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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Making sure your Goodwill donations are helping

TACOMA, WA (July 8, 2019) – A broken doll, an old shower head, a worn couch, and floppy disks. These are examples of what some people donate to thrift stores. The problem? The items can't be resold and adds to the organization's trash pile.

Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region depends upon donations and thrift store sales to provide \$9 million worth of free services for the unemployed such as career training in a variety of fields, life skills education and job placement skills and assistance. But when people drop off things the non-profit cannot sell, it creates a sizable expense that reduces Goodwill's public services.

Sometimes, people will go as far as to drop off items after hours. Surveillance cameras observe people dumping off a used mattress, broken furniture and other obvious landfill items.



### What bad donations will cost this summer

In addition to cash, bad donations also take up resources and storage space, diverting more revenue away from Goodwill's free education and job programs.

During this peak season for donations (June – August) the cost to our Goodwill to store, transport and dispose of unsalable items or trash can reach upwards of \$320,000. And for Portland, Seattle and our Goodwill that summer seasonal cost approaches \$1,112,000 or \$4.3-million per year.

Over the past 12 months, the trash bill for Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier region continued to grow, hitting \$1.3-million.

### What can I donate?

Donation centers accept gently used clothing, household goods, toys and sporting goods, along with home decor. But there are some things these donation centers do not take. These can include treadmills, heavy entertainment centers, computer printers, food and car seats. For more information, here is a full list of who will take what at these donation centers, as well as alternatives to dropping off unusable items at Goodwill.

- <https://www.goodwillwa.org/donate/store-guidelines/>

### **Footnote: the recycling and scrap market is shrinking ...**

While Goodwill is America's top expert in reusing, salvaging or recycling items, the global market for recycle of glass, plastics, wood and cardboard is shrinking (due to material contamination restrictions). As a major participant in the global recycle market Goodwill sells to recycle or salvage operations what thrift customers don't want. That single shoe you accidentally donated can be paired up by a third-party salvage operation and reused overseas in third world markets. Same for some textiles that are gently worn but cannot be sold in Goodwill stores. Operating a \$3.8 million recycle and salvage business for unsold items, Goodwill of the Olympic and Rainier Region kept 87 million pounds of household goods out of the landfill in 2018. But the shrinking recycle market is a global problem that continues to mount. Less items are being accepted as more countries enter the industry and overtax existing capacity to process or salvage. And landfills will only be a short-term solution. In our cities and counties across the country this problem looms large because we lack enough infrastructure in our own country to handle our own waste.

### **About Goodwill of the Olympics & Rainier Region:**

***Our vision** is that very person has the opportunity to learn work and thrive in all aspects of life.*

***Our mission** is to help people reach their fullest potential through education, job placement, and career pathway services made possible by community donations, purchases and partnerships.*

As a unique, nonprofit social enterprise serving 15 counties, Goodwill leverages its thrift store revenue and community support to provide the region's unemployed with free career path training, life skills education and job placement in a variety of fields. This year Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region is on track to help more than 6,000 people gain new skills and enhance their quality of life through entry into computer and office, culinary, construction, environmental cleanup, barista, retail, and advanced manufacturing & warehouse careers. These programs are funded through generous financial gifts, public/private grants, business partnerships, revenue from our 37 thrift stores (including online sales), and salvage/recycle operations.

[www.goodwillwa.org](http://www.goodwillwa.org)

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