

Meet Charlie, Carpentry Graduate



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TUITION-FREE TRADES TRAINING

After working in sales for nearly a decade, Charlie Branson found himself ready for a change in his career. An unexpected layoff helped him take a step forward.

"I was looking to initiate a career shift," he recalled. "All of a sudden, I got laid off, so it sped up the process for me."

Growing up, Charlie watched his father balance a career in sales with carpentry, instilling in him a love for creating with his hands.

"I realized sitting at a desk wasn't stimulating enough for me," he said. "I came across Goodwill, and being able to do something completely for free and not worry about the financial risk while being unemployed – I thought it'd be a good move."

From there, Charlie took Goodwill's [tuition-free training programs](#) in [Construction Basics](#) and [Commercial Carpentry](#).

COMPLIMENTARY WRAPAROUND SERVICES

In the midst of the Carpentry program, Charlie was able to secure a new job in the industry with the help of Goodwill's [Employer Engagement team](#). Charlie was hired as a helper for Warco Construction, but soon was promoted to a Foreman in Training, with plans to progress further with the company.

"Within the next few months, I should be running a crew of my own," he said. "They've got a 24-month plan for me to be a superintendent, so I'll be running job sites soon."

For many people experiencing a career shift, navigating that change can be

daunting. Goodwill's Career Navigators assist with resume building and interview prep to make the transition easier. Charlie's Career Navigator, Verona Hendrix, helped him navigate the process.

"She's an angel," he said. "She helped me take what I knew and gear it towards the industry that I was going into."

PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY

Goodwill's training programs are offered at no cost to the community, thanks to shopping and donating at Goodwill's [36 retail locations](#) and generous [philanthropic donations](#). The opportunity to learn without the burden of student debt was essential for Charlie.

"My dad was diagnosed with a terminal illness while I was in college," he explained. "I was offered a full-time job, so I left community college. My stepmother and I have been trying to pay off medical bills, so I was scared to add more to the toll."

Charlie's dad has since passed, but he looks at being in the trades as a testament to his legacy.

"Before he passed away, we were working on a lot of things together, and I was starting to learn from him. So, I thought [working in the trades] would be a cool testimony to that," he said. "Being able to get certifications that mean something in the industry and can get me a foot in the door, all for free, while also getting someone who's going to walk me through it every step of the way – it was awesome."

Charlie encourages anyone who is on the fence about doing what it takes to launch a new career to just go for it.

"For anyone who is not happy with what they're doing, then take the leap of faith, because it doesn't hurt," he said. "You're not going to go backwards; you can only go forward."

THANK YOU



As the holidays and season of gratitude approach, we want to thank everyone who supports Goodwill - whether by donating gently used items, shopping at our stores, making financial contributions, hiring our participants or more. Your support makes a meaningful difference, helping to empower and uplift people in our community.

If you would like to help fund Goodwill's programs and services that we offer to the community free of charge - like those that helped Charlie on his pathway to prosperity - consider [dropping off your gently used donations](#) at one of our locations or [making a financial contribution](#).

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