

Walmart opens training academy in Fairfield; 3rd in NorCal

September 08, 2017

FAIRFIELD — Walmart opened an employee training academy Thursday in [Fairfield](#), the third such academy in Northern California, and in the process handed out more than \$400,000 to various community organizations through the company's foundation.

Academies are located in or adjacent to a Walmart supercenter. They are a dedicated facility where hourly supervisors and department managers receive two weeks of hands-on training that combines both the classroom and the sales floor, according to a company press release.

“Our training academies help provide associates with the skills they need to succeed and advance, while creating a better and more consistent customer experience,” said Kristen Wilkerson, senior director, Walmart Academy, in the release. “Skills training increases productivity, confidence and knowledge, which leads to greater job satisfaction, personal and professional growth and helps make working at Walmart a smart career choice.”

Walmart has created a new end-to-end training program called Pathways for associates at all levels of store operations, from entry-level to regional general manager, according to the release. Hourly frontline supervisors and department managers will attend a dedicated two-week training program at the academy facility as part of Pathways.

The academy focuses on specific areas:

- The first week is dedicated to retail fundamentals and gaining core retail skills.
- The second week is dedicated to training on the sales floor to gain the knowledge and skills to run the specific department where the associate works.

Areas of study include leadership, merchandising, operations, technology and customer service, in addition to department-specific training, according to the release. The goal is for academy graduates to have the skills and confidence to run outstanding departments, lead people and deliver a great customer experience.

The Fairfield store is located at 2701 N. Texas St.

Walmart plans to build approximately 200 academies in the U.S. by the end of 2017. Each academy will train associates from approximately 25 nearby stores, according to the release. The company plans to train more than 225,000 associates in 2017. Benefits include:

- Making training more accessible to more associates. By being closer to where people work and live, associates can be home each night rather than being away from home for two weeks of training.
- Taking associates out of their home store so they can focus solely on training for two weeks while still utilizing a real-life Walmart sales floor as a training environment.

Each academy will have its own team of dedicated associates with retail operations experience to lead the training, according to the release. All academy stores go through an auditing process to make sure they are able to deliver the teaching, training and development that associates should receive at the academy.

Seven local or regional organizations received grants from the Walmart Foundation as part of Thursday's academy opening celebration:

- \$200,000 to the Redwood Empire Food Bank.
- \$200,000 to the Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services.
- \$6,000 to the NorthBay Healthcare Foundation.
- \$5,500 to Camp Okizu.
- \$5,000 to The Medically Fragile Children's Foundation of Northern California.
- \$2,000 to the Fairfield Host Lions Club.
- \$2,000 to the Fairfield Community Services Foundation.

<http://bit.ly/2eS8MBG>