



**FOR RELEASE**

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## **Collaboration Provides Path to Employment for Individuals Locally**

**Roanoke, VA**—A unique collaboration between the Rescue Mission and Goodwill is helping people who are unemployed and struggling to find and keep employment to enter or re-enter the workforce. Orvis is one company that is benefitting.

“We have been very pleased with the partnership between the Rescue Mission, Goodwill and Orvis,” says Orvis Human Resources Manager Emily Smith. “The program has been easy to implement and sustain, and we are already experiencing wonderful outcomes. We see workers who are energized about acclimating into the workforce and gaining new skills. Not only are they provided with an opportunity to gainfully work, but they are being supported in overcoming barriers such as transportation and the lack of soft skills.”

“The process is very similar to working with a temporary agency,” states Jodi Henrickson, Vice President of Goodwill Commercial Services. “Goodwill negotiated a contract with Orvis for a work team to package customer orders. The team was staffed with individuals who are receiving services from the Rescue Mission as well as individuals from Goodwill who need support in order to work. Goodwill hires the individuals, provides transportation to the work site, and a team leader who is with the team each day to provide training and support and to act as a liaison with Orvis.”

Orvis has partnered with the Rescue Mission for many years as part of its conservation efforts, sending product to the Rescue Mission that would otherwise be disposed of. Individuals in the Mission’s Recovery program and job readiness program (Tabitha) obtain work skills processing those and other donations for the Mission’s two thrift stores, 2<sup>nd</sup> Helpings and THRIFT 460.

“Our partnership with Orvis has provided an important source of revenue for our stores, which support the ministries of the Mission,” says Rescue Mission CEO Lee Clark. “At the same time, it has provided an ongoing means of training in our donation center for people who are often overlooked for employment and need some extra traction to enter the work force. This collaboration with Goodwill means another layer of assistance, helping to ensure their success on the work site, eventually leading them from homelessness to sustainable housing as well.”

“Orvis supports sustainability, social responsibility, and doing the right thing,” says Orvis VP of Operations Mike Rigney. “From training in the Rescue Mission, preparing people to work in industry with Goodwill, this partnership gives people a way back to the workforce and self-sufficiency. It’s a key piece to bring people full cycle back to productive lives.”

Henrickson says the work teams are a great solution for companies that have recurring vacancies because they are much more stable than traditional temporary staffing. Goodwill provides training, oversight, and structure to the teams. “We want to become a resource for area businesses to provide work solutions and at the same time to provide people with barriers to employment the opportunity to gain experience and showcase their

potential. That's the true mission of Goodwill and why commercial services and our Goodwill stores exist - to provide critical funding to support job training and employment programs right here in our community."

The work team at Orvis is currently made up of six individuals, including the team lead; it is expected to grow to 10 by the end of the year. Men and women who are homeless and staying at the Rescue Mission are identified and recommended for the program by their case managers. Since the relationship began approximately 15 individuals from the Rescue Mission have served on Goodwill work teams at Orvis and other companies; some of whom have now transitioned to jobs within Goodwill's Commercial Services and at Goodwill stores.

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**About Goodwill:** 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, 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 October, Goodwill had assisted nearly 38,000 individuals in 2018. Visit [www.goodwillvalleys.com](http://www.goodwillvalleys.com) for more information.

**About Rescue Mission:** The Rescue Mission of Roanoke, located at 402 Fourth Street SE, is a 501(c)(3) grassroots organization serving as a Christian Crisis Intervention Center for Southwestern Virginia. Receiving no government funding, the Rescue Mission is supported by the generous donations of our community partners. Since 1948, the Rescue Mission has consistently served all people in need regardless of race, creed, gender, age, or ethnicity. For more information about the Rescue Mission, please visit [www.rescuemission.net](http://www.rescuemission.net), or call (540) 343.7227.

**About Orvis:**

Founded in 1856, we believe the most meaningful experiences are created by sharing the love of nature and being inspired by its endless possibilities. Orvis pioneered the mail order industry in the United States, operates more than 80 retail stores in the U.S and the U.K., and maintains a network of over 400 dealers worldwide as a trusted source of discovery and adventure in the natural world. We promise to open the door to extraordinary outdoor experiences, and to protect nature by committing 5% of our pretax profits each year to conservation efforts worldwide. Learn more at [www.orvis.com](http://www.orvis.com).

**Contacts:**

Tracy Altizer  
Rescue Mission Chief Development Officer  
(540) 777.7689 or [tracy@rescuemission.net](mailto:tracy@rescuemission.net)

Kelly Sandridge  
Vice President, Marketing & Public Relations  
Goodwill Industries of the Valleys  
(540) 525.5728 or [ksandridge@goodwillvalleys.com](mailto:ksandridge@goodwillvalleys.com)