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Goodwill Southern California Partners with The Footwear Collective to Reimagine the Future of Footwear

Los Angeles, CA, October 3, 2025 – Goodwill Southern California (GSC) in collaboration with The Footwear Collective (TFC) unveiled the **Footwear Futures Project**—a bold, first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at driving the footwear industry toward a circular future.

From **October 1st–31st, 2025**, consumers across the Greater Los Angeles area can bring any pair of shoes—any brand, any condition—to participating Goodwill SoCal locations. Check out the 50 collection sites across Los Angeles County <https://thefootwearcollective.earthdna.org/footwearfutures>

Shoes that are still in good, wearable condition will be resold at Goodwill SoCal’s stores. Shoes that have reached the end of their life will be directed to the Footwear Futures Project for testing—advancing innovation in sorting, recycling, and material recovery to help build the infrastructure needed for circularity.

“We’re proud to partner with Goodwill SoCal—the original reuse experts,” said Yuly Fuentes-Medel, Executive Director of The Footwear Collective. “For over a century, Goodwill has been giving products, including footwear, a second life. At The Footwear Collective, we share that vision: every pair deserves its highest and best use. But some shoes have been loved so much that repair or resale just isn’t an option. That’s the code we need to crack—and those are the shoes we’re determined to transform, unlocking new pathways to keep their materials in use for a truly circular future.”

A Movement Powered by People

At its core, The Footwear Collective is about collective action—and the Footwear Futures Project is their first real-world expression of that mission. By uniting different voices across the footwear ecosystem, TFC is tackling the barriers to circularity that no single player can solve alone. TFC believe progress begins with action, even if it’s imperfect action—because every step forward brings everyone closer to a circular future for footwear.

This project brings together consumers, nonprofits, innovators, and their brand members to test and scale circular solutions for the footwear industry. Membership includes **Altra, Brooks, Crocs, ECCO, New Balance, ON, Reformation, Steve Madden, Target, Vans, and Vibram** – industry leaders united by a shared commitment to reimagine the future of footwear and accelerate progress toward circularity.

“Sustainability and social impact have always been at the heart of what we do. Each year, we extend the life of millions of donated goods while funding job training and career placement programs for thousands of people,” said Margaret Frericks, Director at Goodwill SoCal. “This partnership allows us to expand on that commitment by giving consumers an easy way to keep even their most worn shoes in circulation—while creating both environmental impact and opportunities for the communities we serve.”

“At Brooks, we believe that sustainability is a shared responsibility—and the Footwear Futures Project exemplifies what’s possible when the industry comes together to build circular solutions,” said Dave Kemp, Director of Corporate Responsibility at Brooks Running. “We’re proud to collaborate with The Footwear Collective and our peers to pilot scalable takeback systems that meet the moment and move us toward a more circular future.”

Ilona Coremans, Head of Sustainable Solutions at ECCO, added, “Circularity is a responsibility we will have to embrace—not just as a goal of tomorrow. As a member of The Footwear Collective, ECCO is proud to join the Footwear Futures Project to explore solutions for end-of-life footwear and help shape a more sustainable future step by step.”

“A key part of our sustainability journey is creating a circular supply chain that prioritizes thriving people, resilient communities, and a healthier planet. The Footwear Collective enables strategic collaboration that not only accelerates our progress towards this goal but pushes the entire industry toward a more sustainable future.” stated Gregg Meyer, Chief Sustainability Officer and President of Steve Madden Corporate Foundation.

Consumers are the engine of this movement and their participation in returning used products is the tipping point between today’s linear model and tomorrow’s circular future.

What Will Happen to the Shoes

After sorting for reuse at Goodwill SoCal locations, footwear deemed unsellable will be directed to a sortation partner, where they will be analyzed and prepared for shipment to a network of innovators who will test new methods for separating materials and exploring circular solutions. These selected innovators will be revealed in the coming weeks.

The Footwear Collective will share frequent updates on the [Footwear Futures Project website](#), giving participants and supporters a clear view of what’s happening with the collected shoes, who’s involved, and the progress toward building the circular infrastructure we need.

Join the Movement

If you are in L.A. and ready to join the movement, bring your shoes to any participating [Goodwill SoCal location](#) from **October 1–31, 2025**, and help shape the future of footwear circularity.

This is just the beginning. Insights from our first collection in Los Angeles will shape where The Footwear Collective takes the Footwear Futures Project next. Whether you're in L.A. or beyond, join the movement at footwearfuturesproject.org and follow us on Instagram [@the_footwearcollective](https://www.instagram.com/the_footwearcollective) to join us and be the first to know when future programs launch.

About The Footwear Collective

The Footwear Collective is the first industry-specific initiative under EarthDNA, a nonprofit on a mission to empower individuals to take daily actions to heal spaceship Earth within a decade. As a membership organization with 11 leading footwear brands and retailers, we're reimagining the entire lifecycle of footwear to create a more innovative, more responsible industry—one that drives innovation while reducing commercial and environmental waste. By uniting brands, suppliers, and innovators—often competitors—under a shared goal, we focus on scoping, developing, and scaling circular solutions that are good for business and the planet. Learn more at earthdna.org/home/the-footwear-collective/.

About the Footwear Futures Project

The Footwear Futures Project is the first real-world initiative launched by The Footwear Collective to test and scale circular solutions for the footwear industry. Through a partnership with Goodwill Southern California and leading innovators—more to be revealed in coming weeks—the project collects used footwear, keeps wearable pairs in circulation, and pilots new pathways for recycling and material recovery. By bringing together consumers, industry leaders, and circular innovators, the Footwear Futures Project is shaping the blueprint for a circular future in footwear. Learn more at footwearfuturesproject.org.

About Goodwill Southern California

Since 1916, Goodwill SoCal has been at the forefront of “Transforming Lives Through the Power of Work,” serving vulnerable populations with the greatest barriers to employment. As the largest workforce development and social enterprise nonprofit in the region - with 2,800 employees, 12 Employment Centers, and 117 retail locations across LA, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties -- we deliver critical workforce solutions. Sustainability is also a core value for Goodwill SoCal. Each year, through the purchases of our 16 million shoppers, we divert more than 165 million pounds of material from the landfill. Learn more at goodwillsoocal.org.

Contact Us

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