



GOODWILL-EASTER SEALS FOUNDATION
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Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota's (GESMN's) Power of Work Campaign Expands Digital Literacy Services

Funded by GESMN's ongoing Power of Work comprehensive capital campaign, new digital resources are now available.

Saint Paul, MINN., June 27, 2024 – Nonprofit organization Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota (gesmn.org) announces the expansion of its digital literacy programs. Feedback from program participants who used GESMN job training and career services in 2020 and 2021 revealed an urgent need to better assess participants' barriers to technology access and digital literacy and to develop programs to overcome those barriers. Campaign funding for technology fueled the expansion.

Metadel Lee serves as the digital services coordinator for GESMN and is working to create a more robust digital literacy program. Participants begin their journey by taking a digital skills and technology survey to allow career navigators to understand what skills they already have and what types of technology they have access to, so they can assist them with finding resources to improve their skills.

"We understand that just giving computers to participants doesn't solve the digital divide issue," explains Lee. "Tech access and digital literacy skills are unique to every person. While some may know everything about Instagram or TikTok, they may not know how to use a PC or set up an email account. Some people have steady and reliable access to the internet, others don't. We know that having access to technology and a diverse set of digital skills is essential for finding and keeping employment."

Training programs available through the Northstar Digital Literacy Program cover topics ranging from basic computer skills to email platforms, office applications and online career resources.

Funding for the expansion not only led to additional training programs, but also now allows GESMN to provide to participants:

- Monthly internet service through Comcast's Internet Essentials program
- Refurbished phones, tablets and laptops
- Keyboards and mice
- Hotspots

In addition, the Power of Work Campaign supported upgrades to GESMN's computer labs. The nonprofit now offers computer labs at 11 regional programming sites across Minnesota, and distributed over 200 technology resources to participants in the last year to help bridge the digital divide.

About Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota

Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that offers job training and customized career support to eliminate barriers to work and independence. Reuse and recycling operations contribute to Minnesota's environmental sustainability and employ nearly 2,000 people in the community. Proceeds from thrift retail, e-commerce, grants and financial contributions fund nearly 20 customized services that help Minnesotans get equitable access to jobs, create stable careers and advance in the workplace. Shopping and donating items divert over 65 million pounds from local landfills annually and have helped the organization connect people to jobs since 1919. Learn more at gesmn.org.