

‘Do Goodwill’ is good for the economy

After 18 months of living with COVID-19, the only certainty is that we must continue to live with uncertainty. Another sure thing: Goodwill Southern California is positioned to play a significant role in Southern California’s sustainable economic recovery.

“Most people know Goodwill because of our thrift stores. But a lot of people are unaware that everything we do is in support of our mission: ‘Transforming Lives Through the Power of Work,’” said Louise Oliver, Regional Operations Officer for Goodwill Southern California. “We serve individuals with disabilities and barriers to employment by providing education, training, work experience and job placement services.”

In spring 2020 when local businesses were scaling back and COVID was ramping up, Goodwill SoCal launched the “Do Good. Do Goodwill” campaign – a multi-pronged response to the crisis that aimed to raise funds for job training and to raise awareness of Goodwill’s mission.

Founded in Los Angeles in 1916, Goodwill Southern California is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that every year helps thousands of individuals with barriers to employment find a job and keep a job. Everyone recognizes Goodwill as one of the top brands in the world. Many people, however, do not know that its thrift stores are the social enterprise that funds those job training programs.



Actress-singer-activist Raven-Symoné interacts with fans during an appearance at Goodwill SoCal's Atwater Village Thrift Store in July. Photos courtesy Goodwill Southern California

As part of the Do Goodwill campaign, Goodwill SoCal has reached out to corporations, celebrities, influencers and industry experts to spread its message of hope. The campaign struck gold with actress-singer-activist Raven-Symoné. In a video that debuted in July, Raven talks about the tangible good things that result from a donation to Goodwill. The video can be viewed on [YouTube](#) and the [DoGoodwill](#) website.

The [video](#) features breezy repartee between Raven and her friend and manager Alexandra Wright. Alex shares that as a single mom at a tough time, she benefitted from Goodwill SoCal's job training programs. Raven uses the video to raise awareness of Goodwill SoCal's mission to Transform Lives Through the Power of Work. "It's all about good jobs. It's all about good work. And it's all about good people and Goodwill," she says in the video. "...That's why I do Goodwill."

Raven's donations were sold from "Raven's Closet," a special display at the Atwater Village Goodwill Store, where she met with more than 200 fans. Through the morning, she posed for selfies, signed autographs and chatted up her fans. A confirmed fan of upcycling, Raven also took time for thrifting with Alex. Check out the in-store [video](#) here!



Goodwill SoCal's Atwater Village Thrift Store

Get to Know Goodwill SoCal

- ✓ In 2020, 17,078 individuals enrolled in Goodwill SoCal career programs and 3,940 were placed in jobs.
- ✓ 80+ retail thrift stores operate in Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, with 18,800,000 store visits and 1,700,000 individual donors in 2020.
- ✓ Each year, Goodwill SoCal diverts more than 130 million pounds of donated usable goods from the ocean and landfills.

Like many businesses, Goodwill's thrift stores closed for a while during the pandemic. But its employment programs were deemed essential services. Goodwill SoCal operates 13 employment centers in Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including two in the San Fernando Valley and one in Santa Clarita. Job training programs are provided free of charge, and many participants get supplemental help with housing, childcare, transportation and other supportive services. Populations served include people with disabilities; veterans; the justice-impacted: homeless; and disconnected youth.

Goodwill isn't just good for jobseekers. It's good for businesses too. Many job-training programs are created to develop workers for specific industries. Goodwill SoCal also offers a number of business lines that support local companies with services including printing, logistics, recruitment solutions, fulfillment, custodial and landscaping.

Angelo Varsobia, owner of Premier Properties Preservation Company in North Hills, connected to Goodwill SoCal through The Valley Economic Alliance. His company had just received a large contract to clean and sanitize more than 1,000 L.A. Unified School District campuses across the county, and needed to quickly ramp up his janitorial staff. Working through the Northeast San Fernando Valley WorksSource Center, Claudia Aceves of Goodwill SoCal successfully placed more than 80 Goodwill program participants in jobs with Varsobia.

"This is a great example of the power of collaboration with partners through our Do Good. Do Goodwill campaign," Louise Oliver said.

To learn more about Goodwill Southern California and the Do Goodwill campaign, go to [DoGoodwill.com](https://www.dogoodwill.com).

