



Growing Hospitality Industry Teams Up with Goodwill *Two-year Grant Awarded for Employment Training with Doubletree Austin*

AUSTIN, TX – The Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), awarded Goodwill a two-year grant to provide funds for a new training program, *Hands on Hospitality*, in collaboration with Doubletree Hotel Austin. This grant will allow Goodwill take further strides toward its mission by helping Central Texans with disabilities obtain and retain positions in the hospitality industry.

“Goodwill has had a contract with DARS for more than 30 years,” said Jerry Davis, President and CEO of Goodwill. “In that time, we have placed hundreds of people with disabilities into community employment through our Supported Employment and Job Placement programs.”

Hands on Hospitality will give participants the skills to successfully obtain and retain positions within the hospitality industry. Participants will complete a four to six week training program at the Doubletree Hotel Austin in one of five fields listed in Texas Workforce Commission's “Top Fifty careers with the Most Projected Annual Openings.”

Participants will also attend the Doubletree's orientation, monthly training, and quarterly training, which addresses areas of safety, policies and procedures, and other topics. Participants will be considered as priority applicants for available positions at the Doubletree Hotel Austin, since they have been trained and are ready to go to work. If no vacancies exist, participants will be assisted with securing placement at Doubletree/Hilton affiliates in the Austin area (eight properties), since skill sets and procedures are similar among this group.

The Doubletree Hotel Austin, with the leadership of Melissa Graves, Human Resources Director, has developed a strong relationship with Goodwill and has a proven track record of training and hiring people with disabilities and disadvantaging conditions. Since 2004, the Doubletree Hotel Austin has been a Summer Youth Employment site, acting as a host company for at-risk youth through Goodwill's programs.

Established in 1958 in Austin, Goodwill served 69 people in its first year of operation. Now, more than fifty years later, Goodwill has been able to serve more than 13,000 Central Texans last year. Assisting people with barriers to find, obtain and retain employment at employers in the community, the organization serves people who face a variety of barriers to employment, including physical and mental disabilities, homelessness, those with a criminal history, lack of work history, substance abuse or teen parenting.

About Goodwill Industries of Central Texas:

Goodwill Industries of Central Texas is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the mission of providing job-related services for people with barriers to employment. Revenue generated is used to fund job training and employment programs for Central Texans. For more information about Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, go to www.austingoodwill.org.

Media Contact:

Suzanha Peña, Director of Marketing
Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
O: (512) 637-7158; C: (512) 748-0132
Suzanha.Pena@austingoodwill.org

Amy Rames, Communications Specialist
Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
O: (512) 637-7124; C: (512) 748-1629
Amy.Rames@austingoodwill.org

Melinda M. Paninski, Business Relations Consultant
DARS/Division For Rehabilitation Services
C: (512) 284.0057
Melinda.Paninski@dars.state.tx.us