

**For Immediate Release:**

**Celebrating 125 years of helping people improve their lives with work!**

In 1890, just one year after the Oklahoma Land rush, Goodwill of the Great Plains, then known as Wall Street Mission was formed. Named after a street in the South Bottoms of Sioux City, IA, it served as a tiny Sunday school. In 1919, one year after the end of World War I, Reverend John P. Hantla, a circuit preacher in Nebraska, moved to Sioux City to be the superintendent of the school. Three years later, Hantla traveled to Boston, MA on a mission to learn about an amazing new philosophy founded by Edgar Helms known as Goodwill. The philosophy was designed to help disabled and disadvantaged people achieve self-sufficiency and earn a living by collecting, mending and selling donated clothes and household goods. Following Helm’s guidance, Hantla gave birth to Wall Street Mission Goodwill Industries in Sioux City. A philosophy of retail stores funding programs and services.

In the roaring 20’s Goodwill opened its Camp in South Sioux City, NE and started hosting Thanksgiving Dinners for the needy, a tradition that would last for 86 years. During this time Goodwill also started a bread line that would later be taken over by the City of Sioux City.

In 1943, at the height of World War II, Wall Street Mission Goodwill Industries had its first Shoe Party providing shoes for children in need, a tradition that continues today, throughout their territory.

Fast forwarding to 1959, the same year Alaska and Hawaii became states, Reverend John Paul Hantla, the son of their founder, became director of the Mission and another store opened in South Sioux City, NE. In the 60’s stores were opened in Fort Dodge, IA and Sioux Falls, SD. In the 70’s they opened stores in Mason City, IA, Yankton, SD, and on West 4th in Sioux City, two years after a fire destroyed the Goodwill Building on Wall Street.

In 1996, John Hantla became the third generation in the Hantla family to be appointed as president of Goodwill Industries Wall Street Mission. Hantla said, “The majority of people know Goodwill for the stores and thankfully many make donations to these stores, but when I tell people about the programs we offer they often say, “I had no idea you did that.” “Today our name has been changed to Goodwill of the Great Plains, which more accurately represents the second largest territory of any Goodwill in the United States. From Mason City, IA to Rapid City, SD our territory is 600 miles wide, includes four states and contains 1.2 million people. Within this territory we operate 21 stores and two e-commerce sites, and our programs give a whole new meaning to our mission of helping people, suffering all kinds of hardships, transform their lives by making it convenient for them to take the first step towards a better future by getting a job.”

In 2014, Goodwill’s Connection Centers, which are job creation sites offering vocational and job placement services, located inside nine of their stores served over 3,500 people. This directly resulted in over 15-hundred people getting jobs at over 100 businesses throughout their territory. Hantla said, “We serve a wide variety of people from U.S. veterans, and persons with disabilities, to immigrants, felons and anyone between. We have a rich history of helping people improve their quality of life, and we have only tapped the surface of our opportunity to serve the people of our territory. We are taking strategic steps to explore entrepreneurial ideas with visionary people as we shepherd Goodwill of the Great Plains into the future. “

**MEDIA CONTACT**

Mallory Gaul, Community Marketing Manager

Goodwill of the Great Plains

712-224-1338

marketing@goodwillgreatplains.org

www.goodwillgreatplains.org – www.facebook.com/GoodwillGreatPlains

**About Goodwill of the Great Plains**

Goodwill of the Great Plains is a community-based non-profit 501c3 organization headquartered in Sioux City, IA serving South Dakota, and portions of Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota. Last year Goodwill served over 16,000 people through mission programming funded in part by 21 donated goods retail stores. Goodwill programs received accreditation from CARF and a voluntary board of directors governs the organization. Please visit the Goodwill of the Great Plains website at [www.goodwillgreatplains.org](http://www.goodwillgreatplains.org) to learn more about our organization.

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