# Rare French impressionist painting sold for $40,600 to support Baltimore charity



A rare French impressionist painting donated to a Goodwill store in rural Maryland has been sold at auction for an impressive $40,600, providing a substantial boost to charitable efforts in the Baltimore area.

The artwork, titled Marche aux fleurs, depicts a lively Parisian street scene and was created by French artist Edouard Leon Cortes. It was initially donated by an individual unaware of its value and came to light when a staff member at the Goodwill branch suggested it might be worth more than could be reasonably priced for sale on the shop floor.

Lisa Rusyniak, CEO of Goodwill’s Baltimore division, told The Sun, “The seller didn't actually know what it was worth.” Once the painting was identified, it was transferred to a Baltimore Goodwill outlet for examination by local art experts. After authentication, the piece was sent to Sotheby’s auction house in New York for cleaning and appraisal, resulting in its sale for $40,600.

Terri Tonelli, manager at the initial store, described her reaction upon learning the painting’s provenance: “The hair on the back of my neck was standing up by then,” she said in a previous interview with local media.

The significant proceeds from the sale are being utilised to support the Excel Center, a free high school programme in Baltimore that offers adults aged over 21 the opportunity to earn a Maryland Department of Education diploma. Rusyniak explained the impact the centre is having on the local community: “We have so much generational poverty here in Baltimore, and we are making a difference at this high school.”

Since its opening two years ago, the Excel Center has become heavily oversubscribed, with waiting lists growing. “One of our students brought their mother and grandmother so three generations are attending the school right now. It's great,” Rusyniak said.

She also highlighted a broader trend affecting shopping behaviour, noting that rising prices linked to tariffs introduced under the Trump administration have led more people to consider thrifting. “I think more people will get into thrifting that may not have formally been in that space before,” Rusyniak said. “We try to put really good quality items on our sales floor and as prices rise we see customer counts increase. Not only are they supporting our mission, but they are helping us keep our clothes and household goods out of landfill.”

Goodwill operates over 3,300 stores across the United States, using the funds raised through donations and sales to support various community programmes and charitable initiatives. The discovery and sale of the rare Edouard Leon Cortes painting provide a notable example of how unexpected donations can lead to significant benefits for local communities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.toomeyco.com/auctions/2023/07/fine-art/123> - Confirms Edouard Léon Cortès' typical auction prices for similar floral market scenes, though sold for $12,900 in 2023 (lower than $40,600 sale mentioned in the article).
2. <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6102064> - Documents a comparable Cortès painting titled 'Marche aux fleurs, Place de La Madeleine' at auction, demonstrating his focus on Parisian street scenes.
3. <https://rehs.com/Edouard_Leon_Cortes_Marche_aux_fleurs.html> - Details Cortès' career trajectory and market strategies, corroborating his status as a sought-after artist whose works could warrant significant auction prices.
4. <https://www.goodwill.org/> - General Goodwill Industries website confirming their thrift store model and community programs, though specific Baltimore details aren't listed.
5. <https://www.sothebys.com/> - Auction house mentioned in the article where the painting was appraised and sold, though no direct listing for this specific $40,600 sale exists here.
6. <https://www.goodwillches.org/> - Goodwill of the Chesapeake's website (covers Baltimore region), though no specific mention of this painting sale or Excel Center details are provided.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/yourmoney/article-14656437/Surprising-item-Goodwill-sold-40k-helped-fund-school-process.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data