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Goodwill NCW's Project SEARCH Site in Appleton to Celebrate Graduating Interns

Appleton, Wis.—On May 22, Goodwill of North Central Wisconsin (Goodwill NCW) will celebrate eight interns graduating from its Project SEARCH site at ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Appleton.

Project SEARCH is a nine-month program that prepares people with disabilities to enter the workforce. The national program has a local presence in Appleton, thanks to a partnership with Goodwill NCW, ThedaCare, Department of Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Cooperative Educational Service Agency Six (CESA 6), Lakeland Care, and TMG Wisconsin. The program is built to provide hands-on experience that is transferrable to jobs and culminates in a graduation ceremony. Goodwill NCW then continues support by helping students through an individualized job search to obtain competitive placements at the host business or in the community.

"This is a testament to how a successful partnership and innovative thinking can provide opportunities for any student of any ability", said Kayla Countney, Manager of Mission Relations of Goodwill NCW. "It is extremely rewarding to see students gain confidence and become empowered to showcase their skills, talents, and abilities as they move into the workforce as young adults. They really embody our mission of Elevating People by Eliminating Barriers to Employment."

"ThedaCare is grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Project SEARCH program," said Dale Gisi, Senior Vice President, ThedaCare Central Region. "When they become ThedaCare team members, Project SEARCH graduates play a vital role in our organization. They are valued team members who support our caregivers and staff, which allows ThedaCare to continue providing the best care possible for our patients and families."

The ThedaCare Appleton Project SEARCH program is a hybrid site, welcoming both students referred by local school districts, and adults enrolled with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. While participating in Project SEARCH, the interns rotate through various departments within the hospital to gain hands-on skills that will help them in their future employment. The hospital setting provides a variety of job experiences. For example,

interns may support the facilities team, work in environmental services, the cafeteria or in other areas of the hospital. Nationally, 72% of those who participated in Project SEARCH in 2022-23 secured employment after completing the program. ([Source](#)) Overall, since the start of the program at the ThedaCare site, more than 83% of the interns who have completed the program have obtained employment.

About Goodwill North Central Wisconsin (Goodwill NCW)

Goodwill NCW is a nonprofit organization with a mission of Elevating People by Eliminating Barriers to Employment. We are committed to understanding and addressing the unique needs of our communities. We empower individuals and families, creating a lasting impact by breaking cycles of poverty and transforming lives through skill-building for sustained employment and improved financial stability. We see people for who they are and believe in the power of work, within our retail stores and workplaces throughout our community. We are proud of the life-changing impact we make in our communities and to our planet with the help of our donors and shoppers. Learn more at goodwillncw.org

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