

# Working!

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**Stable  
Families  
Make for  
Brighter  
Futures**

**Latinos  
Link to  
Employment**  
at Goodwill

The  
**Paper Chase:  
R.I.P.**



# Opening Doors



In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act became law, guaranteeing equal opportunity for people with disabilities in public accommodations, commercial facilities, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications. Today, however, unemployment for people with disabilities remains high, at about three times the national average.

Thanks to workplace modifications, Ernie Berry's up to speed with all his responsibilities—from coursework to business meetings. Berry says, "I could not do my job without the adaptive software." Not only is Berry getting the job done, he asserts, "I am able to do all of my work faster."

## Assistive Technology and Accommodating Attitudes Open Doors for Workers

Larry Cain works as a Rehabilitation Technologist at Goodwill Industries of Northwest Ohio in Toledo. A certified assistive technology practitioner, Cain's expertise in providing effective, appropriate job accommodations is sought by both workers and employers, including a variety of state agencies.

Just one of the people Cain has worked with is Ernie Berry. Ambitious and already quite accomplished at age 22, Berry works as an administrative expert for the City of Toledo Department of Affirmative Action, and coordinates the city's response to the Americans with Disabilities Act. He's also working towards a Master's degree, and serves on the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities. As if this weren't enough to keep him busy, Berry's also running for Ohio State Representative. In 2006 alone, Disability Management helped 128 people get back to their jobs after incurring workplace injuries.

Berry's sight is impaired by a congenital condition called optic atrophy, making many of his daily tasks difficult and time-consuming. To address the challenges posed by his limited vision, Berry went to Goodwill and consulted with Cain. He recommended a variety of adaptive software and equipment, including Zoom Text®, Kurzweil 1000® Reading Program, an enlarged monitor for both his desktop and laptop computers, and a portable scanner to read text while away from his office.



## Getting Employees Back to Work Following Injuries

In Grandville, Michigan, employees of Goodwill Industries of Greater Grand Rapids' Disability Management program work with a variety of individuals who have incurred workplace injuries, helping them to continue working while not complicating their injuries.

"Disability Management serves an underserved population with barriers to employment," says Program Director Don Weemhoff.

The program boasts a 60 percent return-to-work rate, and individuals who complete the program leave reluctantly because the Goodwill program has offered them an environment where their abilities are highlighted, rather than their injuries.

Now in its fifth year, the Disability Management program works with over 50 insurance companies and employers to help people get back to work.



Paper shredding and pricing of new goods is typical of the light duty work that individuals perform when learning how to get back to work.

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## Accessibility's the Law, but Attitude's the Key

Battling the morning rush-hour, Linda McKinstry has driven herself to work for the past decade at Goodwill Industries of North Central Pennsylvania (DuBois).

Upon arrival, McKinstry's colleagues assist her out of the driver's seat, into a wheelchair, and finally to her motorized scooter. The Goodwill researched and trained colleagues in the various lifts that could safely transfer McKinstry to and from her scooter, while avoiding injury to her and themselves.

The DuBois Goodwill is designed to meet all accessibility requirements, but the accommodating attitudes of Goodwill staffers make it work, says McKinstry. "When you have a disability as visible as mine, it is not always easy to gain meaningful employment. At Goodwill I have been welcomed, encouraged and I have found a place that makes earning a paycheck meaningful."

McKinstry easily makes her way around the retail processing facility, including the jewelry area where she works. The Goodwill's safety director and her colleagues make it a priority to keep all areas clear so that McKinstry can maneuver around the entire building.

McKinstry has taken a leadership role in securing appropriate accommodations for others in her hometown of Brookville, where she has also helped establish designated handicapped parking areas in the city, and raised awareness of the need to make local schools accessible for all students. ■