

Goodwill of Northern Illinois: VITA Program

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Yearly Report 2013

Taxpayers pay, on average, \$246 to have their income taxes prepared and filed each year, according to 2013 data from the National Society of Accountants. Most taxpayers do not have the funds to pay for these services, causing them to miss out on crucial tax credits that can substantially increase their annual household income. Goodwill prepares and files income tax returns for **no charge**, allowing taxpayers to keep every dollar of their hard-earned money.

Goodwill uses the IRS phrase “Earn It, Keep It, Save It” as a reminder for taxpayers and volunteers throughout the year. The income tax refund is the largest paycheck for many taxpayers, and Goodwill’s volunteers make sure that clients receive all the credits they qualify for each income tax season, including the American Opportunity Credit for college students and the Earned Income Tax Credit for working taxpayers.

What is VITA?

35 volunteers

donating
1,450 hours

preparing
2,087 tax returns

returning
2.1 million dollars to local communities!

Tax Sites Located in Goodwill of Northern Illinois’ Service Territory

Mobile Totals	DeKalb Totals	Rockford Totals	Machesney Park Totals
Returns: 188	Returns: 291	Returns: 487	Returns: 776
Refunds: \$239,280	Refunds: \$255,089	Refunds: \$612,744	Refunds: \$1,020,614
EITC: \$97,782	EITC: \$87,303	EITC: \$244,392	EITC: \$410,856
Education Credits: \$0	Education Credits: \$9,605	Education Credits: \$6,487	Education Credits: \$12,013

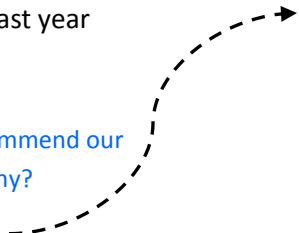
In addition to our permanent tax sites, we partnered with United Way, the National Disability Institute, and the Walmart Foundation to provide free filing online from any location.

Through this valuable partnership, an additional 345 taxpayers were able to file their taxes for no charge!

More about our customers...

- 197 people paid for tax help last year—we saved them nearly \$40,000 this year by doing their taxes at Goodwill!
- 67% plan to pay off bills with their refund
- 56% plan to save at least 10% of their refund
- 23% have a disability
- 62% used our tax sites last year

100% of our customers recommend our tax sites to other people! Why? See what they say...



Tax Season Highlights

New initiative: financial festival!

Goodwill developed a “financial festival” this year at its Rockford tax site. This initiative brought together local financial experts to serve as resources at a one-stop financial wellness event. Goodwill’s partners this year included MembersAlliance Credit Union, Family Credit Management, Prairie State Legal Services, Super Shredders, Northern Illinois Food Bank, and Rock Valley College. Over 70 families participated in this event. Booths included the following topics: credit reports, checking and savings accounts, job search assistance, legal advice, low cost internet and phone service, food benefit screening and sign-up, and college education programs and FAFSA assistance.

New focus: pre-season education!

Goodwill hosted an educational seminar before the tax season began, in an effort to educate local service providers and non-profit agencies on the importance of tax time credits. Through training provided by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Goodwill was able to provide educational outreach to more than twenty local agencies. Providing pre-season education means more awareness, more understanding, and more families who are educated about the importance of filing their tax returns in order to claim valuable tax time credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit.

New focus: employee engagement!

This year Goodwill has focused more on its employees and their financial wellness, in addition to the communities we serve. Taxes are an important piece of our financial puzzles, and through education and free tax preparation services, Goodwill is able to help put more money into employees’ pockets each year. 69 employees used Goodwill’s free tax preparation services this year at 13 different locations throughout northern Illinois, reflecting the participation of more than 20% of all employees.

**For more information about Goodwill’s VITA Program,
please call (815) 987-6200 or
visit us online at www.goodwillni.org/career/taxsite.html**

*The 2013 VITA Program was supported by the IRS, United Way of Rock River Valley,
City of Rockford, the Walmart Foundation, and Northern Illinois University.*

