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**Goodwill SOLAC Awards Workers Whose Lives Have Transformed
*Individuals Recognized for Their Hard Work and Perseverance
Demonstrated Through Goodwill's Job Program***

Long Beach, CA—February 27, 2015—Five individuals who once faced barriers to employment but have since transformed their lives through Goodwill's job programs were recognized at a special awards event last week. The awards event is held each year to commend individuals who've earned high job performance marks from employers who hired them through Goodwill, Serving the People of Southern Los Angeles County (SOLAC).

A Goodwill SOLAC employer and community partner also were honored for making it possible for many of Goodwill's participants to find jobs that have enabled them to lead self-sufficient lives. Also during the awards event, Los Angeles County Sheriff Jim McDonnell presided over the induction of the 2015 Goodwill SOLAC Members of the Board. Hosted by ABC7 Eyewitness News reporter Eileen Frere, the event was held at the Palos Verdes Golf Club and drew about 150 people.

The individual award recipients were: Carmel Goodwin, Achiever of the Year, Supported Employment; Charles Hunt, Goodwill Employee of the Year; Johnnie Mendoza, Graduate of the Year, Continuum of Care; Marschall Fisher, Achiever of the Year, Direct Employment Placement; and Tiarra Barrera, Graduate of the Year, Healthcare Academy.

While as a child Carmel Goodwin was diagnosed with development delays, she has never let her disability put limits on her life. Over the past decade, Carmel has served as a dedicated employee at the Goodwill retail store in Norwalk. She also is a former gymnast who has medaled at the Special Olympics.

Charles Hunt is a stand-out employee for the Goodwill retail store in Carson. Formerly incarcerated for nearly 20 years, Charles made a decision to change his life in prison and worked in warehousing through a prison job program. While he faced challenges finding work following his release, Goodwill SOLAC gave him a second chance by offering him a job as a sales associate, a position he's successfully held for nine straight years.

Johnnie Mendoza and Marschall Fisher also both experienced incarceration and struggled to find work after their release from prison. Yet, after meeting with Goodwill SOLAC's employment counselors, they were offered jobs in the food service industry. Today, Johnnie works in food prep for a Redondo Beach bistro, and Marschall works as a chef for a Long Beach café.

Five years ago, Tiarra Barrera was a single mother raising two young children while living in a low-income housing community. Determined to support her family, Tiarra enrolled in Goodwill SOLAC's Certified Nurse Assistant Training Program. She received supported services from Goodwill, such as assistance with uniforms, books, transportation, mentoring and state testing fees. During her training, Tiarra also took courses for the Registered Nurse Program at Long Beach City College, of which Goodwill provided her with \$1,000 scholarship and tutorial assistance to help her succeed. She was later accepted into the College's Associate Degree Nursing Program that she graduated from two years later. Tiarra will soon sit for her National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nursing. Upon receiving her license, she will begin a two-year contract to work as an RN for St. Mary Medical Center.

U.S. Security Associates was awarded the Employer of the Year award for their role in hiring nearly 20 graduates of Goodwill SOLAC's Loss Prevention Training Program since 2013. The Harbor Regional Center received the Community Partner of the Year award for providing oversight, technical assistance and funding authorization for countless numbers of individuals through 10 supported employment enclaves and individual placement sites throughout Southern Los Angeles County.

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. For more information about Goodwill SOLAC, please visit www.thinkgood.org.

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Photo Caption #1: In one of the most emotional moments of the evening, sales associate Charles Hunt raises his Employee of the Year award as event host Eileen Frere cheers along with the audience.

Photo Caption #2: Los Angeles County Sheriff Jim McDonnell is pictured reading the Oath of Office to the 2015 Goodwill SOLAC Members of the Board during the organization's annual awards dinner.