

# Media Alert



For Immediate Release

May 14, 2018

## Goodwill® to Open Youth Center at Melrose Jobs Campus in Roanoke

**Roanoke, VA** – Goodwill Industries of the Valleys will open a Youth Center at the Goodwill Jobs Campus on Melrose Avenue early this summer. This announcement comes on the heels of construction beginning on the City of Roanoke’s Melrose Branch Library, which will occupy a portion of the Goodwill facility closest to Forest Park Academy.

“Youth need a safe place to come together in the summer and after school during the school year,” states Mary Ann Gilmer, Vice President of Mission Services. “The new center will not only house our Youth Science Camp this summer, but also the Science Club that takes place throughout the year, our Reality Check program, Summer Youth Work program, and mentoring programs for youth to help them understand the value of education and work on their future goals and aspirations. The area where the library is now being constructed is where many of these activities had been housed in the past, so we are excited to now have the opportunity for our Youth services to be more visible to the community.”

The Youth Center will be located in the space that is currently operating as the Simply Goodwill store. The store will officially close on May 26<sup>th</sup> and renovations for the Youth Center will begin on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Employees of Simply Goodwill will transition to positions in stores throughout the Roanoke Valley including the Salem Store and Outlet, which are located just 3 miles away on East Main Street in Salem. No layoffs will occur as a result of the store closing, but more mission programs for the community will be established with the opening of the Youth Center. A Donation Center will remain at the facility.

Goodwill plans to hold a stakeholder meeting on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 6pm with the community and other local organizations that serve youth in the area to determine additional opportunities that can be a part of the new Goodwill Youth Center. The meeting will take place at the Melrose Jobs Campus.

Area youth and the community can look forward to the following activities and offerings at the Youth Center (implemented in several phases):

- Computer Lab: May be used for school projects and for training opportunities such as learning computer skills beyond hand-held devices
- Virtual Reality Stations
- Recreational Spaces: Flat screen TV with gaming systems, pool table, foosball table, and more.
- Adaptable Spaces: Can be used for mentoring, tutoring, community meetings, etc.

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys 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. In 2017, Goodwill assisted nearly 45,000 individuals with barriers to success, of which 4,961 were youth, helped 3,494 people find jobs in our community, and provided training opportunities that resulted in more than 1,300 credentials being earned by individuals participating in Goodwill programs. As of the end of March, Goodwill had assisted nearly 17,000 individuals in 2018.

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