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## A People-Centric Approach

Jeff Stieg, Senior Health & Wellness Specialist at Goodwill NCW, discusses their evolution to people-centric wellbeing and the collaboration it took to develop.

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Goodwill of NCW is one of 161 regional Goodwill organizations throughout North America. They serve 35 Wisconsin counties in the Northcentral WI region and employ 1,300 team members. Their goal is to help those with disabilities and other barriers to employment, maintain their independence and become fully contributing members to society. The vision of their wellness initiative is Live Well, Do Good! Their team members are working at a high level of wellbeing so they can bring their best selves to their work and personal lives.



WCWI, a community of connected employers who are transforming Wisconsin's workforce.

The Wellness Council of Wisconsin is the only nonprofit organization in Wisconsin dedicated exclusively to helping employers design results-oriented wellness strategies to maximize the health and productivity of their most valuable asset—their employees. As Wisconsin's premier resource for workplace wellness, WCWI's mission is to serve by:

- Empowering organization in transforming culture to change lives;
- Helping employers build comprehensive and sustainable programs;
- Dedicated to local support with a national network;
- Connecting over 700 likeminded professionals who support over 500 organizations.

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## A People-Centric Approach

**Katie Reiels, WCWI Project Strategist:** Hi Jeff! Thanks for being such an integral part of our member panel at WCWI's 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Employee Wellbeing Conference. Since we were only able to scratch the surface on everything Goodwill is doing in regards to employee wellbeing, let's take some time to expand on the progression of wellbeing at Goodwill as an organization that is continually looking for quality improvements in your strategy.

**Jeff Stieg:** Absolutely! As you know, I represent Goodwill of North Central WI. Our territory spans 35 counties in the Northcentral WI region. We have 30 locations across that territory with about 12-1300 team members working at each of those locations. We have people who come to us through programs to work, such as older adults getting back into workforce and students and/or adults who have barriers getting into the workforce so we assist them in getting job training. Overall, we have 1,400 people across 28 retail stores, a logistics center and our campus. Our campus houses our leadership team, people team, finance team and facilities. Goodwill's workforce is pretty diverse and truly spans the state of WI. Those two things can create some challenges when it comes to wellness programming.

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*We can't take a one size fits all approach. We have to be innovative with our delivery.*

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**KR:** I love that you state that you can't use a one-size-fits-all approach. It's easier said than done. Can you expand on how you have created a personalized approach to reach your diverse and geographically spanned workforce?

### EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING STRATEGY

**JS:** We started our program probably a lot different than other organizations have, with a very individualized approach. It was a "we'll meet you where you are" approach. We did this by investing in a one-on-one strategy. So back in 2009, we began a pilot with a part-time organizational chaplain and an on-site Nurse Practitioner (NP). The NP was providing blood pressure checks, general health checks and would assist team members in connecting to the medical system. The chaplain was helping team members with mental, spiritual and emotional concerns and goals. We started with a two-pronged approach working on the physical health and emotional health. The chaplain and NP traveled to a limited number of locations, as a pilot program and met team members at their store or location during work time. This worked out really well and our team members quickly built relationships with these individuals and truly felt that we were doing this for them and that

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it was a benefit to working at Goodwill, which built credibility for us. We saw favorable claims numbers from our health insurance plan, specifically from those sites that the nurse practitioner was visiting compared to the ones she was not. We were already seeing decreased unnecessary ER utilization and better management of chronic conditions.

In 2011, we decided to expand to reach all of our locations. I was brought on the team as a Health and Wellness Coach. From there, we couldn't just rely on an individual approach alone and started to develop a population health strategy. This is where the Well Workplace process really came into play for us. I began to apply the strategic process to our program in order to enhance its validity. In 2011, we put together our first operating plan with specific objectives built on some preliminary survey data, demographic data and workers compensation data. Our belief is if you can encourage individuals to become well and support them in their work environment, it will build a longer term strategy-with the workplace being the place for change.

Through some of our data collection, we started to see a need in financial wellbeing as many of our team members are living paycheck to paycheck, making \$9/hr. So we hired a Financial Wellness coach to be part of our Circles of Care team. In 2013, we continued to see flat claims cost since the inception of the Circles of Care team.

