

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF THE GREATER EAST BAY

Aftermath of the Dot Com Bust

A wise person once observed that, "success is a journey, not a destination." For some, the journey is not an easy one. This was certainly true for James.*

James came to Goodwill in December 2003 through a referral from a center in Vallejo that provides temporary shelter to the homeless in Solano County. Once, James lived the American dream—wife, children, a nice home, a good paying job. He had earned a living in the computer field working as a network administrator. But 2003 was not a good year for the high tech industry, and like so many in that field James lost his job.

With the loss of employment, the rest of James' life began to unravel as well. Mounting bills and no job prospects created pressures at home and eventually led to a separation from his wife and children, the loss of his home, and the repossession of his car. In an attempt to hold things together, James took a series of temporary jobs as a material handler and forklift operator with local employers. Unfortunately, these short-term jobs did not allow him to earn enough to pay his rent, and soon he found himself homeless as well. When he eventually attended an Applicant Orientation at Goodwill's training center in Cordelia, his 30-day time limit at the homeless shelter had almost run out.

With the help of Goodwill's employment specialist, James was able to quickly secure a full time material handler position with a local warehouse at \$8.00 per hour. This was enough to pay rent and help to stabilize his life for a time. Nevertheless, James' journey was not yet over.

In April 2004, Goodwill's Community Service Program in Cordelia was searching for a part-time computer instructor. James' experience was an excellent match for this position and he was offered the job and the opportunity to make re-entry into the computer field. James held this position for two months and did an excellent job for Goodwill. Although the position was an excellent bridge back into his chosen field, however, the part-time nature of the position still did provide him with long term stability he needed.

In June, again with the assistance of Goodwill staff, James secured a full time position as a Help Desk Technician at a data storage company in. He is currently earning \$10.50 per hour with full benefits available upon completion of this probation period. James' journey to success has been a winding path, but he feels he has gained his life back, and said, "If it weren't for Goodwill, I really don't know what would have happened to me."

* Name changed to protect the privacy of the Goodwill participant.