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Goodwill of Greater Washington Joins Broad Effort to Observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Washington, D.C. – Every year, during the month of October, Goodwill of Greater Washington joins hundreds of organizations across the United States in recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This campaign is an opportunity to educate our nation’s workforce, facilitate discussion about disability employment issues, and lift up the countless contributions of America’s workers with disabilities. This year we celebrate both the 75th anniversary of NDEAM and the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The NDEAM theme for 2020 is *“Increasing Access and Opportunity”*.

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

“Ensuring that America’s workplaces continue to include and accommodate people with disabilities will be an important part of our economic rebound,” said U.S. Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia. “Looking ahead, the Department will remain focused on the policies that led to a strong economy and record-low unemployment rates for persons with disabilities prior to the pandemic. A vigorous economic rebound and job growth will, alongside the Americans with Disabilities Act, increase access and opportunity for Americans with disabilities.”

A key focus of Goodwill’s mission of transforming lives and communities through the power of education and employment is to provide individuals with disabilities in the Washington, D.C. area the opportunity to obtain sustainable employment. Almost 80 percent of all labor hours at Goodwill’s 13 government contract sites are performed by individuals with disabilities via the AbilityOne Program.

“We are proud to be a part of this year’s National Disability Employment Awareness Month,” said Goodwill of Greater Washington Chief Marketing Officer Brendan Hurley. “It is an exceptional opportunity to spread awareness about the tremendous contributions individuals with disabilities provide not only to our organization but to the American workforce as a whole.”

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its message – during October and throughout the year – by visiting www.dol.gov/ndeam.

To learn more about Goodwill’s contracts division and the AbilityOne Program please visit <https://www.dcgoodwill.org/employment/contract-services/>.

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About Goodwill of Greater Washington: Goodwill of Greater Washington has been transforming lives and communities through the power of education and employment since 1935.