

MERS Goodwill Excel Centers Begin New School Year

MERS Goodwill's three Excel Centers, located in St. Louis, Springfield, and Poplar Bluff, MO, each began a new school year on Monday, August 12, 2019. 385 students are currently registered for the new term at the St. Louis Excel Center, along with 204 in Springfield, and 118 in Poplar Bluff.

In addition to providing high school education free of charge for students, the Excel Centers provide free drop-in childcare centers and free transportation assistance, aiming to give students the ability to balance school and work schedules by addressing needs outside of the classroom. While there, students develop relationships with both staff and classmates as part of an effort to encourage academic progress and engagement.

Each MERS Goodwill Excel Center hosted its inaugural round of graduation ceremonies in May. Eight students graduated from the Poplar Bluff Excel Center on May 28, followed by five students from the St. Louis Excel Center on May 29, and seven from Springfield on May 30. These students have now moved on to join or reenter the workplace.

The fourth Goodwill Excel Center, located in Columbia, MO, is set to open October 2019.

Read more about the new Excel Center term in [St. Louis Community News](#).



High school redux



Five graduates of The Excel Center of MERS Goodwill in St. Louis stand together after their graduation ceremony in May. Submitted photo

The Excel Center of MERS Goodwill in St. Louis gives adults free education towards a high school diploma

By Charlotte Beard

Along with the many students that returned to school last week, The Excel Center of MERS Goodwill located at 1727 Locust Street in St. Louis welcomed new students and returning students for the second year. Classes resumed Aug. 12 for adults who are working towards obtaining their high school diplomas instead of a GED. Pre-existing high school credits can be applied to the program.

The Excel Center of St. Louis, one of three centers in Missouri, launched its first school year in October 2018 and currently has 385 students enrolled. In addition to funding from MERS Goodwill, Jadee Lau-

er the Director of St. Louis' center shared there is a portion of funding with the state that is set aside specifically for training and providing skills to individuals eligible for the SNAP program.

"We're able to tap into that money (to) train and give education and skills to students so that they can eventually get off that public benefit," stated Lauer.

People seeking to attend The Excel Center to receive a diploma must be age 21 and older. Lauer shared that the center currently has a 74-year-old attending. Attendance is currently limited to Missouri residents due to funding coming from Missouri.

There are other locations in Springfield and Poplar Bluff.

"We had our first graduation in May," stated Lauer. "We had six who graduated in May. We had the graduation (at the center) with lots of people—lots of students attended so they could get re-inspired. Right now, we're planning a December graduation."

"As part of MERS Goodwill's mission of changing lives through the power of work, our commitment with the Excel Centers is to enhance career potential and provide access to jobs," said David Kutchback, President and CEO of MERS Goodwill. "We are

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Around Town



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Weather

FRIDAY
Sunny; Scattered Storms
83/64

SATURDAY
Sunny; Spot. storms
81/66

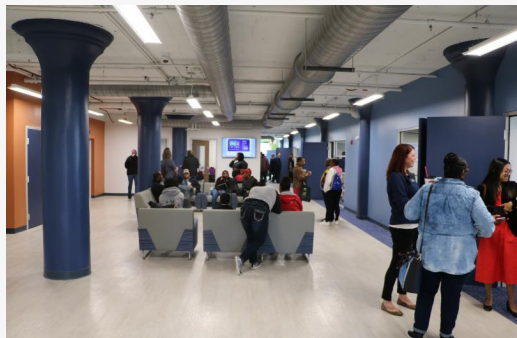
SUNDAY
Sunny
83/66

FIRST WARNING WEATHER
powered by meteorologist NC-6



Finish your High School Degree and Gain an In-Demand Workplace Certification

The Goodwill Excel Centers help adults earn their high school diploma free of charge, and gain workplace certifications that allow for higher wages and greater career opportunities.



**Complete the Registration
Form Here**



Class times are flexible to accommodate work schedules, and each facility has a "drop-in" child care center. Visit [our website](#) for more information.

No Monkey Business: Rare Donation Finds its Forever Home

A vintage colobus monkey fur coat, donated 15 years ago to MERS Goodwill, will now be preserved at the Missouri Historic Costume and Textile Collection at the University of Missouri-Columbia (MHCTC).



Colobus monkeys, native to various regions in Africa, are known for their striking black fur, which contrasts with their white mantle, whiskers, bushy tails, and facial beards. Coats made from the fur of these monkeys were widely popular in the 1930s, when Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli debuted colobus monkey coats into the world of haute couture in 1933.

In keeping with the mission of the MHCTC, the colobus monkey coat will now be preserved and valued for teaching purposes, research, and exhibition, including potential usage and examination in various Textile and Apparel Management classes at the University. The college will include the coat, the second colobus coat in its collection, in exhibits and instruction.

Read the full story from the Columbia Missourian [here](#).

Good News From MERS Goodwill



Tim's Travels: Back to



MERS Goodwill: National



Enterprise Holdings

School with Goodwill

"Tim Ezell learned by shopping at Goodwill, students have the freedom to define their style at budget-friendly prices. At Goodwill, parents, students and teachers can find a one-stop-shop for all their back to school needs."

Bargain Hunting Week

"I just love a good deal, and there's no better week to shop until you drop than on National Good Deals Week."

Foundation donates \$125K to MERS Goodwill Excel Centers

"The MERS Goodwill Excel Centers provide an extraordinary opportunity to change the lives for members of our community, and we're so glad to contribute to the continued success of these programs," said Chris Tabourne, Enterprise Holdings Assistant Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion and a member of the MERS Goodwill's Board of Directors.

[Watch full segment here!](#)

[See the segment here!](#)

[Read article here!](#)

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www.mersgoodwill.org



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