MERS/Goodwill ranks second nationally in veteran services.

Agency Serves More Than 3,700 Veterans in Bi-State Area

MERS/Goodwill ranked second in the country in Goodwill Industries International, Inc., community-based organizations, for number of veterans served in 2011. MERS/Goodwill provided more than 3,700 veterans in the Missouri and southwestern Illinois area with vocational and rehabilitation services. The agency has been actively assisting veterans in the area for more than 20 years. In October, the agency received a grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue its Vet Success Program, providing critical services to veterans with disabilities.

"MERS/Goodwill is privileged to provide vocational rehabilitation and employment services to service men and women," said Dr. Lewis Chartock, President and CEO of MERS/Goodwill. "For more than 20 years, MERS/Goodwill has been aiding veterans, helping them find meaningful employment throughout the area. We are honored by the ranking and will continue to help those men and women who proudly served our country and its people."

The agency assists veterans seeking aid with vocational and rehabilitation services. In addition, MERS/Goodwill’s Vet Success Program partners with The Rehabilitation Institute of Kansas City to provide services at each of their area vocational rehabilitation offices throughout the state. Services include vocational evaluation and counseling, educational and vocational career planning, case management, employment services, independent living assessments, life skills and job coaching, and job site analysis. Sub-contracted services are procured through a partnership with the Center for Specialized Services in St. Louis.

"We have a long history of assisting veterans and other individuals with disabilities," said Beth Brown, Assistant Vice President/Director at MERS/Goodwill’s Lippman Center.

MERS/Goodwill is committed to supporting veterans in both their return to civilian employment and independent living.

MERS/Goodwill continues to enjoy incredible community support! Our thanks go out to everyone who has made our success possible—our funding partners, our outstanding staff, our Board of Directors, and, most important, the people living in our region who continue to support our mission. MERS/Goodwill’s impact in improving the quality of life for so many has made it, in our opinion, the most successful social service agency in the Missouri/Illinois bi-state region.

Goodwill stores, stocked by the generosity of the public, help fund our programs, and each year we use these dollars to start up services which meet urgent needs in the community. We never stop looking for innovative ways of responding to unmet community needs. Our newest programs continue to grow, with the Autism Program, opened last year, currently working with 16 individuals (more already than the year’s planned financial break-even point), which has moved into renovated space, customized for the clients’ needs, at our Lippman Center. ACCESS, the program providing employment services to veterans of domestic violence, helped 139 people in 2011, and the Computer Deconstruction Program (newest of our enterprises) is providing an environment for transitional training of higher functioning sheltered workshop employees as they work toward community integration, while recycling the components.

The Innovative Conceptor’s Employment Program, developed in cooperation with Judge Jimmie Edwards, served 71 at-risk youth in 2012, demonstrating a recidivism rate of less than 5%. Overall, the Employment and Training Division of the organization served more than 48,000 consumers at over 70 locations, up 25% from the prior year.

Retail Division performance in 2012 was also record-breaking. Twenty-nine of the region’s 42 Goodwill stores grossed over $1 million, with three stores topping $2 million. We built two new stores in St. Peters and Lake St. Louis. On-line sales were up 80% over 2011 and salvage recycling revenue was up 33.7%. The Contracts Division brought in 67.7 million and provided employment for 204 individuals, most of whom have barriers to employment.

Yes, the new year is exceptional, and we’re looking forward to an even better year in 2013!
First Outlet Center Helps Reduce Waste by the Tons

In only one year after its grand opening, MERS/Goodwill’s first Outlet Center reached $2 million in sales. The success of St. Louis’ first Goodwill Outlet Center extends beyond the $2 million mark. Goodwill has been able to recycle an astonishing 13.28 million pounds of merchandise that otherwise may have been wasted.

“Not only are we thrilled with the success that our Outlet Center has had thus far, but we are grateful for the support that has helped prevent millions of pounds from piling into landfills,” said Dr. Lewis Chartock, President and CEO of MERS/Goodwill.

Through the Outlet Center, MERS/Goodwill sold approximately 3.95 million pounds of merchandise in just twelve months’ time. Of the 3.95 million pounds, 1.29 million is estimated from the 85,510 large items sold at the Outlet Center. Additionally, 18.43 million pounds of goods were collected from other local Goodwill stores and brought to the Outlet Center.

