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**Inspiring Workers, U.S. Veterans Supporter Recognized
at Goodwill's "Celebrate the Power of Work" Awards**
*Honorees Commended for Dedication to Goodwill's Job Programs
and Community Service Contributions*

Long Beach, CA—February 23, 2016—Four inspiring workers, a local employer and a U.S. veterans supporter were honored last Wednesday at the "Celebrate the Power of Work" awards dinner hosted by Goodwill, Serving the People of Southern Los Angeles County (SOLAC). Nearly 400 people gathered at the event, which is organized each year to recognize individuals who have transformed their lives through Goodwill's job programs.

Radio personality Pat Prescott of 94.7 The Wave hosted the event, which was held at the scenic Lagunita Waterfront Pavilion at Hotel Maya in downtown Long Beach. A special appearance was made by two former members of The Supremes, who performed several songs before the packed audience.

The event's award recipients were: Brenda Cervantes, Achiever of the Year; Francisco Garcia, Graduate of the Year; Stephanie Ruiz, Graduate of the Year; and Gerardo Medina, Goodwill Employee of the Year.

Brenda Cervantes is working in her very first job as a sorter for Alcoa Fastening Systems. Yet, she is considered one of the most diligent workers on her crew. With a learning disability and no job history, Brenda endured a tough job search before she was hired by Alcoa. But through Goodwill's Supported Employment Program, she received one-on-one counseling that led to her job, enabling her to lead an economically independent life.

Francisco Garcia is currently being trained for a leadership position as a security officer for the Port of Long Beach. But before landing a job with the Port, he struggled to find work for two years after he was laid off from his coveted job as a warehouse manager. He eventually enrolled in Goodwill's Loss Prevention Training Program, a five-week course that led to his existing job.

Stephanie Ruiz earned a certificate in Culinary Arts from Cerritos College since her career dream is working as a pastry chef. Still, she found it difficult to find work in her field, as she suffered from seizures, spoke limited English and had no work history. But after completing Goodwill's career workshop at Cerritos College, she started putting her dreams into motion by working for two employers in the culinary field.

Goodwill custodian Gerardo Medina is equally valued for his friendly, positive demeanor as for his devotion to his job. Over the past 13 years that he's worked for Goodwill, Gerardo has made it his mission to impart daily words of encouragement to his fellow staff members. He says that being friendly to staffers is as important to him as making them feel comfortable about functioning in an orderly workspace.

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The Employer of the Year award was presented to Alamos Belmont Rehabilitation Hospital for being an exceptional partner of Goodwill SOLAC. Mark Hall, Administrator for Alamos Belmont, accepted the award on behalf of the hospital. The five-star skilled nursing facility serves as a clinical site for Goodwill's Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) Training Program. The hospital estimates that at least 40% of their CNA staff are Goodwill graduates.

American Gold Star Manor President and CEO Terry Geiling was honored with the 2016 Community Leader Award. Terry is the epitome of a true community leader, having led numerous boards and causes. An active Rotarian, Terry has participated in Rotary International trips to administer the polio vaccine to the children of migrant workers. But perhaps his most passionate role in the community is leading the American Gold Star Manor, a senior retirement facility for U.S. veterans and mothers who have lost children in the line of duty.

In addition to honoring the award recipients, the event also inducted the 2016 Goodwill SOLAC board members. Long Beach Police Chief Robert Luna officiated the board's oath of office after board chair Harry Saltzgaver addressed the audience about the organization's recent successes.

The awards event received a broad range of sponsorship support from the local business community. The event's top level Diamond Sponsor was Frank and Lisa Chapman. The Platinum Sponsors were: Executive Control Insurance Services and United Agencies. The Gold Sponsors were: Alcoa Fastening Systems and Rings; Century Housing Corporation; CSULB College of Continuing and Professional Education; and St. Mary Medical Center Foundation. The Bronze Sponsors were: Abode Communities; ECC Technology; Eleven Western Builders; Farmers & Merchants Bank; Harrington Group; and Long Beach Chamber of Commerce. (To view other event sponsors, visit www.ThinkGood.org.)

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: (Far right) Gerardo Medina is shown holding the Goodwill Employee of the Year award presented by (from left) event host Pat Prescott, Goodwill SOLAC Board Chair Harry Saltzgaver and Goodwill SOLAC President Janet McCarthy.

Photo Caption #2: 2016 Community Award Recipient Terry Geiling is shown giving his acceptance speech during the awards event.

Photo Caption #3: Long Beach Police Chief Robert Luna is pictured standing before a gavel that he used to officiate the Goodwill SOLAC Board's Oath of Office.