

Mark Foster, Founder and President, Second Chance, Inc.

Mark Foster is Founder and President of Second Chance, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing job training and workforce development for Baltimore City's most disadvantaged residents. Through its workforce development program, Second Chance trains and employs individuals in deconstruction of buildings to salvage reusable materials, accepting and retrieving donated materials, and operating its 250,000 square-foot retail location.

After receiving a degree in Hotel Administration from Cornell University, Mark spent the first 20 years of his career in hospitality, managing and then developing hotels and restaurants. In 2000, he was motivated to give back to the community by creating a non-profit organization that offered training and job opportunities to people most in need of a pathway out of poverty after experiencing incarceration – those who needed a second chance. Mark also recognized the need for impacting the stream of usable material being dumped in a landfill every day and was able to combine these community needs together in creating Second Chance. The nonprofit was started with an original team of just four employees operating a small store and providing deconstruction services – the professional process of disassembling buildings and salvaging the reusable materials. The organization grew quickly and today Second Chance employs 250 people from the community and completes an average of 300 deconstruction projects each year stretching from Florida to Maine. Second Chance also picks up over 2,000 donations each year of furniture and other materials. Collectively, Second Chance diverts more than 40,000 tons of materials from being dumped at local landfills annually.

In 2003, Second Chance opened a 25,000 square foot retail location in downtown Baltimore, which has now grown to 250,000 square feet and offers a wide selection of donated and reclaimed items and materials. This unique social enterprise channels its profits generated through sales and deconstruction directly back into its workforce development programs focused on training program participants for sustainable employment. Since 2003, more than 2,000 individuals have been impacted by the training program and earned positions within Second Chance's deconstruction services or retail operations before moving on to other employment opportunities.

Over the years, Second Chance has established itself by providing life-changing opportunities to individuals in need, earned a highly respected reputation for preservation and conservation of our planet's natural resources and running one of Baltimore's most unique shopping destinations. In late 2019, the organization was a recipient of the Neighborhood Builders® grant from Bank of America, which recognized the achievements impacting the community and awarded Second Chance \$200,000 to further expand its workforce development program.

About Second Chance, Inc.

Second Chance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to deconstructing buildings and homes, salvaging reusable materials, and providing job training and workforce development for those with employment obstacles in the Baltimore region. Second Chance is a social enterprise which, in addition to its professional deconstruction services, operates a retail location in downtown Baltimore that occupies 250,000 square feet and offers a wide selection of donated and reclaimed items and materials. Profits generated directly support the Second Chance workforce development training program, which is focused on increasing the skill levels, employability and compensation potential of all participants. Training program graduates are guaranteed associate or supervisory-level positions within Second Chance's deconstruction services or retail operations. To learn more, please visit secondchanceinc.org.