Had donors not contributed their items to MERS/Goodwill, many of these items would have been wasted and contributed to landfills. However, the Outlet Center has redistributed the items at exceptionally low prices; most merchandise sells by the pound for $0.39 or $0.79, and no item is priced over $15. Customers have access to over 2,000 new items every 15 minutes, and the Outlet Center is open seven days a week.

“At MERS/Goodwill, we’re constantly looking for ways to better serve our customers. We are proud that the Outlet Center has satisfied both our customers’ needs, and simultaneously encouraged recycling,” Chartock said.

MERS/Goodwill and ReDo Collaborate to Celebrate Yard Sale Season

As summer winds down, so begins the beloved annual yard sale season. ReDo, a local company specializing in organizing and decorating, hosted a yard sale on Saturday, August 4. Like last year’s sale, any unsold items were donated to MERS/Goodwill to aid them in their mission to provide vocational and employment rehabilitation services for those with barriers to employment.

“We’re very appreciative for ReDo’s continued support of our organization,” said Dr. Lewis Chartock, President and CEO of MERS/Goodwill. “ReDo’s generosity has positively impacted the St. Louis community, as the money raised through the sale of donations given to MERS/Goodwill is directed to helping those in our community find and keep successful jobs.”

The ReDo Yard Sale was held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, August 4 on the 5200 block of Westminster Place in the Central West End. All of the items available for purchase, including a Maytag “Thin Twin” stacking washer and dryer and several pieces of furniture, come from ReDo’s patrons who have saved, stored, or no longer have need for the items.

Following the day’s event, all unsold items, including furniture, clothing, electronics and home accessories were picked up by a MERS/Goodwill donation truck and delivered to designated donation sites. It is at those donation locations where MERS/Goodwill clients and customers can purchase these goods at a reasonable price and help fund the organization’s programs.

OUTLET CENTER REACHES $2 MILLION MARK

First Outlet Center Helps Reduce Waste by the Tons

First Missouri State Capital State Historic Site.

On October 17, eight SPYC workers stationed at this park showed some of their skills and creativity during the city’s “Missouri Day” celebration. The event theme was “Civil War” and explored the social and military aspects of Missouri’s role in the Civil War.

Youth Displayed Missouri’s Role in the Civil War

State Parks Youth Corps Workers Hosted Booths and Tours at “Missouri Day” Celebration

Youth from the State Parks Youth Corps program (SPYC) is designed to give youth between the ages of 18-24 valuable work experience at state parks. MERS/Goodwill is in charge of staffing 11 state parks across five counties for the program, including First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site.

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Events

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Events
Once again MERS/Goodwill partnered with the St. Louis Cardinals to host an electronics recycling and general donations drive Tuesday, April 24 in the Ballpark Village lot at the corner of Walnut Street and South Broadway. The drive collected all unwanted items with a battery, cord or plug, in addition to general donations.

On the heels of Earth Day, MERS/Goodwill and the St. Louis Cardinals are helping solve the problem of obsolete electronics. In this digital age of evolving technologies, the amount of gadgets can add up quickly, and disposing of unwanted electronics can be expensive and harmful to the environment.

"The positive impact electronics drives have on our community, both environmentally and economically, is tremendous," said Bill DeWitt, Jr., Chairman and CEO of the St. Louis Cardinals. "The Cardinals are proud to encourage safe disposal of electronics and prevent unnecessary waste."

"MERS/Goodwill is excited to once again partner with the Cardinals for such a worthwhile drive," said Dr. Lewis Chartock, President and CEO of MERS/Goodwill. "We are devoted to helping St. Louis stay environmentally and socially responsible and will continue to raise awareness of recycling unwanted electronics."

Computers and computer accessories, phones (home and cell), clocks, TVs, VCRs, DVD players, stereo, AV equipment, including cable and satellite boxes, and any device with a cord, plug or battery were all accepted.

Donors received a voucher for a half-price Cardinals ticket, in addition to coupons to Fritz’s Frozen Custard and a chance to visit with Fredbird. Participants received tax receipts for their donation. MERS/Goodwill stores and donation centers accept all types of electronics free of charge year-round.
Most nine-to-five jobs allow employees to turn off phones, email and thinking caps after hours, enjoy the evening and have a full social work day the following morning. Although not required by MERS/Goodwill, Robin Pruitt does not adhere to these social norms. After years of working with teens and young adults, Robin knows the best time for a youth to communicate is when he or she is ready, and that can be any time of the day or night. “When we get a new client, I always tell them I wake up happy,” said Robin. “When the client responds with a questioning look, Robin explains that her phone is on 24/7 and clients are always welcome to call. It is small gestures such as this that make Robin unique and contribute to the tremendous success of the MERS/Goodwill WIA Youth Program, in Illinois.”

