Partner Profile

Contract Partner of the Year: Whirlpool Amana Receives Recognition

The team from Whirlpool Amana poses with their plaque. From Left: Tina York, Kyle Heineman, Josh Pesek, Dan Bruns and Andrew Schrepfer. They were honored to attend The Edgars and receive this award recognizing their partnership with Goodwill.
Goodwill of the Heartland recognized Whirlpool Amana as its 2016 Contract Partner of the Year at The Edgars Achievement Awards on May 12th at the Coralville Marriott. Goodwill’s relationship with global appliance leader, Whirlpool Amana, began in 2007 when our contracts department began assembling drain funnels for their refrigerator manufacturing lines. Since then, the partnership has expanded to include the kitting, repacking and subassembly of 51 different finished part numbers.

The impact of the partnership is clear when hearing the stories of the people we serve. One, an 80-year old Korean War veteran who assembles drain funnels, said that coming to work at Goodwill invigorates him. Another trainee emigrated from Vietnam with no high school diploma and little work experience. He recently graduated from Goodwill’s Light Manufacturing Program, where he gained experience working on a variety of Whirlpool projects. When he received his certificate, he held it up and beamed with pride. A single mother of two was recently offered her very first job, in Contract Services. She will help build ice doors for refrigerators made at Whirlpool Amana. Whirlpool’s partnership with Goodwill has changed many lives for the better over the past nine years.

In 2016 alone, the Contract Services team produced 5.2 million finished products for Whirlpool Corporation. This created work and training opportunities for over 200 people at Goodwill’s Employment and Training Centers.

Hear from Whirlpool Amana in their own words about their experience in working with Goodwill’s Contract Services: https://www.youtube.com/GoodwillHeartland

Heartland Goodwill Enterprises Lands $18 Million AbilityOne Vegetable Oil Contract

Heartland Goodwill Enterprises, a separate nonprofit corporation affiliated with Goodwill of the Heartland, was selected to take on a sizable contract to package vegetable oil for the USDA’s international and domestic food aid program. The contract is expected to be around $18 million annually for between 10,000 – 14,000 metric tons of oil packaged in four different container types.

This contract is only available to nonprofit agencies that create jobs for people with significant disabilities through a set aside program called AbilityOne. For more information on AbilityOne, visit: http://www.abilityone.gov/abilityone_program/history.html

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 10.5 percent in 2016, more than twice that of those with no disability (4.6 percent). Heartland Goodwill Enterprises projects creating more than 60 jobs in eastern Iowa with approximately 40 of those positions filled by people with disabilities.

Goodwill of the Heartland serves people with a wide range of employment barriers, not just those with disabilities. In order to meet the direct labor ratio requirements of AbilityOne, it established Heartland Goodwill Enterprises in 2013 to administer its AbilityOne contracts. Current contracts include custodial work at the Iowa City Federal Building, the Herbert Hoover Library and Museum in West Branch, the Coralville Reservoir and the Federal Courthouse and Army Corps of Engineers office in Davenport.

Next steps include negotiating a price for the packaged oil with the USDA that is acceptable to both organizations, conducting a talent search for a process engineer with edible oil experience and arranging for project financing. Initial efforts will also include selecting a food packaging facility within the Goodwill of the Heartland service area which includes the Iowa City/Cedar Rapids corridor and the Quad Cities.
Contracts Launches New Manufacturing Training Program

With its new Light Manufacturing Training Program, Goodwill of the Heartland is meeting a local workforce need while also connecting job seekers with livable wage jobs. The program, which launched in early 2017, is providing paid training to people as they build the skills they need to succeed in area manufacturing jobs.

The organization received a $30,000 grant from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation to get the program started. Jess Schamberger, Vice President of Operations for Goodwill, noted this grant is helping both job seekers and manufacturers.

Schamberger said, “Our local manufacturing sector offers good paying jobs, but we know that many companies are experiencing workforce issues. They are having difficulty recruiting and retaining skilled workers for entry level positions.”

She added, “With this new program, our intent is to help those that are unemployed or underemployed achieve greater financial independence while simultaneously providing a workforce solution that closes the skill gap manufacturers face.”

Goodwill’s program uses on-the-job experience and classroom-based training to prepare participants for manufacturing employment. The classroom learning includes safety and manufacturing continuing education coursework at no cost through a partnership with Kirkwood Community College.

The trainees work a minimum of 200 hours on assembly, packaging, inspection and recycling production processes. The elements of the program are based on the Advanced Manufacturing Competency Model, an industry standard created by manufacturers. The on-the-job experience component takes place through Goodwill’s Contract Services Division.

Goodwill’s Contract Services Division is ISO 9001:2015 certified, with locations in both Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. The organization partners with area manufacturers to create paid training opportunities for people that face employment barriers. Goodwill has other job training programs in place targeted to specific populations like veterans, individuals with disabilities and people with a history of substance abuse. This new program is different because there are no restrictions on who it can serve.

Jaynelle Gryp is a recent graduate of the light manufacturing training program. This mother of two had a criminal background and no prior manufacturing experience. She recently completed an internship making $15 an hour at the Parker Hannifin location in Hiawatha. Parker Hannifin is a Fortune 250 global leader in motion and control technologies.

“I feel like I can do something now, Gryp said. “Before I felt like I might be stuck at low-income jobs with bad hours and no benefits.”

Kirkwood is partnering with Goodwill to offer 4-week paid internships to successful graduates. Internships give job seekers the opportunity to demonstrate their skills to employers while earning a paycheck. Kirkwood’s Vice President of Continuing Education and Training Services, Kim Becicka, said the internship experience also allows businesses to assess the talents of Goodwill graduates at no cost to the employer.

“Employers are able to understand and see what type of education and training has been provided and what types of skills have been learned through the on-the-job training experience,” Becicka said.

The hope is that these internships will ultimately lead to full-time employment for program graduates. In addition to this job placement help, Goodwill also provides case management and follow-up support. Goodwill connects program participants with needed community resources and addresses employment barriers including transportation, healthcare, financial management and childcare.

Schamberger said, “We want to help our graduates succeed and maintain their jobs long-term. This program is designed to do just that.” To date, 10 people have completed the program and 4 have secured employment.
Kirkwood Community College is partnering with Goodwill to offer two courses, free of charge, for participants in the Light Manufacturing Training Program: Foundations of Lean and OSHA-10. Foundations provides an introduction to Lean thinking teaching concepts and tools that drive waste out of business processes so resources are used to add value to customer products. OSHA-10 covers general industry safety and health principles, OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) policies and procedures and general industry standards. Participants who successfully complete the course receive a certification card from OSHA. Goodwill program participants are enrolled in coursework at no cost while earning continuing education credits.