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Goodwill Honored with Family Strengthening Awards

AUSTIN, TX – Goodwill Industries of Central Texas (GICT) will travel to Pittsburgh at the end of June to be honored for their family strengthening initiatives and practices.

Since 2001, Goodwill Industries International and the Annie E. Casey Foundation have partnered to support and expand family strengthening programs within Goodwill member organizations through the Family Strengthening Awards. Each year, Goodwills from across the globe are awarded for their family strengthening initiatives in nine separate categories.

GICT was one of the four Goodwills selected to receive the 2007 Family Strengthening Awards. The organization applied to four of the nine categories (Leadership Commitment, Community Resource Connections, Youth Services and Job Readiness and Placement Services) and won each one.

In 1998, GICT opened its first family enrichment center in low-income public housing development, serving parents and children with employment and youth programs in their own neighborhood. The successful outreach inspired Goodwill to seek more innovative partnerships and extend their services to agencies throughout the Austin community.

"The location helped us become more accessible to our target families and more responsive to all their needs," said Katie Navine, VP of Workforce Development. "If a person doesn't have good housing, childcare or transportation, getting and keeping a job are just not possible. We think about the whole family with every individual we serve and that has brought us to the forefront of serving parents and children."

All four of the award winners will be expected to assist Goodwill Industries International in its efforts to promote family strengthening among the Goodwill memberships, and will send a representative to the 2007 Goodwill Family Strengthening Conference in November.

"All of these programs support families in their quest for self-sufficiency and are able to do so through innovative partnerships that make community resources more accessible," said George W. Kessinger, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries International. "Their significance lies not only in the effectiveness within their individual communities, but also in their ability to model programs that could be adopted in other communities facing similar challenges."

For more information on the programs and services offered by Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, visit www.austingoodwill.org.

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