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*Based on evaluation survey responses, we were seeing that our Circles of Care team was our team member's number one benefit for working at Goodwill. That was a huge win for us to see that our work was something that was truly valued in the organization.*

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In 2015, we looked at data collection trends at the time and decided to incorporate HRA/Biometric testing. We launched a Personal Wellness Assessment at three retail stores, our corporate headquarters and our logistics hub. We offered a wellness day incentive (PTO) for just showing up and doing the screening. Seeing this aggregate health data was a great benefit to us and we made sure to communicate to our team members that they were getting valuable free testing done at work. We determined that we needed to create an action plan based on the results. That's when we created our Live Well Team which exists outside of our Circles of Care Team. All individuals on our Circles of Care team have wellness in their job titles. However, our Live Well Team is a diverse group of leaders that offer insight that we didn't have into their different areas of the business. Several of these people that sit on our Live Well team contain leadership positions at the organization and are key decision makers at the organization. This allowed us to make an even bigger impact outside of the corner of our HR department.

In 2016, the committee decided that the Health screenings was a success and we needed to expand to all locations.

In 2018, we opened up our onsite clinic. There is an abundant amount of savings that can be found through taking healthcare out of the healthcare system as a strategy for saving money. Our clinic is located at our

## TIMELINE

**2009:** Goodwill began with an individualized, one-on-one approach focusing on physical and emotional health of team members

**2011:** The organization expanded to include a Health Coach and a focus on the strategic Well Workplace Process to enhance their strategy. They reviewed key data metrics and developed a formal operating plan.

**2013:** Goodwill expanded strategic focus to include financial wellness coaching. Saw favorable results in maintaining a flat health care claims trend year-over-year.

**2015:** The organization piloted health screenings in three stores as a benefit to team members, and to collect meaningful data to further drive the strategy. They formed the Live Well team, a committed team of leaders who contribute to the review of data and collaborate to enhance the employee wellbeing strategy in alignment with Goodwill's overall mission and goals.

**2016:** Goodwill expanded the health screenings to all locations.

**2018:** They opened an Onsite Clinic to continue the effort to make healthcare accessible to their team members.

Logistics Center. We now have all Fox Cities locations that are eligible to use the clinic, which represents about 500 team members.

**KR:** Thank you for sharing that evolution. I think it's important to note, that you have really built a strong foundational strategy and continue to evaluate your efforts to strive for better, more supportive offerings to your team members. And you have strong and supportive teams to continue the progression of your strategy. When you talk about your Circles of Care and your Live Well team, how did you gain leadership support to create these teams and achieve a collaborative internal network?

## COMMITTED AND ALIGNED LEADERSHIP

**JS:** There were 2 big sells. One was building on the success of our Circles of Care team. They really drive our one-on-one strategy and laid the foundation of a strong, caring and supportive network. However, we needed to communicate how we can do better to move our culture forward. I like the term 'value of investment' and not just looking at wellness as a way to reduce cost, because it's so much more than that. We experience a challenge in recruiting, we need to be competitive for talent.

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*I really had to take a look at what our organization is trying to do. What are the goals of our program and how can I take what we were doing with wellness and tie it into the larger goals of our organization?*

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That really helped me to get the buy-in of our Live Well Team. The inception of the Live Well team was right off the heels of the Personal Wellness Assessment program and any organization that does health risk assessments knows that it is a significant investment. As an organization and as wellbeing practitioners, we have the obligation, duty, and the privilege to take that investment and make the most out of it. I wanted to make sure we were doing the most with the information, and to get the most out of it, I need a diverse group of individuals who are going to offer their feedback to make decisions from the data.

I'm fortunate because I don't have to do a lot of selling to our leadership because that's just who we are. Now that doesn't mean I'm off the hook for making a case for it, it just means I have more of an open door to make suggestions and that really helps.

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*Also, I know our culture and our number one value at Goodwill is to put people first. With this value in mind, people do things at Goodwill just because it is the right thing to do.*

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**KR:** Absolutely! But your organization exemplifies the foundational concept that is necessary for all organizations to have: successful support and forward-moving momentum from leadership. We know it's important to have leadership communicate these values system-wide. How often do you collaborate with your Live Well Team and include them in the communication of wellbeing at Goodwill?

## COLLABORATION IN SUPPORT OF WELLNESS

**JS:** I meet monthly with the Live Well Team and any big decisions on programming will go through them first. When we are planning a large initiative, we divvy up the work. They are a huge part of our vendor selection and learning process. They are a part of the review and reporting of our data collection methods. As a self-funded organization, I work very closely with our Benefits consultant and they will help with the interpretation and reporting of our data. Our Live Well Team is a huge part of our celebrations. Usually the location that had the highest amount of participation will get a healthy snack party. Having the Director of Retail Stores celebrating in person with their team on their accomplishments helps them stand out and reinforces the importance of wellness. The Live Well team communicates our wellbeing initiatives. Our Senior VP of Operations sits on our team and will communicate any new happenings, encouraging our team members to participate.

