



The sun is struggling to break through the clouds as Tyrone strides into work near 7 Mile and the Lodge on Detroit's Northwest side. He walks under the familiar glowing arches of McDonald's, then clocks in to begin his shift.

And while hundreds of drivers will cruise by the drive-thru window today, none may realize that this restaurant is more than just a restaurant to the young man wiping counters and sweeping floors inside. To Tyrone, it's a place of belonging and a demonstration that Goodwill connects people to opportunities that would otherwise be impossible. Several years ago, Tyrone was referred to Goodwill's Skill Building Program by his case manager at Detroit's Neighborhood Service Organization. Though he has cognitive and emotional challenges, Tyrone's case manager believed he also had potential that could be unlocked with the kind of training that only Goodwill provides.



Tyrone says Goodwill helped him gain skills and experience that made him employable so he could be independent.



Desiree L. Dismuke, a case manager for Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit, checks in with Tyrone regularly to encourage him to continue setting goals and to gauge progress at his new job working for McDonald's in Detroit.

Goodwill's Skill Building Program serves adults with significant barriers to employment and helps them function more independently. The program emphasizes vocational training, community integration and personal responsibility. Participants acquire skills for daily living, communication, socialization and employment. Goals are shaped around the individual. Skills are taught through classroom training, volunteering, paid work in a variety of settings and supported community employment.

Tyrone says his time in the program taught him that he could achieve more than most people expected of him. He shares, "I used to think I was just down on my luck but Goodwill gave me some great experiences. They encouraged me to learn new skills and helped me understand how to be part of a team." Following completion of the program, Tyrone gained experience working for Goodwill Automotive kitting parts for the domestic Big 3. Goodwill has been a Tier 1 supplier to the automotive industry since 1924. He says the work was difficult and moved at a fast pace, but he appreciated the chance to gain new skills. In time, his goal was to transition to a job outside of Goodwill and work fully in the community.

Earlier this year, Tyrone achieved that goal when Dustin Campbell, a Goodwill workforce development specialist, helped him prepare for interviews and earn a job at McDonald's. Now, Tyrone has responsibility for maintenance at his McDonald's location. He works about 25 hours per week and uses what he earns to grow his independence. He's using his paychecks to save for transportation, maybe get a place of his own and meet his responsibilities as a father. The day we stopped in to visit him, the restaurant was nearing completion of a renovation project. A brand new interior and fresh design will make this a welcoming place to grab something to eat. And so, too, will Tyrone, an employee who beams with pride as he does his job. Tyrone says, "I'm not the fastest or the best but I work my hardest. I care about doing a good job. Goodwill taught me that. I've learned not to compare myself to others but just to do the best I can in my own unique way."

Asked why he thinks people should give to support Goodwill, Tyrone looks up from his work and fires back, "So many places say they will help you. But when Goodwill says it, they mean it. I got skills from Goodwill I can use to better myself for the rest of my life. That matters. That makes a huge difference for people like me."