

# Rappahannock Goodwill Industries Goodnews

Winter 2015

Changing Lives Through the Power of Work

## Woody Van Valkenburgh. More Than Three Decades of Impact.

As 2015 comes to a close, so does an amazing 35-year term of service for Woody Van Valkenburgh, president and CEO of Rappahannock Goodwill Industries (RGI). His contributions are significant and the foundation he's laid will become the bedrock as RGI welcomes incoming President and CEO Donnie Tolson in January.

Woody's history with the organization began in 1980 when he became executive director of Rappahannock Rehabilitation Facility, the predecessor organization to Rappahannock Goodwill Industries. Initially, the organization provided employment only to adults with severe disabilities. Convinced there was greater community need, Woody expanded the organization's vision to include serving people with other barriers to employment, including those with educational or economic disadvantages.

"I've always believed in a person-centered approach," said Woody. "Discover what a person wants to do, determine the gaps, develop a plan. This philosophy has guided all our decisions."

The organization's growth over the past three and a half decades is astounding. Within a few years of coming to Rappahannock Rehabilitation Facility, Woody had expanded the organization's mission, renovated a new office building on Caroline Street, created a Learning Center, and developed a Custodial Services Unit.

These contributions caught the eye of Goodwill Industries International (GII) and in 1991 Rappahannock Rehabilitation Facility became an affiliate, renaming itself Rappahannock Goodwill Industries. The opening of Goodwill stores resulted in a



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major alternative income source and the staff immediately tapped into the vast experience of GII, the world's largest trainer and employer of people with disabilities.

Today, RGI serves the City of Fredericksburg and a twelve-county territory in east central Virginia. So far this calendar year, RGI has provided services to 6,022 people and placed 811 people in jobs. In 2014, RGI had an economic impact in the region and Commonwealth of \$56.8 million. RGI's current headquarters is an 80,000-square-foot facility known as the Goodwill Community Resource Center. It includes a Goodwill Store, an Outlet, a transportation hub, a Job Help Center, a staffing agency and Goodwill offices. It's also home to the 9,000-square-foot Collaboration Zone occupied by like-minded organizations that collaborate with RGI and each other to better serve the region.

The Chamber of Commerce named Woody a "Local Legend" in 2015 and awarded RGI the 2015 Green Frontier Award for its commitment to recycling and salvaging items for resale. Woody also received the 2015 Mathews Entrepreneurial Award from Goodwill Industries International. Woody has also been recognized by SourceAmerica, as

well as local jurisdictions.

While appreciative of the accolades, Woody measures success differently. "Time will tell if I've been successful," said Woody. "If the organization continues to anticipate challenges and create new employment pathways for people with barriers to employment, I'll know I created an organization with strong infrastructure, lasting values, and an unwavering sense of purpose. I'm confident in the staff and in Donnie Tolson, so I know the organization is in good hands." There's no doubt that the organization's continued success will be an ongoing tribute to his vision and service to those with disabilities and barriers to employment.

# Woody Van Valkenburgh: Gratitude and Thanks



**Woody Van Valkenburgh**  
 President/CEO  
 Rappahannock Goodwill Industries

As I write this column, I'm acutely aware of how lucky I've been throughout my career to be surrounded by the brightest, most talented, and most motivated people who are passionate about Rappahannock Goodwill

and our work in the community.

And what a community we have, filled with people who have responded to Goodwill's mission either by donating to, or shopping in, one of our retail stores. Donations create jobs and have kept TONS of waste out of landfills. If you've ever donated to or shopped with us, volunteered your time, or given financially to our organization, you have made a difference and I thank you.

I'm beyond grateful to RGI's board of directors, who set our strategic direction and empowered me to implement it. Having a strong, nimble board who understands how to adapt to the needs of the community has propelled our organization forward. Being nimble is something we talk a lot about in our

administrative offices. Our staff constantly reminds each other to "keep your knees bent" so we can be ready to switch or add gears at any time. These folks are among the best of the best and I'll miss their energy and ideas.

To the businesses and organizations who've partnered with RGI, financially or via job opportunities, you are pivotal to our success. My hope is that RGI will see continued growth in terms of service to the community, and that means more partnerships and solutions to address how the nature of work is changing. Automation is a real concern and potentially a real opportunity for people with barriers to employment. I'd like to ensure our most marginalized clients continue to find work – and, through work, find independence and fulfillment.

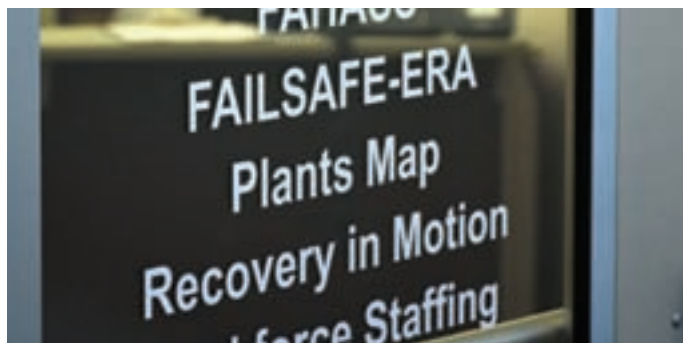
While I'll miss our staff, volunteers, clients and the work a great deal, I'm certain the time is right for a changing of the guard. Rappahannock Goodwill Industries is strong in terms of talent and the balance sheet. Incoming President and CEO Donnie Tolson knows the organization, our plan, and our mission.

