



Goodwill Industries of Central Florida E-Waste Program

Did you know that since 1981, 400 million computers have been sold in the United States?

Each year Americans discard tens of millions of computers, televisions and other electronic devices. The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that over 250 million computers will become obsolete within the next five years. This means that over 220 million tons of old computers and other electronics will make their way to the landfills.

Computer systems contain lead, mercury, chromium, nickel, zinc and other heavy metals. If disposed of improperly they pose serious dangers to human health and the environment. Electronic waste that is diverted from US landfills is sometimes exported to Asia, Africa, and other developing countries. Many of these countries' disposal operations pollute the environment by burning uncontained plastics and dumping acid into rivers and water supplies.

Goodwill's across the country are working with cities and government agencies to properly dispose of America's electronic waste. Nationally, Goodwill agencies receive millions of pounds of electronics at their donation centers, annually. Unfortunately, many electronics are not usable. Safe recycling and disposing of these products in landfills is very expensive and diverts critical dollars away from human services. More and more landfills are refusing to accept electronic products. Local and state governments are imposing strict regulations on their proper disposal.

The Goodwill movement is creating ways to economically and environmentally recycle and reuse donated electronics. In response to the need for a program to handle the surplus of computers, TVs and other electronics, Goodwill executives formed a task force to evaluate the situation. Today, many of the Goodwill's are successfully managing electronic donations through the formation of national partnerships and the de-manufacturing of computer components.

Goodwill Industries of Central Florida has embarked on the development of a new Electronic waste department focusing on collecting and de-manufacturing computer equipment. In the near future it will be expanded to include the testing, assembly, and reselling of computer systems. Computers donated at any one of the 25 retail locations and donation centers are gathered for processing at the main facility in Orlando. The donations are placed in large containers to be sorted in the Electronic Waste department.

Employees and clients inspect the computers, sorting into various bins- towers, monitors, keyboards mice, and cords. The towers are moved by conveyor belt to one of six work stations for de-manufacturing.

The outer casing is removed in order to find the inner workings -screw by screw and piece by piece

Power Sources.....

Floppy Disk Drives.....

CD Roms.....

Expansion Boards

Mother Boards.....

Memory Cards.....

And processors....

The computer tower is reduced to an empty steel shell.

Goodwill has founds manufacturers and recyclers willing to partner with them in the recycling and reuse of computers parts. Goodwill's electronic waste initiative seeks economically and environmentally sound ways to recycle and re-use donated electronic equipment. Since its inception the program has processed hundreds and thousands of pounds of electronic waste. It is estimated that the program will remove from the waste stream 1.1 million pounds of electronics, after being fully operational for one year. This means a tremendous cost savings to Goodwill.

So remember, the next time you have a computer to discard - don't dump it, donate it to Goodwill,

Any brand, any condition,

It's all good and it just feels good to donate to Goodwill!