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We tend to get a lot higher participation because it's not just coming from me! I work with our Live Well Team to reach all retail locations. They all have their specialties: IT, Facilities, Communications are all represented so we can gain true perspectives on how to better serve Goodwill team members.



**KR:** You make such a good point that it's important to get multiple viewpoints with diverse representation on your team. For your data collection, do you feel like the HRA/Biometrics data that you are collecting still aligns with the goals of your wellness initiative?

**JS:** We always try to offer benefits equally throughout the organization. We've got full-time people and part-time people from all different demographics and different surrounding environments. Offering our biometric screening and health assessment program is a way for us to offer everyone the opportunity to get the testing done and have standardized data to use. Our onsite clinic and biometric testing is run by the same company so our NP is able to get this data and do direct outreach with those who are at higher risk. She's seen team members with extremely high cholesterol that have never known they had it due to the fact that they've never seen a doctor and these people are in their 30's and 40's. So it's a great benefit to our team members to get the testing for free at work as a part of our overall wellbeing strategy.

**KR:** Looking at your overall model of wellbeing, you focus on physical health, but you also focus on spiritual, financial, emotional and career. Share how your Circles of Care team encompasses all components of wellbeing at Goodwill.

## INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT THE WHOLE EMPLOYEE

**JS:** When you look at our logo you see that all of the wellbeing bubbles are connected and centered at the heart. This truly depicts that our strategy is about holistic wellness. At one point or another, someone is dealing with one of these aspects of wellbeing or perhaps all of them at once.

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*We see our team members as multi-dimension human beings who all have different spheres of influence. So we look at these dimensions of wellness and understand that our approach is people-centric and is centered at the heart. We communicate with methods of health education, but we aren't telling people our prescription for wellbeing. Instead, we are trying to help build you up from the inside out so you can connect that wisdom inside of you to help you determine where you want to go, what is your potential, what are your hopes, what are your dreams and how can we help you get there. That is the foundation of our team.*

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**KR:** I love that you state that wellbeing is not a prescription, but instead a discovery of what it means to you personally. With that in mind, it seems like your Circles of Care team have helped you align your wellbeing program into the overall culture of Goodwill. Would you say that is accurate?

## SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES

**JS:** Definitely, it's woven right into who we are and what we do. We've modified our facilities to accommodate meeting spaces with the Circles of Care team. The Circles of Care resources are part of our onboarding experience for team members.

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*It's everywhere. It's not just a program.*

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Even though we have two separate teams involved (Circles of Care and the Live Well team), they are both aligned. Our Live Well strategy is part of our Circles of Care strategy. Our Circles of Care team sits on our Live

Well committee and we make sure we are all on the same page in order to display and demonstrate a fully aligned and committed strategy.

**KR:** We talked about your Live Well Team and their representation but can you describe your Circles of Care team and how it functions?

**JS:** On our Circles of Care team we have 2 Health & Wellness Coaches, a financial wellness coach and an Organizational Chaplain. Each of these members gets out into the stores. We each maintain a coordinated monthly travel calendar to make sure we reach all of our sites at different intervals. Our Chaplain and Financial coach are out every 9 weeks. We make sure to get out to the stores and are a part of their team huddles. We are typically in 2 stores a day and so we will get to one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. We might share a special wellness topic at these meetings. We let team members know that we are there and will stay in the stores for about 2-3 hours at a time. Our team members can connect with us when we are not in the stores through an online scheduling calendar that is connected to Outlook. They can schedule with us in person or we can do Skype calls or email check in, whichever mode is most preferred.

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*We want our team member's interaction with the Circles of Care team to be a year round thing that sends the message that we are always there.*

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**KR:** That high touchpoint, especially in a regional retail setting is so impactful. Just hearing you talk about this interaction, it shows that building meaningful relationships at work and making the time to connect is so crucial to advancing a high trust environment. Do you feel like this strategy is well-received by team members?

**JS:** These sessions can get personal and people can be talking about very sensitive things. Team members want to be able to have these conversations with people that they trust. This knocks down the barrier of feeling apprehensive to share. Our Organizational Chaplain was out for a period of the year and I had team members asking me how she was doing and that they really missed her. Creating that emotional bond with people really opens the door to deep and meaningful conversations.

