

In 2005, Goodwill Industries International provided job training and career development services for nearly 850,000 individuals, many of whom are parents. These parents often benefit from other local Goodwill programs aimed at stabilizing and strengthening families. "These local member agencies are expanding on our core mission of helping individuals overcome barriers to find and retain employment," says George W. Kessinger, Goodwill Industries International president and CEO. "We work to place parents in permanent employment, because we want to help them become more effective in meeting their families' needs. When you support a parent, you support the entire family and the community where they live."



## GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF GREATER NEW YORK AND NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

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CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES  
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN  
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2006 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

## OPENING DOORS FOR FAMILIES

When parents enter a Family Learning Center operated by Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey, they find a place filled with life, optimism and programs designed to help them achieve their family goals. Classes in English as a Second Language, GED preparation and employment services improve parents' chances of securing jobs and wages that will support their families. Free child care and flexible hours help them work around family schedules to access the programs and resources they need. Children benefit directly, too, from tutorials, after-school programs and other activities that support them in realizing their own aspirations.

All this bustle started in the 1990s, after the Goodwill Industries commissioned independent research to find out how the organization could best help families get ahead in the Two Coves neighborhood in the Borough of Queens. The findings made it clear: Goodwill needed to offer an array of activities beyond traditional employment services to strengthen families so they could succeed.



THE PARENTS WE SERVE WANT TO SUCCEED  
SO THEIR CHILDREN CAN HAVE MORE OPTIONS  
THAN THEY DID. WE NEEDED TO GO BEYOND  
TRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO HELP  
FAMILIES ACHIEVE THAT GOAL.

—Rex Davidson, President & CEO, Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey

## FAMILIES CAN THRIVE

Research in hand, Goodwill re-focused the entire organization around a broadened vision of family support. The board changed its strategic plan and added specialists in education and family services. The first Family Learning Center in Two Coves became the physical heart of the work. “We went out there and told parents to come in, that all Goodwill doors lead to all Goodwill services,” says Vice President of Development, Administration, Compliance Joan Meinking. “Families immediately wanted to take advantage of everything they could.”

Goodwill also went beyond its own board and staff to engage other community resources in family-strengthening work. Spearheading the Community Redevelopment Council, Goodwill formed partnerships with employers to expand educational and training opportunities. A partnership with Jamaica Hospital Medical Center brought preventative medical services into the Family Learning Center.

The Two Coves community is now a better place for families to thrive. A 2002 outcomes evaluation showed substantial increases in educational attainment and a 10 percent decrease in unemployment since the Center's opening.

Building on experience and buoyed by success, Goodwill introduced Family Learning Centers to two additional neighborhoods. “A neighborhood is like a family,” says Meinking. “And we serve both in a similar way: finding out what they need to move forward and supporting them as they reach toward success.”

## FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Goodwill Industries International, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize Goodwill member agencies with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.