Creek Area Math & Science Center.

She loves to travel, enjoys reading and binge-watching series on Netflix, desires to become fluent in Spanish, and has recently learned to play pickleball.

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, pastor's wife, and mother, Alexis has witnessed the faithfulness of God throughout her life, marriage, and motherhood. She is grateful for all of God's blessings and wants others to know and experience the fullness of His love. Her favorite (and often relied upon) scripture is Philippians 4:6-8.

# Realtors group slates homeownership workshop

The Battle Creek Area Association of Realtors and several community groups are offering a free homeownership workshop on Thursday, Oct. 19. The event will be held at 6 p.m. (with dinner at 5:30) at the Albion Housing Commission in the Charles Snyder Building, located at 1300 Cooper St. in Albion. “Purchasing a home can be one of the most important

financial decisions a person can make in their lifetime,” said Amanda Lanker, CEO of the BCAAR. “Studies have shown that homeownership is key to wealth creation for a family.”

Topics that will be covered at the workshop include: the home buying process; how much house one can afford; steps to building or repairing credit; down payment myths; and types of loans.

This free workshop is open to the public, but an RSVP is required. Registration can be done online at [www.BCAAR.com](http://www.BCAAR.com), then clicking on “FREE Homeownership Workshop

– October 19, 2023.” More information can also be found by emailing [staff@bcaar.com](mailto:staff@bcaar.com) or by calling 962-5193.

## GOODWILL Continued from previous page

GICMH also operates an International Automotive Task Force (IATF) 1694 quality certified manufacturing facility. Goodwill’s Manufacturing Team offers over 25 years of experience providing sub-system component work for domestic and foreign, Tier 1 automotive suppliers including visual inspections, non-conforming product sorting, spot job packaging, manufacturing contingencies, kitting and more.

The facility is geared to provide participants seeking a career in manufacturing the opportunity to work in and learn about a worldwide recognized quality management system used in the automotive industry.

Last year, Goodwill’s manufacturing department shipped over 5.4 million parts to customers with an incredibly low error rate of .18 parts per million with each shipment of parts delivered on time.

“Navigations is a program that began in 1993 and provides the opportunity to get people with significant disabilities into jobs that will enable them to support themselves, build confidence and feel pride in what they are accomplishing every day,” Bauer said. “Each year the Federal government and State of Michigan set aside a portion of their fiscal budget to provide employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.”

The program requires that the work completed on these contracts needs to have at least 75 percent of the direct labor hours performed by persons with significant disabilities, he continued.

“Navigations Incorporated secures and manages these contracts while providing all necessary support to the employees with disabilities to meet the contract requirements,” Bauer said. “Currently, Navigations provides all the groundskeeping, snow removal and some of the custodial work at the Hart, Dole, Inouye Federal Center. Navigations also provides housekeeping services at the Fort Custer Education Center.”

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides low-income tax filers free income tax preparation.

“Last year, in our VITA program, we served 2,500-plus people and returned about \$3.5 million to the community through those tax refunds,” said Bauer. “If you apply a reasonable money multiplier on that figure it represents a substantial amount of money coming back to the local community which is driven by residents volunteering to help other citizens in our community. GICMH actively goes out recruiting volunteers who believe what they do is important in giving back to the community. Training those people to IRS stan-

dards and having them show up in the middle of a Michigan winter night to meet with someone they don’t know and help that person get a tax refund that may represent the largest amount of money that person will receive at one time in a given year is incredible to see. The volunteers are asked to give a lot of themselves, but they do it willingly, some year after year, to provide this service to the community. Those individuals who volunteer to help others are an example of what kind of people we have in our community.

“Every person that we see is unique because they have a different background and a different set of issues,” said Bauer. “Everything we do here is driven by what that person sitting in front of you wants. So, it’s their own goals, their own unique perspective of what they want out of employment that drives what we do.”

To learn more about Goodwill Industries of Central Michigan’s Heartland and the job opportunities and training programs they offer, go to [goodwillcmh.org](http://goodwillcmh.org) or call 269-788-6500.

“We look forward to seeing everyone at our 70th Anniversary celebration on Oct. 6,” said Bauer. “Thank you for helping us change lives through the power of work!”

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