“In a field full of compassionate people, Robin stands out,” said Hilary Wagner, MERS/Goodwill Vice President. “Particularly for some young people who may have limited support from family or friends, to have someone like Robin in their corner makes a world of difference.” Hired in July 2007 as MERS/Goodwill’s Coordinator of WIA Youth Services in Illinois, Robin managed programs in Bond, St. Clair, Madison and Jackson Counties. As the years have passed, different grants have allowed Robin and her team to work with various counties in the state. Today the program serves youth in Bond County through funding from Madison County Employment and Training Department, and in Clinton, Washington and St. Clair Counties with funding through St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department. “She’s like a second mother,” said Patria Hill, WIA Youth client – Cahokia. Patria became involved in the Cahokia program in August 2009, and Robin helped Patria pursue her dreams of playing basketball in college. Now at Lindsey University in Belleville, Patria is shooting hoops while studying English education. “Even though I’m no longer in the program, Robin still helps me. I always call her when I need advice and use her as a reference for various visits, including school and jobs.” Robin has dreams of her own that she is striving to fulfill. The success of the current four counties and clients of the past few years Robin’s hopes of growth for the WJA Youth Program in Illinois. She recently completed applications for new grants, hoping to expand into additional counties. To display community support, Robin collected more than 30 letters from various businesses and organizations in Illinois.

**NORTH COUNTY RESIDENT SPREADS “GOODWILL”**

It’s a rare occasion to spot North County resident James Elliot without a smile on his face. Twelve years of experience with Goodwill Industries, a non-profit agency that provides for the vocational needs of individuals in the bi-state area, has taught James the ins and outs of the company. A majority of his career has been with MERS/Goodwill, but he has also spent time with Las Vegas and Ohio Goodwill Industries. No matter the location, the mission is the same, and that’s what James works so hard to support. As a MERS/Goodwill case manager and Employment Specialist, James helps clients who face barriers to employment find and maintain jobs, spreading his infectious smile to more than a few faces over the years. This year, for the fourth consecutive year, James Elliot was named MERS/Goodwill’s top placement person in the 61 bi-state offices. “James is the epitome of a model employee,” said Dr. Lewis Chartock, MERS/Goodwill President and CEO. “He is constantly working to provide his clients with gainful employment, while creating meaningful and lasting connections with employers. We are proud of James’ accomplishments and excited to see his continued support of our organization.” James, who often works seven-day weeks to accommodate all of his clients, has set an exemplary model for those around him. Since 2008, he has successfully helped more than 65 clients find employment each year, boasting a record year of 86 placements in 2010. James attributes his success to his clients and co-workers who continue to inspire and motivate him. “James and I have been working together for 10 years,” said Erin McCuan, MERS/Goodwill Director of Aftergut Center. “He is respected by his clients, co-workers and MERS/Goodwill. He is tenacious in seeking out employers who want to partner with MERS/Goodwill and offer employment opportunities to our clients. His numbers speak for themselves!”

**DOBSON HELPS THE DEAF**

Julia Dobson, an Employment Specialist with MERS/Goodwill, helps deaf and hard-of-hearing people overcome the challenges they face in finding work. Julia is a part of Project Grow, working in conjunction with referring counselors from Missouri’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and MERS/Goodwill. “She is a true team player!” said Erin McBride, Director for Aftergut.

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**MEGHAN IS ‘ACCESS’IBLE**

Meghan Hanahan often receives calls from past clients, telling her about their new-found success and thanking her for helping them to change their lives. As an Employment Specialist for MERS/Goodwill’s ACCESS program, Meghan will do just about anything to help her clients succeed. She primarily helps survivors to become job-ready by preparing resumes, developing interview skills, and securing outfits through Goodwill stores. Once participants are job ready, Meghan identifies job leads, networks with employers, fills out job applications and transports those who don’t have cars to interviews or to apply for jobs. One of the most important things she adds to participants’ job search is camaraderie, helping them feel at ease in what can be a difficult and tense process.

