

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## MINNESOTA WOMAN HONORED BY GOODWILL INDUSTRIES INTERNATIONAL

### 20-year Goodwill® Employee Recognized for Long-Standing Commitment to Mission

**Saint Paul, Minn.** – Maureen Gaedy has worked for Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota since 1997, but her longevity with the organization is just one indication of her commitment and passion for its mission. Gaedy has weathered continuous change and unprecedented growth — in her staff, territory, programs, participants and role as an individual contributor. Goodwill Industries International is pleased to recognize her hard work with the 2018 Edgar J. Helms Award for Staff.

When Gaedy started as a program manager for the rehabilitation programs at Goodwill in Saint Cloud, her hard work earned her a promotion after just 18 months. Over the years, she has developed a number of innovative programs that increase the skills and self-sufficiency of young people with disabilities in response to identified gaps and needs in the local community. This includes, but is not limited to, forming partnerships with school districts to embed services on campuses and enhancing assessment and evaluation services to better align with vocational rehabilitation policies and procedures.

In her current role as workforce development director, Gaedy oversees services at seven sites across ten counties in Minnesota. Services include employment training and education, the [FATHER Project](#), military services, youth services and more.

“To say Ms. Gaedy is passionate about her job is an understatement and ultimately does a disservice to the true strength of her leadership,” said Barb Smith, senior director of community programs at Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota. “Beyond simple passion, she also possesses the education, expertise, drive, flexibility, and sensitivity necessary to respond to personal and community needs.”

A strong demonstration of Gaedy’s commitment to eliminating barriers and improving employment factors was demonstrated through her work with state Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). Because of policy advancements that seek to improve integrated, competitive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, cases referred from VRS became more complex. Demand for specialized on-the-job evaluation and assessment opportunities as well as diversity in industry and job type has grown, resulting in significantly longer training times.

Gaedy leveraged her relationships with both VRS and area school districts to develop an adaptation of Goodwill’s assessment and on-the-job evaluation services, typically conducted in Goodwill retail stores, to be more reflective of the individual’s specific employment goals. This adaptation increased service personalization and helped ensure future VRS and school district referrals.

“When I joined Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota, our community in Central Minnesota was in crisis. A vocational service provider closed suddenly, leaving more than 300 adults with disabilities without resources. When Goodwill stepped up to implement vocational services focused on competitive jobs for comparable wages, I was eager to participate,” Gaedy said. “I learned about the mission and values of our organization and realized I was in a unique position. I’d worked in the not-for-profit sector for over 15 years; however, I’d never worked in such a mission-centric organization. It has been an honor to work with so many dedicated and talented individuals who care so much about who we serve.”

Goodwill Industries International’s Edgar J. Helms Award for Staff recognizes a Goodwill employee who has exemplified the mission of Goodwill Industries® and founder Rev. Helms’ values of unselfish service

to people with disabilities or other disadvantaging conditions. The award is open to staff who have not been a previous program participant or received any support services from Goodwill.

**CONTACT:**

Melissa Becker  
Director of Marketing and Communications  
Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota  
952-484-0518 [mbecker@gesmn.org](mailto:mbecker@gesmn.org)

Savanna Mickens  
Public Relations Specialist  
Goodwill Industries International Phone:  
(240) 333-5293  
[Savanna.Mickens@goodwill.org](mailto:Savanna.Mickens@goodwill.org)

**ABOUT GOODWILL-EASTER SEALS MINNESOTA**

Serving Minnesota for nearly 100 years as a leader in employment services, Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota (GESMN) provides education, job training and placement services to eliminate barriers to work and independence. Revenue from 50 retail stores — along with grants and fees and other financial contributions — supports programs throughout Minnesota. Our “donate-shop-reuse-educate-employ” model diverts over 60 million pounds from landfills annually and brings us one step closer to a world where everyone experiences the power of work. Visit [gesmn.org](http://gesmn.org).

**Media ABOUT GOODWILL INDUSTRIES INTERNATIONAL**

Goodwill Industries International (GII) is a network of 162 community-based, autonomous organizations in the United States and Canada with a presence in 12 other countries. GII is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that is recognized by GuideStar with its Platinum Seal of Approval, the organization’s highest rating for charities. GII was also ranked by Enso as the #1 brand doing the most good in the world for two consecutive years, and was the only nonprofit brand rated in Forbes’ 20 most inspiring companies for three consecutive years. Local Goodwill organizations are innovative and sustainable social enterprises that create job training programs, employment placement and other community-based programs by selling donated clothing and household items in more than 3,300 stores collectively and online at [shopgoodwill.com](http://shopgoodwill.com). Local Goodwill organizations build revenues and create jobs by contracting with commercial, state, government and non-government organizations to provide a wide range of business services, including manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, packaging, assembly, food preparation, document management, groundskeeping and administrative. Last year, local Goodwill organizations collectively placed more than 313,000 people in employment in the United States and Canada. In addition, more than 35 million people used computers and mobile devices to access Goodwill education, training, mentoring and online learning services to strengthen their skills, and more than 2 million people received in person services. To learn more, visit [goodwill.org](http://goodwill.org).

For more information or to find a Goodwill location near you, use the online locator at [goodwill.org](http://goodwill.org) or call (800) GOODWILL. Follow us on Twitter: @GoodwillIntl and @GoodwillCapHill, and find us on Facebook: GoodwillIntl or Instagram: GoodwillIntl.