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## [Goodwill Furthers Commitment to Economic Mobility Following Opportunity Task Force Report](#)





Chris Jackson, EVP of Workforce Services & Organizational Development

*Guest post by Chris Jackson, Executive Vice President of Workforce Services & Organizational Development at Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont.*

In the words of Goodwill's founder, Rev. Edgar J. Helms, "Be dissatisfied with your work until all individuals in your community have the opportunity to live a life of usefulness and enjoy a maximum of abundant living." These words have been the call to action for Goodwill organizations across the nation for more

than 100 years.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, more than 150,000 people in our community live in poverty, and out of 50 major cities, we rank last in the chance for a child to climb the economic ladder. For the past two years, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force has worked tirelessly to understand these issues and with the release of their findings, there is a call to action for all of us.

All people in our community matter. The hope and the opportunity to prosper for all can be attainable, and race, geography and zip code should not dictate or pre-determine a child's life trajectory. That was the essence of the message that was shared by members of the Opportunity Task Force. After thoughtful inquiry, community engagement, soul searching and peeling back the layers, we can now better see our imperfections and opportunities.

The report shined a light on the fact that there is not just one issue that affects a person's ability to get ahead. It reinforces and confirms that the reasons people in our community get left behind are multi-faceted. The issues include factors beyond an individual's control, including the neighborhood in which they grew up and the quality of the school they attended. We know that there are system-level issues including access to affordable housing, healthcare and other basic needs, such as transportation, and affordable quality childcare and Pre-K. We are reminded that the stability of the family and the access to networks that provide a safety net are critical. The report reinforced that some level of post-secondary education and being prepared for work are key drivers of success.

This was necessary work. It allows us to see the potential, to be better, more resourceful, more committed, more inclusive and more united. There is a lot of work to do and the recommendations from the Opportunity Task Force set forth our intentions about what we want our community to be for ALL.

The factors that affect a person's ability to get ahead have been determined by decisions made over decades and even generations, including those related to public policy and economic development, and segregation. We should not expect any quick fixes. Positive and sustainable change will take time and require the collective will of all of us. It will require commitment, focus and patience.

The Opportunity Task Force has given us a perspective on the past and a vision for a new future. If we commit to working together with tolerance,

collaboration, trust, dialogue and hope, our community will retain and attract industry, talent and other investments that will sustain us.

We applaud the Opportunity Task Force efforts to lay the groundwork to build a healthy community for more people to prosper. At Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont, we commit ourselves to doing our part to work in partnership with other community agencies and leaders to ensure that all individuals and families in our community have the opportunity to climb the economic ladder through family sustaining employment.

We are committed to making a positive change in the lives of the individuals and families in our community. Are you up for the challenge? What is your commitment?

*Learn more and read the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force's full report at [www.LeadingOnOpportunity.org](http://www.LeadingOnOpportunity.org). Hear more from the voices of community partners [here](#).*

The post [Goodwill Furthers Commitment to Economic Mobility Following Opportunity Task Force Report](#) appeared first on [Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont](#).



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