The ACCESS (Assistance with Career Counseling and Employment Services for Survivors) program is funded by the Simon Foundation and was piloted by MERS/Goodwill in 2009, initially as a collaborative effort with the St. Louis County Domestic Violence Court. ACCESS provides employment services to survivors of domestic violence by providing specialized services which address the specific employment and safety concerns. Participants are referred from area domestic violence service providers for assistance with their job search. The program aids survivors whose employment history is negatively impacted by their abuser’s behavior or those who are seeking employment to become financially independent and obtain alternative housing.

“I think the amazing thing is that we got them the starting job and they went back to school. Now, they have a certificate in something or they are almost done with their associates degree,” said Meghan. “So, now they are asking for help with the next step and that makes us really happy. I love those calls.”

“She masters that art of being direct, yet compassionate. She will fight tooth and nail for what someone deserves and allow them to cry and vent to her, but she doesn’t allow them to stay in that place,” said Christina Holmes, ACCESS Program Director.
POSITIVELY WARREN

If anyone has the secret for maintaining a positive attitude, Warren Cobb got the formula. Warren faces the world with a developmental disability, but his smile never fades. His ability to take on each challenge with a positive outlook, his willingness to learn and grow, and the care he shows for those around him is inspiring. MERS/Goodwill helped him utilize these attributes to land a job that he truly loves.

“I could bottle positivity, it would be called Warren Cobb,” said Leslie Quahes, Director for MERS/Goodwill’s Southwest Community Center. “He is very passionate about everything he is interested in.”

During high school, Warren attended the Career Training Program at Garden Villas South where he completed various food service tasks including setting tables, preparation services, and busing tables. He also completed a variety of work experiences at St. Louis Community College at Meramec, Fiddlers Rehearsal, Delmar Gardens, and at a nursery. Never turning down a chance to learn, in 2008, Warren worked at the South County Goodwill with MERS/Goodwill’s Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP), putting clothing away. He joined SWEP again in 2010, working in the Dietary Department at Green Park Nursing Home. With such a variety of experience, Warren wanted a more permanent job working around people. After graduating from high school in 2011, Warren began working with MERS/Goodwill in the Supported Employment Program, where he had the opportunity to try a variety of jobs during the Supported Employment Assessment.

MERS/Goodwill always kept me going to help me find a better job,” said Warren. “Even if I was tired, my case manager would make me laugh and push me to keep going.”

Warren’s case manager began helping him look for jobs in dietary, restaurant and laundry positions, but the perfect job came along at Woodlands Nursing Facility in the Housekeeping and Dietary Department. He currently works with a team which is responsible for cleaning the lobby, clearing out the trash from resident rooms, and busing the dining hall. Warren says he likes his job, but enjoys working with the residents the most.

“The residents are very nice and I can see the compassion the employees have for them at this job,” said Warren. “An ‘Angel Walk’ is held when a resident passes away. We hold hands and say a final prayer for them. It is very hard, but I know they lived a good life.”

Glenda Leicht, a proud grandmother and hard-working mother of five adult children, heads to work every day with a smile on her face. It may seem as if she has the world in the palm of her hand, but for years, the weight of the world rested on her shoulders. At the age of 60, Glenda was unemployed and helpless to help raise her special needs grandson, while also assisting two of her children and struggling financially following a divorce. Glenda had plenty of experience in accounting and administrative skills, but felt her age was a barrier. Glenda was intimidated and reluctant to seek out job opportunities. Her lack of modern computer skills and confidence in her own abilities led her to seek the help of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) with MERS/Goodwill.

As soon as Glenda qualified for SCSEP, she was placed at Nazareth Living Center for 20 hours of work experience per week. She began working with Constance and quickly completed skills training provided by SCSEP, perfecting her computer skills and boosting her confidence. She eventually became the part-time receptionist for five different departments within Nazareth.

“Glenda faced barriers in the workplace because of her age and she didn’t have the computer skills needed for many work environments, but her biggest barrier was her lack of confidence,” said Constance McCord, case manager for SCSEP.

