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PROMISING PRACTICES



College provides a hand up to career advancement

Throughout its 112-year history, Goodwill Industries' core mission has been to provide job training and career development services. Goodwill founder Dr. Edgar J. Helms created training programs to enable unemployed persons to gain valuable skills to help them reach their maximum work potential.

[Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia and the Central Savannah River Area](#) has worked more than a decade to apply Dr. Helms' vision to today's high-demand, middle-skills occupations. In 2007, the organization established Helms Career Institute and Polly Long Denton School of Hospitality to provide skills training in occupational areas that lead to careers and paths out of poverty.

Five years later, the Helms Career Institute was elevated to a degree level and renamed [Helms College](#). The establishment of Helms College marked the first time that a licensed, nationally accredited, federal financial aid-eligible college was affiliated with a local Goodwill.

In addition to serving traditional college students, Helms College programs follow Goodwill's model of serving individuals with disabilities or other barriers to education.

A recent [CARF International](#) survey report noted, "Helms College was developed to expand innovative educational options for persons served above and beyond the normal job skills training provided by community-based rehabilitation organizations. The college offers students a postsecondary education and degree programs in the skills necessary to

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About the ECS Promising Practices newsletter series

An organization receiving exemplary recognition in its CARF survey report stands out because of its professional and strategic response to a service or business need. CARF presents these ECS Promising Practices articles to encourage dialogue among service providers and to offer examples of creative solutions for improving service quality.

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move above the minimum wage environment that most vocational rehabilitation programs offer.”

Helms College offers certificate, diploma, and associate degree programs in hospitality, culinary arts, health sciences, and aesthetic arts/personal care. The programs are complemented by academic remediation and applied learning in businesses.

The survey report added, “The college provides a high quality curriculum that is supplemented by distance learning opportunities that utilize state-of-the-art technology to enhance the educational experience.”

[Helms College](#) has added three branches to its original Macon, Georgia, campus to provide a broad range of choices for students taking their first or next steps up the career ladder.

“The higher education initiative of Helms College seeks to enable more people to achieve what Dr. Helms called ‘a maximum of abundant living,’” said James K. Stiff, president of Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia and Helms College. “Helms College builds on the firmly established Goodwill foundation by providing a hand up to students ready to achieve higher career satisfaction and a fuller portion of the American Dream.”

Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia plans to continue to grow Helms College with additional campuses within the organization’s 35-county service area, including a working farm.

The ultimate goal is to enlist other Goodwill organizations to establish branch campuses of Helms College and thereby honor Dr. Helms’ legacy of offering a hand up for individuals who face obstacles in advancing their careers.

For more information about Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia and the Central Savannah River Area, please call Barry L. Paschal, senior director of marketing and communications, at (706) 650-5760. The organization’s website is at www.goodwillworks.org and the Helms College website is at www.helms.edu.



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