



GOODWILL-EASTER SEALS FOUNDATION
553 Fairview Ave. N., St. Paul, MN 55104

CONTACT

Christine Lekatz

lekatz@neuger.com

612-664-0710

Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota Moves Into Public Phase of Its Power of Work Comprehensive Capital Campaign

With \$12 million raised to date, the fundraising campaign is enhancing service accessibility and operational stability through increased programming and a focus on digital equity.

ST. PAUL, MINN. (February 29, 2024) — Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota (GESMN) announced today the launch of the public phase of its Power of Work comprehensive capital campaign, which has raised \$12 million since its 2019 launch. The campaign is designed as a critical and meaningful response to the deep-seated employment disparities in Minnesota and addresses common barriers, such as the digital divide, by providing the resources and training necessary for today's job market. With a goal of \$12.8 million, Power of Work will remain open through Summer 2024.

“The Power of Work campaign supports our efforts to serve populations deeply impacted by the changing economy and rising costs, who need a little support to build thriving careers and stable families,” said Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota President and CEO Michael-Wirth Davis. “Every year, we serve over 5,500 people who deserve equitable access to jobs and higher levels of employment. Since our founding in 1919, and together with partners and community support, we’ve eliminated barriers to work and independence for people who want to enter or advance in Minnesota’s workforce, every day.”

GESMN has supported individuals and families in preparing for, securing, and maintaining stable employment for over a century. The Power of Work campaign builds on that commitment in tangible ways by enhancing service accessibility, program innovation and operational stability. Community investments in the campaign are already being leveraged. In 2023, more than 5,500 people were served by GESMN services and programs – a 21% increase over 2020.

Examples of investments made possible by the campaign include:

- A dedicated digital equity specialist and digital technology helpdesk, combined with laptops and hotspots for participants
- Digital skills training programs
- 200+ technology resources distributed to bridge the digital divide
- New and expanded training opportunities and engagement with employers and stakeholders throughout Minnesota
- Immersive virtual reality experiences so participants can engage in hands-on, real-time training (e.g., automotive skills)

“The opportunities that came out of GESMN’s disability services were huge. Having the regular check-in and constant support from my career navigator was really great,” said Curtis, who is now a program administrator technical specialist for the State of Minnesota.

Major funders of the leadership phase of the campaign include Otto Bremer Trust, the Hardenbergh Foundation, the Schulze Family Foundation, the Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundation and Marsden Services.

“Marsden has been a proud supporter and partner of Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota for more than two decades,” said Marsden Services President and CEO Guy Mingo. “GESMN’s mission exemplifies job creation by eliminating barriers to work, offering job skills training, and preparing people for independent living. The goals of the Power of Work Campaign are critical for the future of our workforce.”

To learn more about the campaign and Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota, visit gesmn.org/future.

About Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota

Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that offers job training and customized career support to eliminate barriers to work and independence. Reuse and recycling operations contribute to Minnesota’s environmental sustainability and employ nearly 2,000 people in the community. Proceeds from thrift retail, e-commerce, grants and financial contributions fund nearly 20 customized services that help Minnesotans get equitable access to jobs, create stable careers and advance in the workplace. Shopping and donating items divert over 65 million pounds from local landfills annually and have helped the organization connect people to jobs since 1919. Learn more at gesmn.org