Well liked and efficient in her duties in the business offices, Glenda became a valued employee at Nazareth Living Center and successfully exited from SCSEP in November of 2011, after receiving her first unsubsidized paycheck. Today, Glenda works an average of 38 hours per week as the assistant to the admissions coordinator at Nazareth. She assists in numerous departments at the Center, helping to arrange dinners, the golf tournament and other fundraisers, as well as completing general administrative tasks and brightening the faces of the nurses, residents and visitors she works with.

“I wouldn’t be where I am today were it not for MERS/Goodwill and Constance’s encouragement,” said Glenda. “She really pushed me to break out of my shell.”

VETERAN FINDS SUCCESS

MERS/Goodwill was recently recognized for serving more than 3,700 veterans in 2011. This number is incredible and MERS/Goodwill, in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, has changed many lives. Michael Buttery is just one of the 3,700 served by MERS/Goodwill, and the Vet Success Program has changed his life forever.

Volunteering to serve his country, Michael was stationed in Quang Tri, Vietnam from 1969 to 1972. Upon his return to the states, Michael faced the hardships felt by soldiers of the Vietnam-era. As a tank mechanic in the Army, Michael’s profession demanded continuous physical labor, forcing him to put constant strain on his body. Following the war, Michael maintained a steady career in construction, building inspection and delivery, but the physical requirements, hours and pay prompted Michael to seek other options.

As a consequence of being a professional mechanic, Michael Yet lost most of the cartilage in his thumbs. “I was fearful when I realized I couldn’t hold a hammer,” said Michael, but fewer hours and the increasing physical strain prompted him to explore new career options. Determined, but unsure, Michael was referred to MERS/Goodwill by the Department of Veterans Affairs. MERS/Goodwill’s Vet Success Program provides vocational rehabilitation and employment services to veterans with service-connected disabilities. Services include vocational evaluation and counseling, regional and vocational career planning, case management, employment services, independent living assessments, life skills and job coaching, and job site analysis.

“We see many veterans like Michael,” said Don Vaivil, MERS/Goodwill Coordinator of Skills Training. “They’ve been trained in physical labor their entire lives, but now need to be re-trained in sedentary work.” Michael, like many Vietnam-era veterans, had virtually no computer knowledge prior to his arrival at MERS/Goodwill. Now participating in MERS/Goodwill’s A+ Skills Training, Michael has mastered computer basics and is learning to build PCs.

Michael’s electronic and mechanical background made him an ideal candidate for the A+ Skills Training. The 20-week training prepares students to take the A+ certification test. Successful certification will help students obtain an entry-level position in the IT field, such as computer technician or help desk specialist. Michael is in his fourth week of training. Five days a week, Michael arrives at MERS/Goodwill’s Lippman Center prepared for morning training, never missing a class. Michael’s class schedule allows him to maintain employment as a delivery driver from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. until his certification and job search are fulfilled. Michael actively participates in class, asking questions and gaining invaluable knowledge. While Michael is preoccupied with learning, his commitment and drive is inspiring those around him.

“Michael faces constant pain from his physical disability, and yet he continues to show a great work ethic, working hard to achieve his goals,” said Don. “All the while, he keeps a confident, positive attitude and does not let his limitations prevent him from ultimately achieving success. I have a great respect for all of our clients who have served in the armed forces, and it is my honor to help Michael branch out in a new direction of his life.”
COMMUNITY PARTNERS & MAJOR FUNDING SOURCES

United Way of Greater St. Louis - Gary Dollar
Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation - Jeannie Loyd
Illinois Department of Human Services - Van Leeds
Department of Veterans Affairs - Corliss Strathmore
Frank Carlin
St. Louis County Office of Productive Living Services - Joyce Prage
St. Louis Agency for Training and Employment - Michael Holmes
St. Louis Office for IDD Resources - Michelle Darden
Federal Bureau of Prisons - Terry Mills
Missouri Department of Corrections - John Graf
Tina Wilkerson
Southeast Missouri Workforce Investment Board - June O'Dell
Jewish Federation of St. Louis - Andrew Riehfeld
St. Charles County Department of Workforce Development - Don Holt
St. Francois County Board for the Developmentally Disabled - Leauna Burgess
Mid-America WIB - Melinda Nicholson
Jewish Family Services - David Roberts
Developmental Disabilities Resource Board - Pig Cape
Green County Board for the Developmentally Disabled - Jon Jones
Office of Job Training Programs - Joseph Franklin Counties - Shirley Wilson
U.S. Department of Labor - Stan Blazek
Office of Developmental Disabilities - Eric Stansbury
St. Louis Mental Health Board - James Dodson
Missouri Family Support Division - Alpyn Campbell
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services - Cathy Huegstdorfer
Mildred Simon Foundation - Lewis Chastock
Northeast Missouri Workforce Investment Board - Mark Poppa