**KR:** That's amazing. I think with the combination of your Circles of Care team and your Live Well team, you are able to combat some of those trust barriers by making leadership and wellness practitioners open to the diverse workforce you serve. As you look into the future, what are some strategies that are on the horizon to further enhance Goodwill's wellbeing strategy?

**JS:** We are looking to continue to grow our onsite clinic strategy. We are also planning to continue to grow our career wellbeing piece. Our Financial Coach brought on career as a key focus area. But we've also worked to create our Goodwill University team, which focuses on internal team member development. There is a great parallel between continuous learning and holistic care and we want to continue to bridge the gap. We employ people who are working at a low wage and we know that isn't necessarily sustainable.

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*So how can we teach our team members the skills they need in order to move on to that next career and achieve their financial dreams or even just personal aspirations.*

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We are working with our CEO who wants to see more concrete career tracking both at our retail stores and our main campus. We want to provide the space for people to grow, but also provide tools. In conjunction to this, we are planning to take a deeper dive into our data collection methods through enhanced data analytics. We are also looking at how we can improve our evaluation efforts from our team members in regards to our individual programming. Currently, we do one annual survey that asks questions on all programming. We are currently struggling to make progress in reducing the smoking rate below 20% and that's really important to us. We are looking at different avenues of how to get that number down. We were able to make a small dent in

that number after we implemented health screenings because we do test for nicotine and we saw a 2% drop, but that's been steady for a couple of years. We are working with our brokers, other employers, and best practices to see what our best option should be. We struggle because we have a lot of low income team members and unfortunately when you look at the data, an individual's health is more impacted by their financial status and their environment than it is by their own genetics. We are really trying to help our team members overcome these barriers.

**KR:** I love that your future strategy includes career tracking and teaching employees the skills to be successful. What would you say is your biggest barrier in your position and in impacting health behavior change as you strive to help your team members in their journey?

**JS:** The biggest barrier is simply the choices that are made by the population. We can't change people's choices, we can only influence and educate. I'm a big believer in the Blue Zones project and the oasis of wellbeing in a scene of poor health. I look at the location of our stores and they are surrounded with fast food restaurants and convenient stores. Walking and biking can be dangerous in some of the cities and not practical. So we can try to create this oasis of health at the workplace, but it ultimately comes down to the choices we make, the environments people live in and we don't always have the influence to change those things. It's a long term strategy and there has to be a lot of players involved.

**KR:** Absolutely. Since you are in a role of influence at Goodwill, what words of advice do you have for other wellbeing practitioners who are dealing with similar barriers?

**JS:** To get influence at an organization it takes time.

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*But I highly recommend you become part of the business and operations of the industry that you are working in. Don't see yourself as someone outside of the operations that you are working in more as if you are part of it.*

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Know your industry, know how your company is performing, and know the numbers and business terms because not only is that going to be helpful in your role but it will also give you credibility. Once you have that credibility, it will be easier to deliver. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Be reliable and part of the company. Always see yourself as someone who has an expert level knowledge to help your company solve the challenges you are facing. As someone who has background in primarily health promotion, it limited my understanding of the business and corresponding HR strategies. So really trying to understand those parts of the business helped me become a reliable influencer.

**KR:** So often we hear people say that I'm not in a position to make a decision or make an impact. But by taking initiative to understand your business and industry, is a great step to achieve that level of influence. Thank you so much for your time, Jeff! We appreciate you sharing your experiences to continue to create a community of wellbeing practitioners who support one another in Wisconsin!

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### 3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. In order to create meaningful connections with employees, it's imperative to implement multiple touchpoints and an aligned organizational support strategy that includes the perspectives of key stakeholders.
2. There is no prescription for wellbeing. Employees need support in their multiple dimensions of wellness and it's important to continuously look for ways to improve upon how to educate and support at the workplace.
3. In order to enhance your influence and validity as a wellness practitioner, you must become a part of the business and see yourself as vital to the core functions of your business.



### **ABOUT JEFF STIEG**

As Senior Health and Wellness Specialist for Goodwill of North Central Wisconsin, Jeff Stieg (pictured in center along with members of the Circles of Care Team) strives to make the workplace a catalyst for positive personal growth and self-realization all while providing wellness related solutions for business challenges. Jeff's journey into the workplace wellness arena began long ago when he realized his personal mission of inspiring others on their path of health and wellbeing. With a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology and a slew of certifications in the Wellness and HR field, Jeff worked in several settings before falling in love with the mission and culture of Goodwill where he's done his work since 2012

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The Wellness Council of Wisconsin (WCWI)

[www.wellnesscouncilwi.org](http://www.wellnesscouncilwi.org)

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