

# Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc.

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## **Paralyzed shooting victim now helps others with disabilities**

*Left a quadriplegic after a drug-related shooting, Houston Leek now advocates for others with disabilities while pursuing career as graphic designer for a local bilingual telephone directory.*

Five years ago, Houston Leek was paralyzed from the chest down during a shooting. Today he works from his wheelchair as a graphic designer and is helping pave the way for others with disabilities to live independent lives.

At the time of his accident, Leek was living in Gary, Indiana. An argument about a drug deal escalated into a shooting which left him a quadriplegic, with use of his arms and hands, but not his fingers. He endured months of hospitalization and painful rehabilitation to learn to move again.

With the support of the Indiana Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Leek began a training program in computer graphic design at Goodwill Industries. "The class at Goodwill gave me a future. I felt like a regular person again," he says.

Now Leek works as a graphic designer and salesman for El Directorio, the Spanish-English phone directory, and is the vice president of the board of directors for the Indianapolis Resource Center for Independent Living (IRCIL), an organization that helps others who are leaving nursing and rehabilitation facilities to live independently.

"When I was in rehab, IRCIL helped hook me up with VR. VR got me to Goodwill and Goodwill gave me a lot of confidence to go out and do things for myself," he says. "I'm taking classes and going to conferences to increase my advocacy skills to help people with disabilities who want to get out and live on their own."

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News Release



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