FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Goodwill Industries of the Valleys and Virginia Western Community College
Featured in an Aspen Institute Case Study “Working Together and Making a Difference”

Roanoke, VA – The Aspen Institute’s Workforce Strategies Initiative (AspenWSI) and Achieving the Dream have released a case study detailing the partnership between Goodwill Industries of the Valleys and Virginia Western Community College. “Working Together and Making a Difference” is the first Courses to Employment partnership case studied and documented during its initial partnership formation stage by AspenWSI. The study explores from conception to implementation and outcomes how Goodwill® and Virginia Western were able to co-locate community college classrooms on the Goodwill Jobs Campus. Goodwill was then able to provide support services such as employment readiness and job placement services to individuals enrolled in the technology and advanced manufacturing trainings.

Courses to Employment looks at how community-based organizations, such as Goodwill, are working to improve opportunities and outcomes for low-income individuals. It focuses specifically on how these organizations are increasingly partnering with local community colleges to improve pathways into and through post-secondary training and education, and then on to quality jobs. AspenWSI’s research highlights the role these partnerships play in addressing special supports low-income adults need to succeed in education linked to employment.

In the report, AspenWSI states, “The story of the Roanoke effort offers a fresh perspective and valuable lesson for community college and nonprofit workforce leaders who are interested in launching or improving partnership strategies.” Dr. Robert Sandel, President of Virginia Western also remarks in the report, “It’s a textbook case of working together without any type of hesitancy, not worrying about who gets the credit, just worrying about how we make a difference in peoples’ lives.”

“We believe the Aspen Institutes Case Study is a wonderful tribute to the success of the partnership between Goodwill and Virginia Western,” states Bruce Phipps, president and CEO of Goodwill. “That success is measured by the lives that Goodwill and Virginia Western have been able to impact through the programs and supports that are offered to individuals participating in the programs.”


The Aspen Institute’s Workforce Strategies Initiative works to identify, evaluate, and promote promising and successful practices and policies that improve access to quality training and employment for low-income adults. For more than a decade, AspenWSI has helped shape America’s workforce development strategies and practices to enhance outcomes that enable low-income adults to successfully complete training programs and access quality jobs. Its mission is to help low-income Americans gain ground in today’s labor market by informing public policy, investors, and leaders in the workforce development field.

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, a United Way partner organization headquartered in Roanoke, serves 31 counties and 13 cities in the New River, Roanoke, and Shenandoah Valleys. Its mission is to help people and families in our community achieve a better life through work and independence. As of the end of October Goodwill had served over 38,000 people in need of employment and training assistance and placed nearly 3,700 in competitive community employment.

With nearly 13,000 students on Virginia Western Community College’s main campus in Southwest Roanoke City, to satellite locations at the Roanoke Higher Education Center in Downtown Roanoke, Greenfield Education & Training
Center in Daleville, and the Franklin Center in Rocky Mount, we are committed to providing affordable, accessible, and quality educational opportunities and workforce training to meet individual, community, and global needs. To learn more, visit www.virginiawestern.edu.

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