

AS SEEN IN *Forbes & Fortune*

WASHINGTON D.C.'S EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Goodwill, Great Work

Local nonprofit Goodwill of Greater Washington drives change through access to free education, job training, and career opportunities for Greater Washington, D.C., area residents facing barriers to employment and self-sufficiency.



When people think of Goodwill, they often think of the place where they donate their household goods. While it's true that Goodwill operates sustainability-minded thrift stores to keep usable items out of landfills—there are 22 such stores in the Washington, D.C., area alone—the mission of Goodwill goes much deeper.

“We are in the business of education and employment for people facing barriers to success,” says Catherine Meloy, President and CEO of Goodwill of Greater Washington (GGW) and The Goodwill Excel Center Adult Charter High School. “We are a forerunner of sustainability and a local nonprofit serving the unique needs of our community.”

GOODWILL EXCEL CENTER

More than 60,000 adults in the District have not completed a high school education, which is a serious barrier to not only entry-level job placement but also career advancement. Through the Goodwill Excel Centers, GGW's two adult-chartered high schools, students can earn a free high school diploma and industry certified credentials at their own pace.

“Our Excel Centers are modern, state-of-the-art buildings that look more like offices

than schools,” says Meloy. Their prominent business district location intentionally gives students an escape from unsafe or unstable neighborhoods, surrounding them with community members that model professional lifestyles.

Since opening its first location in 2016, Goodwill Excel Centers have accumulated more than 600 alumni, from ages 15 to 72. The schools even offer free on-site childcare. “Our students show their children how important education is,” Meloy says. “It's very rewarding to see lives and generations changed by our services.”

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

GGW not only provides employment to more than 1,000 local team members, but also equips employees with the tools and training they need to excel. “It's not just about providing jobs,” says Meloy. “It's about providing work environments in which people thrive.” Unlike many traditional businesses, GGW offers team members 1:1 case management as well as professional training to help them climb the career ladder to success.

AFFORDABLE LIVING FOR FAMILIES

With high rent prices, affordable living is an enormous challenge for many Greater Washington area residents. Meloy and GGW



also recognize the lack of affordable housing as a critical barrier to employment and self-sufficiency. Most options on the market are for small spaces that are uncomfortable for families.

Therefore, under Meloy's vision and in partnership with Affordable Homes and Communities, the County Board of Arlington, Virginia, has approved the redevelopment of GGW's flagship store to include affordable housing. Scheduled for completion in 2027, this innovative, new affordable living mixed-use facility will be built on top of a new Goodwill retail store and will provide 128 homes, many with two or three bedrooms.

“With an on-site daycare, this complex is designed with families in mind,” says Meloy. “The desire is that this will be a model to be replicated across the country.”

Serving the organization since 2003, Meloy has assembled a passionate, talented team of strategic thinkers to execute her vision. “We're here to serve the local community,” she stresses. “I report directly to our local board, not a national organization. We are mindful of where our community's barriers are today so that we can create generational change for the future.”

Goodwill
Greater Washington
Transforming Lives and Communities