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Mr. and Mrs. David C. Farrell
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Harry and Arden Fisher
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Kristy Tourell - Senior Vice President, Retail
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Hiilary Wagner - Vice President, Employment & Training
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Kevin Shaw - Vice President, Retail
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Beth Brown - Assistant Vice President, Employment & Training
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Esther Williams - Assistant Vice President, Innovative Concept Academy

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SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Vocational Evaluation
- Community Employment Services/Job Placement
- Skills Training Programs:
  - Office Computer and Administrative Skills Training (Office CAST)
  - Next Generation Career Centers (NGCC)
  - Community Corrections: Residential and Pre-School
  - Missouri Work Assistance (MW A):
    - Missouri Work Assistance (MW A): Employment Services for individuals who are receiving TANF
    - Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
    - GED Instruction
    - ACCESS: Services to victims of domestic violence

CARF ACCREDITATION

MERS/Goodwill is CARF accredited in the following areas:
  - Community Services: Child and Youth Services
  - Employment Services: Community Employment Services/Job Placement
  - Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation Services
  - Employment Skills Training Services
  - Employment Transition Services
  - Organizational Employment Services

CARTH ACCREDITATION

MERS/Goodwill is CARF accredited in the following areas:
  - Community Services: Child and Youth Services
  - Supported Living
  - Community Employment Services: Job Development
  - Community Employment Services: Job Supports
  - Community Employment Services: Job Site Training
  - Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation Services
  - Employment Skills Training Services
  - Employment Transition Services
  - Organizational Employment Services

2012 Financial Information

Public Support

Contributions of inventory $50,368,731
Associated organizations 700,506
Other 1,237,840
Total Public Support $52,907,077

Revenue

Store and salvage $58,825,277
Employment and training 19,070,840
Contract services 6,880,317
Sheltered workshop 682,081
Other program services 1,877,839
Investment income 202,988
Miscellaneous 76,918
Total Revenue $87,915,870

Total Public Support and Revenue $140,202,947

Expenses

Program services $126,365,688
Management and general 5,076,726
Fundraising 2,264,114
Total Expenses $133,706,528

Change in Net Assets $6,496,419

Assets

Cash and cash equivalents $12,108,223
Accounts receivable 4,212,949
Inventories 3,245,444
Investments 12,340,815
Property and equipment 19,066,204
Other 2,477,420
Total Assets $52,551,055

Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts payable and accrued expenses $8,038,081
Long-Term Debt $58,825,277
Total Liabilities $52,551,055

Total Net Assets $52,551,055
MERS/Goodwill Vehicle Donors Receive Free Year of Movies at Wehrenberg Theatres

For those who were planning to get rid of that old car or boat by the end of the year, Wehrenberg Theatres just made the deal sweeter. In addition to receiving a tax deduction for donating an old vehicle or vessel, MERS/Goodwill teamed up with Wehrenberg Theatres to provide movie tickets for one year good for 2012. The promotion was valid in December and included almost every type of licensed mode of transportation, including cars, trucks, boats, and RVs (running or not).

“It is the season of giving,” said Dr. Lewis Chartock, President and CEO of MERS/Goodwill. “So, while you’ll receive the gift of movies for a year, by simply donating you are giving someone in your community a chance at a better life. Wehrenberg Theatres is a great community partner, and we are excited to be able to offer area residents this unique and exciting opportunity.”

MERS/Goodwill’s promotion with Wehrenberg Theatres was good throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area, Springfield, MO, Columbia, MO, and Jefferson City, MO. MERS/Goodwill has been operating its vehicle donation program for nearly 40 years, and their efforts in making the process quick and easy. In addition, Goodwill provides free towing for all vehicles.

“We were very excited to offer this one-of-a-kind promotion,” said Roni Vetter, who heads the Vehicle Donation program for MERS/Goodwill. “It’s the perfect time of year for it and it’s truly a win-win situation for the donor and the people whom MERS/Goodwill helps.”