My plan come January 1 is to enjoy myself and spend time with my lovely wife, Nancy, and our grandchildren. We'll travel, work around our house, and maybe even take a class or two. The possibilities are endless and I'm looking forward to writing the next chapter. I'll see you out there!

# The Collaboration Zone Is Complete!

In 2012, during a strategic planning meeting, the idea that Rappahannock Goodwill Industries was "of the neighborhood and not just in it" became the driving force that led to the concept of the Collaboration Zone (in local parlance, the CZ). The idea for the CZ was to provide physical office space in the Goodwill Community Resource Center to like-minded organizations to enhance mission effectiveness through collaboration with each other as well as RGI.

"I'm thrilled to announce that as of December 1, all 9,000 square feet of the Collaboration Zone is occupied by community-minded businesses," said Donnie Tolson, RGI's current chief



financial officer and incoming president and CEO. "When we came up with this concept three years ago, we were in a bit of uncharted territory for RGI. We hoped if we provided the space that

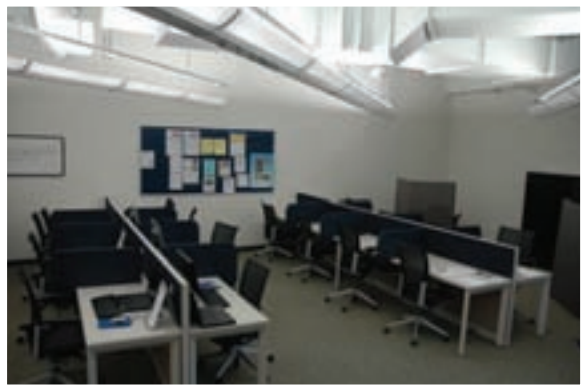
organizations would fill it and we'd be able to create synergy and opportunities to work together. It's already become more than we could have hoped for. In fact, we may have underestimated the desire for something like this in our community – we have a waiting list!"

Collaboration Zone Partners include: Children's Home Society, College Hunks Hauling and Moving, FAILSAFE-ERA, Fredericksburg Area HIV/AIDS Support Services (FAHASS), Plants Map, Recovery in Motion, Taskforce Staffing, and The Childcare Network.

Relationships between RGI and these CZ organizations are solidifying and opportunities to work together have already presented themselves. Examples include:

- Goodwill's Custodial Services Unit has contracts to clean several CZ partner offices.
- Plants Map has hired Goodwill staffers to print and ship their interactive horticultural tags, which allow gardeners to label their plants and display a QR code that can be scanned to connect with that plant's PlantsMap.com profile.
- FAHASS recently wrote a grant to advance community health and included a workforce component to help its clients find jobs. RGI provides many of these workforce services and is a sub-grantee as a result of the collaboration.
- Recovery in Motion and FAILSAFE-ERA both serve clients who need vocational help and support reentering the workforce. The flow of traffic between their offices and our Job Help Center has increased.

To learn more about our Collaboration Zone partners and the work they are doing in the community, visit [www.fredgoodwill.org/about/collaboration-zone](http://www.fredgoodwill.org/about/collaboration-zone).



## A Good Year for Goodwill

Make that an excellent year for Goodwill! To date, we've provided services to 6,022 people and placed 811 persons in the workforce. Data confirms the ever-growing need in the region we serve, and our success is a direct result of RGI's commitment to creating learning and employment opportunities either ourselves or through partnerships within the community.

The opening of the Culpeper Workforce Center (CWC) has had a direct impact on our service numbers. Since opening its doors in July of this year, the CWC has already served 936 people. This partly federal- and state-funded, full-service site provides core self-service job search assistance to all job seekers, and intensive individualized services to those who are eligible. The Center also provides access to other partner program services as required by federal legislation.

RGI has been able to offer free adult literacy tutoring through our GoodSkills Literacy Corps program. This program utilizes ten full-time AmeriCorps members to perform direct service activities, including one-on-one tutoring of individuals in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and basic computing skills. Lack of basic literacy skills is a huge barrier to employment, one that's often easily correctable. AmeriCorps members help us provide these skills at no cost to our participants.

The Rappahannock United Way (RUW) provides funding for two evolving and vital RGI programs. The Workforce Education Resource Navigator is a program in partnership with

Empowerhouse that provides vocational services to victims of domestic violence. RGI helps them develop their own roadmaps for obtaining the necessary skills to thrive in the working world. RGI's Career Connected Education Program (CCEP) is a partnership with Germanna Community College (GCC) to address the significant barriers to employment for the 240+ students with documented disabilities enrolled at GCC. The CCEP program offers part-time students with documented disabilities the opportunity to hold steady jobs with Goodwill, which imparts experience and skills relevant to post-graduate employment.

Post-graduation, RGI offers placement assistance through our Job Help Centers.

As we enter a new year, RGI will continue to seek more partnerships that allow the organization to meet the needs of people with barriers to employment.

If you are interested in becoming an RGI partner, contact Megan Bergen, VP of Mission Services. [Megan.Bergen@FredGoodwill.org](mailto:Megan.Bergen@FredGoodwill.org).



### End-of-Year Donations

Please consider an end-of-year donation to Rappahannock Goodwill! Our donation centers will be open through December 31 at 5pm. You can also donate financially at [www.FredGoodwill.org/donate-online](http://www.FredGoodwill.org/donate-online). Thank you!