

Meet Colette, Goodwill Graduate & New Spectrum Billing Specialist



From Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont <community@goodwillsp.org>
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After receiving services at Goodwill, Colette launched a new career.

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MEET COLETTE

"Goodwill will encourage, empower and prepare you for a foundation in the workforce," said Goodwill University graduate, Colette Simmons.

Today, Colette works as a billing specialist for Spectrum, a job she loves.

"I'm excited! I loved going to work when I was a teacher, but I'm really enjoying what I'm doing now," Colette explained.

The former educator worked as a math teacher for 20 years before retiring and working as a daycare worker. Like many others during the pandemic, Colette faced challenges and ultimately left her position at the daycare for her safety.

"Because I was working at a childcare center, I was afraid I was going to get the virus," she said.

FINDING GOODWILL

As a senior citizen, Colette worried about finding work and how she was going to take care of herself. In the interim, she received assistance from the nonprofit Crisis Assistance Ministry, who recommended her to Goodwill for employment.

"Goodwill was a good opportunity to rebrand myself and get some certifications under my belt," Colette explained.

Through [Goodwill University](#), Goodwill's job training division, Colette was able to take the [Customer Service Experience](#) and [Microsoft Essentials for Business](#) courses virtually, which helped her advance her skills.

"Actually, I tried to get hired at Spectrum before and I failed their test miserably," she said. "The customer service class taught me how to collaborate, how to deal with the public and how to speak. I had to change my demeanor to be inviting, learn how to probe, ask the right questions at the right time and show empathy for the customer."

Following the classes, Colette aced the interview and exam with Spectrum.

Training courses, like the one Colette took via Goodwill University, are available free of charge thanks to donations and purchases made by shoppers at [Charlotte-area Goodwill retail locations](#).

"Goodwill made me feel comfortable," Colette said when speaking on the training she received. "They educated me, they taught me how to do a phone interview and talk to people. They've made me look at the industry differently because now when I go to a store, I look at the people in the store as well as on the phone. I don't handle them the way I used to."

UTILIZING OTHER CAREER SERVICES

In addition to courses, Goodwill participants also receive [wraparound services](#). They have access to [family stabilizing services](#) and are assigned a Career Navigator and [Employer Engagement](#) representative. Colette's Career Navigator, Antonia "Toni" Voliton played a huge part in her success.

"Toni was excellent and assisted me along this road before I got employed," Colette said. "We did mock interviews and she helped me with my resume."

In addition, Colette says Toni made her feel special and provided her, an introvert, the confidence needed for her job interview.

Colette also received help from her Employer Engagement Representative Julie Salinas, who informed her of the Spectrum hiring event at the [Goodwill Opportunity Campus](#). Longstanding partnerships like this, between Goodwill and Spectrum, provide access to career opportunities for Goodwill participants.

Today, Colette is not only a Goodwill graduate, but an advocate for the nonprofit.

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