

## **Goodwill Announces Senior Training & Employment Opportunities in Six Counties**

### **Local News**

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LONGVIEW, Wash. - Tacoma Goodwill's Longview Operations has announced openings in six Washington counties for their Senior Community Service Employment Program. Training and employment for low-income persons 55 years of age or older will start in June in Grays Harbor, Thurston, Cowlitz, Yakima, Klickitat and Kittitas Counties. The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work based training program for older workers. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and run through Tacoma Goodwill's job training centers, the program provides subsidized, service-based training for low-income persons 55 years or older who are unemployed and have poor employment prospects. Participants train an average of 20 hours a week, and are paid the highest of federal, state or local minimum wage. They are placed in a wide variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, including day-care centers, senior centers, schools and hospitals. The community service training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities. The program goal is to place 30% of its authorized positions into unsubsidized employment annually. "Program participants receive assistance with developing an individual employment plan, along with community service placement and training specific to that service assignment," said Paul Spears, SCSEP Program Manager. "They also receive additional training identified in their individual plans, and supportive services, wages, fringe benefits, annual physicals, and assistance in securing unsubsidized employment," said Spears.

**Maria-Elayne Johnson's journey&hellip;** Maria-Elayne Johnson entered the SCSEP program in 2010. As a senior, she faced an uphill battle. "On a very cold raining morning in December 2009, I awoke with an epiphany of sorts. I was recovering from my fifth surgery in two years, had tried desperately to return to work and could not find a job - or should I say a career," said Johnson. "I had earned both a Bachelor's and Master's Degree and had worked for over 40 years prior. Now I was 63 and legally blind since birth. In spite of all that I had accomplished in my life, I now could not find employment." "My mood was as bleak as the cold day outside," continued Johnson. "But my epiphany came in the form of my 2010 New Year's resolution to get in touch with what is today the SCSEP program. My hope was that the program would give me a network where I could get my career back on task, which it ultimately did. Through a collaborative partnership between the SCSEP program, Tacoma Goodwill and the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind, I was brought aboard as a SCSEP trainee to create and ultimately instruct in a viable program that would serve visually impaired residents in Pierce County who were in need of learning assistive technology software in conjunction with Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer and other program applications needed in today's office and educational environments." "I was certified through the Department of Services for the Blind and Tacoma Goodwill, who ultimately hired me part-time as staff in February of this year. Had anyone told me four years ago that I would become a computer instructor; I would have told them they obviously did not have the right person! I now serve people to help them realize that visual impairment is not the end of their life, &hellip; but the beginning as they

learn skills that will enhance their future," said Johnson. Across the U.S. there are approximately 46,000 participants in the program, with a 44% success rate in transitioning participants to unsubsidized employment. Tacoma Goodwill currently services XXXX participants with a XX% success rate. **About Tacoma Goodwill**

*Getting America Back to Work*... **Goodwill provides innovative job placement, career training and education to connect Americans with a higher quality of life.** As a unique nonprofit business, our thrift shop revenue and public donations fuel programs that help people with limited income, disabilities and disadvantages overcome barriers to employment. This year alone, Tacoma Goodwill Industries will help 9,000 people with education, job training and placement so they can become independent self-supporting citizens. Of these, more than 2,200 people will be offered office, culinary, catering, retail, custodial, warehouse, transportation and logistics careers thanks to partnerships with 800 companies across Washington. These critical career development and placement services are funded through generous financial gifts, grants, fees, commercial services and the operation of 31 thrift stores throughout our western and south central Washington operations. Please visit our website at [www.tacomagoodwill.org](http://www.tacomagoodwill.org).