Time to J.A.G.!

An Introduction to Junior Ambassadors of Goodwill

Welcome to the Junior Ambassadors of Goodwill! As a student volunteer you will get hands-on working knowledge and experience with Goodwill's daily operations. This will include a tour of Goodwill's headquarters and facilities, where you'll learn about the operations of our retail stores, outlets and warehouses. You'll learn about our Life Skills Development and BookWorks programs. Volunteering will take place over a five-day period Monday through Friday for five hours each day. Upon completion of the course you'll receive a certificate of completion of your volunteer program with Goodwill.

About Goodwill-Suncoast

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Goodwill. Our mission is to help people achieve their full potential through the dignity and power of work. This mission is accomplished through employment services, training programs and affordable housing. The sale of donated and new goods at Goodwill stores enables the agency to offer a variety of employment and training services, promote self-sufficiency, and contribute to community conservation through recycling.

A Half Century of Helping People: Goodwill-Suncoast was founded in October 1954 in downtown St. Petersburg. We began by assisting a handful of people with disabilities to gain work skills and paychecks. Now we help thousands of people overcome a variety of barriers through our employment programs, five subsidized apartment buildings, training centers for adults with developmental disabilities, and rehabilitative community corrections facilities. To support these services, Goodwill-Suncoast operates 16 retail stores and three outlet stores.

88% of Goodwill-Suncoast's operating budget is devoted to our programs and services. On an average year, we serve 75,000 people and place 15,000 people in jobs in the community. We are headquartered in St. Petersburg and provide services to people in 10 counties – Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough, Polk, Hernando, Marion, Citrus, Sumter, Levy and Highlands counties.

WAREHOUSE, RETAIL STORE AND OUTLET OPERATIONS

WAREHOUSE:

As donated goods come through the warehouse they go through a sorting process. Some examples of items being sorted are stuffed animals, shoes, purses, metal pots, pans, glass and ceramics.

RETAIL STORE:

There are many steps that have to take place before a donated item can be made ready for sale in our stores. First some items may need to be placed on the processing table for cleaning. Some items will move into stations such as textile hanging station, textile pricing station and wares processing station.

OUTLET:

When product has not been sold in the store it is moved to a portal where the items are separated into salvageable and recyclables. These are broken down into fourteen categories.

LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of the Life Skills Development program is to provide participants experience and training that will support their participation in valued roles and routines in their community, including volunteering, job exploration, accessing community resources and self-advocacy. The program is designed to be participant-driven giving individuals the ability to develop his or her own outcomes based on their needs, wishes and desires. It is the overall goal of the program to support each individual in achieving the highest possible degree of independence and control in their daily life.

Services provided in Life Skills Development emphasize training in personal care, daily living, communication, mobility/travel, decision-making, social skills, and job readiness skills. Any participant of Life Skills Development who is performing productive work will be financially compensated commensurate with members of the general work force doing similar work in line with wage and hour regulations of the U.S. Department of Labor.

It is the goal of the program to assist individuals in moving to a less restrictive environment to include supported employment whenever possible. In keeping with this goal, the Life Skills program has developed a curriculum based on a continuum (a progression) of services. This curriculum begins with exposure to a variety of activities, work and non-work, and moves through full engagement in the community through competitive or supported employment.

Population Served: Individuals 22 years of age and older, with a developmental disability.

Settings: The Life Skills Development program is available at six locations, including the Gandy Center, Pinellas Park, Ocala, Lakeland, the St. Petersburg Skyway location, and the Clearwater Center. In addition, "satellite" or "enclave" work sites are also available at

a number of Goodwill retail, donation, and outlet store locations.

The Life Skills programs located in Pinellas Park, Ocala, Lakeland, Clearwater and the Skyway location are very focused on work: earning money and learning skills to help individuals become employable. Individuals participating in these programs will primarily be involved in work activities. If they are more interested in creative endeavors or learning cooking, homemaking, etc., a component of the program at the Gandy Center may be more appropriate to meet their needs.

Hours and Days of Service: The program day is generally Monday through Friday from 8:00-9:00 am to 2:45 pm. However, hours may vary depending on the location of the program. For individuals who are training in a Goodwill Outlet Store the days and hours may include weekends.

Frequency of Services: Services are provided at the frequency necessary to assist someone with the goals of their program and as authorized by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

Referral and Payer Sources: Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Medicaid Waiver and through private pay arrangements.

Services Offered: The program supports individuals in gaining a variety of skills that could help them in their daily life. One way this is done is by working on different jobs, in which individuals will be paid in one of three ways: piece-rate, which is different for every job; a commensurate wage; or minimum wage. A commensurate wage is an individual wage that is based on a prevailing wage for the job, e.g., a standard set by persons who are experienced in the job. Individuals are tested at least every six months to determine their level of performance. At that time, wages may be raised or lowered.

Some of the other areas of instruction and/or training that individuals may be involved in are:

- Basic academics, including math, reading, money recognition, change making, etc.
- How to plan, prepare and cook nutritious meals
- How to stay fit, including exercise, nutrition, etc.
- How to take care of themselves, such as caring for clothing (laundry), personal hygiene, how to be healthier
- Interviewing skills
- Beginning computer skills
- Developing work tolerance skills
- Assistance with referrals to vocational rehabilitation and any other social and/or community resources
- Decision-making/choices
- Self-advocacy
- How to get along with others
- Community activities such as shopping, volunteering, recreational and sporting events, etc.

- Horticulture, which may include silk flower arranging, planting, weeding and landscaping
- Communication, such as sign language, augmented speech devices, etc.
- Art projects for recreation and/or resale
- Customer service, which may include training in candy and flower sales
- Any other goals that might be listed on the individual's Support Plan

There are several possibilities after the program is complete, which might include but are not limited to getting a job through a competitive or supported employment program, getting further job training, or attending a program that addresses more specific areas such as art or leisure services. The amount of time spent in the program will vary from one person to another and is based on the needs and desires of the individual participating.

BOOKWORKS PROGRAM

BookWorks early literacy program helps to instill a love of reading in children over a seven-county area. Volunteers in each county visit local Head Start centers and daycares and conduct a story-time reading. At the end of each reading, the volunteers provide each child with a book of their own to take home. The volunteers prepare the books by writing each child's name on the book prior to their reading.

BookWorks provides the books to read and the books to distribute to the class at the end of the reading. The teachers help to provide the volunteers with a class list in order to help to prepare the books prior to their reading.

The BookWorks early literacy program receives donations of books through various sources and volunteers help to sort through the donations to determine age-appropriate books for the program. After the books are sorted, they are checked thoroughly for damage, cleaned and labeled with a BookWorks bookplate. The books are then put together in stacks of ten and shelved in order to get out to the volunteer readers in the community.

WELCOME TO GOODWILL AND ENJOY YOUR EXPERIENCE!