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Goodwill Industries of Arkansas Hosts 2nd Annual Gala for Good Michael Poore to Receive Spirit of Goodwill Award

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (August 8, 2024) — Goodwill Industries of Arkansas (GIA) will host the 2nd Annual Gala for Good on Saturday, October 26 to celebrate the spirit of Goodwill and showcase the amazing achievements of program participants, graduates and community partners. Presented by Bank OZK, the Gala for Good also serves as the signature annual fundraising event for the non-profit.

“The Gala for Good is truly a celebration of Goodwill’s mission and how it creates meaningful impact on the people, communities and the state of Arkansas,” said GIA’s Senior Vice President of Development, Shannon Boshears. “This event often surprises attendees who aren’t aware of Goodwill’s work beyond our stores – our second-hand retail model funds second chances to Arkansans seeking opportunity. Many don’t realize how our thrift shops support our broader mission of helping those in need across the state. The Gala for Good shines a light on the importance of Goodwill to the community.”

During the evening, Goodwill will honor and present awards to the Achiever of the Year, Graduate of the Year, Employer of the Year and Community Partner of the Year to recognize their achievements and honor their partnerships. Recipients were selected by an internal nomination and selection process within the GIA organization.

One highlight of the event will be the Spirit of Goodwill Award given to an individual who has devoted their time, talent and effort to advocate and promote Goodwill’s mission of “Changing lives through education, training and employment.” The 2024 recipient of this award is Mike Poore, who currently serves as executive vice-president of Education Partners and former superintendent roles for the Little Rock School District, Bentonville Schools and the Sheridan School District in Colorado.

“Mike has been a long-time supporter of Goodwill and has played a crucial role in the educational initiatives of GIA,” said Brian Marsh, GIA president and CEO. “He has been particularly instrumental in helping support the growth of The Excel Center, Goodwill’s high school for adults, to gain legislative support as the first and only adult high school in the state of Arkansas. This achievement is a testament to his unwavering commitment to providing educational opportunities for all, regardless of age or background. Mike is a tremendous example of the spirit of Goodwill and we are so honored to present him with this award.”

The 2nd Annual Gala for Good co-chairs are longtime friends of Goodwill, Elizabeth and Tom Small. Through their work, they are committed to improving education and employment opportunities in our community.

"Sharing Goodwill's mission and purpose are truly fun! I love taking co-workers, business owners, and friends to the Goodwill campus for a tour of The Excel Center and The Academy," said Elizabeth Small. "Everyone at Goodwill is willing to form positive education and workforce partnerships which makes all of Arkansas stronger. Goodwill's operations are good for the environment, good for job creation, and good for the (my) soul!"

Elizabeth is the director of Business Networks at UA Little Rock, and the instructor of Real Estate Development in the School of Business Economics/Finance Department has been a member of the Goodwill Board of Directors since 2021, currently serving as vice-chair. Tom Small is retired from Bank OZK as a senior appraisal services officer, and he is currently a business advisor in the Goldman Sachs 10K Small Businesses program where he provides guidance for business owners as part of the Goldman Sachs Babson College program.

The 2024 Gala for Good entertainment will feature the international-touring act “Who’s Bad: The Ultimate Michael Jackson Experience” who New York Daily News calls, “The world’s top Michael Jackson Tribute Band.”

Who’s Bad’s power-packed tribute to Michael Jackson has ignited crowds with sold-out shows on every continent and can only be described as a “jaw-dropping, musical must-see.” As the longest-running Michael Jackson tribute band, and the only one to predate his untimely passing, Who’s Bad has sold out nearly 50 venues in the United Kingdom including London’s O2 where the King of Pop was slated to end his career.

Proceeds raised will support Goodwill’s mission to offer life-changing opportunities to individuals seeking education, training and employment to better their lives, their families and the communities in which they live. These programs include:

- The Excel Center®, the only adult high school in Arkansas
- The Academy, a trade school offering certifications and training in the top industries in Arkansas
- Career Services, services for those seeking employment with career counseling and other job readiness assistance
- Reentry Services, services for individuals who are reentering the workforce and community after being justice-involved

The Gala for Good will be held at 6 p.m. at Wally Allen Ballroom at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock and will feature a plated dinner, signature cocktails, live and silent auctions. The event offers several sponsorship opportunities including an option to purchase individual tickets.

To find more information about the event or sponsorship packages, please visit TheGalaforGood.org or call 501.372.5100 ext. 1300.

About Goodwill Industries of Arkansas

Goodwill Industries of Arkansas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to changing lives through education, training and employment. In the last fiscal year, our career services team helped 498 people find work at companies around the state. Through our various education, training and employment programs, GIA provided services to 6,345 Arkansans. Since opening in 2017, 190 adults in Arkansas have graduated high school and earned their diplomas through The Excel Center®, Goodwill's high school for adults 19 years or older. The Academy at Goodwill, licensed by the Arkansas State Board of Private Career Education, is a trade school that provided training and certifications to 2,524 individuals in FY23 to secure new employment and advance careers. Goodwill also offers reentry services for those coming out of justice-involved situations to help train and find employment. Visit GoodwillAR.org for more information.