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NEWS RELEASE

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GOODWILL SEEKS VOLUNTEER MENTORS TO HELP TEENS FIND A BETTER FUTURE

PITTSBURGH, March 31, 2010 – Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania is looking for adult volunteers who want to help young people overcome disadvantages and avoid delinquency. The effort is part of a new national mentoring program known as Goodwill GoodGuides™, designed to help teens finish school and transition into productive careers through the guidance of trusted adults.

Currently, over 50 at-risk youth throughout the area have been identified and are waiting on the support the GoodGuides™ program. Because of this, there is an urgent need for volunteers to offer help for these young people.

“Goodwill has a long history of helping people find work,” said Michael J. Smith, Goodwill SWPA President / CEO. “A crucial part of that history is making sure that families are strong. Adults who become Goodwill GoodGuides™ will help keep youth who are at-risk get on the right path, stay away from trouble and prepare for a better future.”

The program targets youths between the ages of 12 and 17 who are at risk for dropping out of school, facing legal troubles, or at risk for delinquency due to issues such as abuse, disability or drug or alcohol dependence. Its overall goal is to help potentially troubled young people build career plans and skills by providing structured and supportive relationships with trusted adult mentors. Specific goals are improved school attendance and academic scores, high school graduation, career exploration, job shadowing, service learning and financial literacy.

“Goodwill can readily identify many young people who can benefit from this

(more)

program because of our extensive work with individuals and families with various disadvantages,” Mr. Smith said. “Our challenge is to find enough qualified adults who are willing to make a commitment to serve as mentors and to engage at-risk youths in promoting their career development and life skills.”

GoodGuides™ volunteer mentors must be 21 or older, submit to a background check, and agree to a one-year commitment. They will receive mentor training and be required to communicate weekly with the youths, spend six to eight hours a month with them, and communicate monthly with the Goodwill mentoring specialist.

Mentors from the business community will be asked to share insights into the working world and to help youths explore career challenges and opportunities.

For more information about becoming a volunteer mentor or to suggest a youth who might benefit from this program, please contact Jackie Abel-Stavropoulos, Program Manager with Goodwill SWPA, at 412-390-2308 or Jackie.stavropoulos@goodwillswpa.org.

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