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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Goodwill Honors Long Beach Chief of Police Robert Luna &
Community Action Team Founder, Justin Rudd
*Outstanding Goodwill Participants and Partners Also Recognized at
Annual Awards Event*
*Master of Ceremonies – 94.7 The WAVE’s Pat Prescott***

Long Beach, CA—February 27, 2019—Long Beach Chief of Police Robert Luna and Community Action Team Founder Justin Rudd were honored at Goodwill’s “Celebrate the Power of Work” Awards Dinner on February 20th. The awards event is held annually to honor exceptional community leaders, and inspirational individuals who’ve transformed their lives through job programs offered by Goodwill, Serving the People of Southern Los Angeles County (SOLAC).

Popular radio personality Pat Prescott of *94.7 The WAVE* served as emcee for the awards dinner, which was held at the Pacific Ballroom at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center. The event also recognized Goodwill’s Employer of the Year for their role in providing job opportunities to Goodwill’s job program participants.

Chief Robert Luna received the 2019 Community Leader of the Year award for his profound contribution to the community, through an established history of distinguished service, where he has exhibited leadership, inspiration, and gained recognition and respect from peers and the public. He was acknowledged for actively promoting the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, policing in a smart, focused and effective manner, and treating people with dignity and respect. Chief Luna was also recognized for his role in the support and growth of Goodwill SOLAC.

Justin Rudd, the Founder of Community Action Team was presented with the Goodwill's 2019 Catalyst of the Year award for his leadership that inspires positive change, displays motivational spirit, and love of community. Members of Goodwill's selection committee felt that Mr. Rudd exemplifies the individual Stephen Covey speaks of in the following quote:

"I am personally convinced that one person can be a change catalyst, a 'transformer' in any situation, any organization. Such an individual is yeast that can leaven an entire loaf. It requires vision, initiative, patience, respect, persistence, courage, and faith to be a transforming leader".

The Employer of the Year award was presented to PacWest Security Company. PacWest is a privately owned state-licensed security service company that offers innovative Security and Safety Solutions, Fire Life Safety Services, and Robotics solutions to augment their field personnel and reporting.

Over the past year PacWest Security has hired Goodwill's student graduates, as well as partnering with Goodwill for reverse referrals where in PacWest and the Goodwill SOLAC Loss Prevention Team attend recruiting events together where job seekers who want to work for PacWest are first referred to Goodwill for Loss Prevention and Security Training. Once trained, Goodwill refers the job seekers back to PacWest for employment.

Four prior participants of Goodwill's job programs were honored at the awards event for leading successful careers after graduation. These award recipients are: James Woods, Loss Prevention Graduate of the Year, The Wekhomba & Wahome Family, Graduate(s) of the Year; and Brenda Reyes, Graduate Employee of the Year.

James Woods, a graduate of Goodwill's Loss Prevention Training Program, is receiving high performance marks in his position as Manager of the Detail Specialist Department at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles, one of the world's largest - and most elite - auto museums in the world.

It was not long ago that James found himself homeless after the loss of his family's business. After coming to Goodwill, he recalls hearing his job coach say to him, "you give me 100 and I'll give you 110%". James says he did receive 110% from Goodwill's Anthony Ford, and will be forever grateful for the hand up.

The Wekhomba & Wahome Family, Goodwill's Graduate(s) of the Year, rose above their disadvantaging situations, together. Husband and wife, Wallace Wahome & Patricia Wekhomba, along with Wallace's brother Victor Wahome, all say they won the lottery figuratively and literally, when they arrived in the United States from Kenya. Patricia heard about Goodwill's Certified Healthcare Training Program online. The family supported each other throughout their training, with Wallace graduating in 2008, followed by Patricia in 2009, and Victor in 2010. Today, both Wallace and Victor are employed as Licensed Vocational Nurses, and Patricia is a Registered Nurse employed by Cedar Sinai Hospital in the oncology department. Patricia is continuing her education in the Master's program at United States University in San Diego.

For Brenda Reyes, childhood was not your typical experience. Brenda was born in 1989 in El Salvador and moved to the United States with her mother when she was only four years

old. The Reyes family settled in Montebello, CA, and like most immigrant families, starting out was never easy. Brenda was able to commit to her studies and graduated from Montebello High School. Being the oldest child, Brenda needed to find work in order to help support her family. After working sporadic part time hours, Brenda realized that she needed to pursue a career to assist her family. In 2015, Brenda enrolled in Goodwill's Loss Prevention Program. She excelled, and was awarded the program's Outstanding Achiever Award. Brenda was immediately hired by Rite Aid as a Loss Prevention Agent. Her supervisors immediately recognized her talents and work ethic and promoted her multiple times. While working at Rite Aid, Brenda learned of an opening at Goodwill for a security agent and receptionist, where she applied and was selected. It didn't take long before she found herself working in the Workforce Development Division, leading the recruitment efforts for the Loss Prevention Program that assisted her in becoming self-sufficient, not so many years ago.

The awards event received a wide range of sponsorship support from the local business and civic community. The event's Title Sponsors were Frank and Lisa Chapman, Diamond Sponsor was Willis Towers Watson, Gold Sponsors were Aetna, ECC Technology Services, and Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, Silver Sponsors were Alaska National Insurance Company, Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors – Janice Hahn, 4th District, Mercer Insurance, Southern California Edison, and TCI Transportation Inc., and the Bronze Sponsors were Alamitos Belmont Rehabilitation Hospital, American Gold Star Manor, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, California State University Dominguez Hills, Everest Insurance, Living Well Home Care, Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, Port of Long Beach, and St. Mary Medical Center Foundation. These and the other event sponsors can be viewed here: www.ThinkGood.org/PowerOfWork/

Goodwill SOLAC is a nonprofit organization that transforms donated goods into job training, education and placement services for individuals with barriers to employment. Goodwill SOLAC serves 22 cities and communities throughout Southern Los Angeles County. Goodwill SOLAC's main facility—located at 800 W. Pacific Coast Highway in Long Beach—houses its administrative offices, training programs, processing operations, transportation fleet, LiNKS Sign Language & Interpreting Services, a retail store and its e-commerce operations. To learn more about Goodwill career services or to find your nearest Goodwill store or donation center, visit www.ThinkGood.org.

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Photo Captions:

Photo Credit: Caught in the Moment Photography

Photo #1-below: From L to R Goodwill SOLAC Board Member Josef Levy; Goodwill SOLAC President and CEO Janet McCarthy; Community Leader of the Year award recipient Chief Robert Luna; former LA County Sherriff Jim McDonnell; event MC Pat Prescott 94.7 The WAVE; and Goodwill SOLAC Board Chair Anitra Dempsey.



Photo #2-below: Catalyst of the Year award recipient Justin Rudd (second, right) is pictured accepting his awarded as he stands with (from left) Goodwill SOLAC President and CEO Janet McCarthy; event MC Pat Prescott 94.7 The WAVE; and Goodwill SOLAC Board Chair Anitra Dempsey far right.