TUXES, TULLE AND SPARKLES RAISE FUNDS AND AWARENESS

First Annual Bowling in Ballgowns Donates Dresses, Aids Harrisburg, Illinois, Tornado Relief Effort

Carbondale locals broke out their bridesmaid dresses for one final, charitable use on Saturday, March 9, 2012. MERS/Goodwill and Southern Illinois University Carbondale held the first annual Bowling in Ballgowns, which benefited victims of the Feb. 29, 2012 tornado through The Good Samaritan House and relief efforts around Harrisburg.

MERS/Goodwill partners with Chick-fil-A for June

Chick-fil-A Offers FREE Chicken Sandwich Coupon for Donations

Did someone say free chicken sandwich? Every Tuesday and Wednesday during the month of June, St. Louisans brought donations to St. Louis Metro Goodwill locations to receive a coupon for a free Chick-fil-A chicken sandwich redeemable at any of the eight area Chick-fil-A locations.

MERS/Goodwill announces the winner of Missouri’s 2012 Outstanding Older Worker of the Year Contest, Betty Greenlee. As the Director of Housekeeping for Lutheran Senior Services at Breeze Park in St. Charles, Greenlee, 71, oversees 12 employees and ensures that 204 apartments, piano rooms and resident rooms are kept clean and presentable.

Recently, nine regional winners of the 22nd annual Missouri Outstanding Older Worker of the Year Contest attended a two-day award ceremony at the state’s capitol in Jefferson City, MO. The award was presented to Greenlee at a luncheon attended by the other finalists and their employers in Jefferson City’s Capitol Plaza Hotel.

“I know everyone I work with is proud of me and I am proud of myself too,” said Greenlee.

Greenlee demonstrates a strong work ethic, high standards, knowledge of her profession, innovation in problem solving and cooperation. She has also formed strong relationships with her staff as a mentor and with the residents. In addition, Greenlee is known as the ice cream lady because she drives a golf cart around the complex to deliver ice cream to the residents.

“I know everything about my residents,” said Greenlee. “I have developed personal relationships with all of them and I need them as much as they need me.”

The contest seeks to honor Missouri residents who are at least 65 years of age and painfully employed at a Missouri job site for an average of 20 or more hours per week. MERS/Goodwill sponsors the contest along with the AARP Foundation, Experience Works, Inc., Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph, the Department of Economic Development/Division of Workforce Development; and the Department of Health and Senior Services/Division of Senior and Disability Services.

“Older workers should be celebrated all year,” said Dr. Lewis Chartock, President and CEO of MERS/Goodwill.

“This contest serves as a thank you to those who dedicate their time and energy to better our community through their vocations. MERS/Goodwill is proud to be a part of the Outstanding Older Worker contest as a tribute to workers whose wisdom, punctuality and commitment to quality set high standards in the workforce.”

Sincerely,
Recovering Hoarder

Dear Recovering Hoarder,

It sounds like you’ve certainly made some progress, but still have a ways to go in terms of truly living a clutter-free life. While you have many options to choose from when donating your unneeded items, the people at your neighborhood Goodwill will always accept your belongings. They have locations everywhere and you can be proud that money made from selling your donations at a Goodwill retail store will benefit those seeking employment training and employment opportunities.

Sincerely,

Lew

Dear Lew,...

Sincerely,
Recovering Hoarder

After our home was recently featured on the hit television show “Hoarders,” we have decided to continue purging unneeded items from our life. While the folks from the TV network helped us clean out the items inside many of the rooms in our home, we still have mountains, and I mean mountains, of items to get rid of in our storage units, doublewide camper, backyard shed and even in our neighbor’s garage. (They were nice enough to allow our “overflow” to be stored in their garage in an effort to keep it out of the front yard.)

Now that we have a team of family and friends who have vowed to help us purge the rest of our stash, we just need to find an organization that will accept much of this stuff as a donation. Can you recommend an organization to which we could donate our collection of gingerbread houses, Waterford crystal, and left shoes? We really want to make sure that our items are supporting a good cause.

Your donation gave me a Chance

Revenue generated from your donations provide local job training and placement services for those with barriers to employment – right here in metro St. Louis.

Donating is easy. We accept housewares, furniture, clothing, electronics and even cars.
A warm and sincere “thank you” to our board members, our employees, our clients, and the thousands of individuals who donate. Each and every one of you makes the mission of MERS/Goodwill achievable.