

THE COMMUNITY PAGE



The Salvation Army: First to Arrive, Last to Leave!

For more than a century The Salvation Army, a stalwart of charitable giving and an organization determined to change lives for the better, has waged war on a tireless set of enemies: poverty, disease and disaster. But now, in Idaho Falls, our local Salvation Army is squaring off against a new opponent: lack of funding.

When Hurricane Katrina ripped through Louisiana in 2005, The Salvation Army responded almost instantly, bringing relief to thousands. Our local chapter rushed food, clothing and hope through dozens of semi trucks to the disaster scene. But soon after, the Army began experiencing difficulty matching the costs of the needs they were satisfying.

"Our income has been diminishing, and our expenses have been increasing," Major Goodwin says.

With those trends, some in The Salvation Army worry they'll have to close down The Salvation Army Thrift Store—a tremendous asset to the program. Last month alone, the thrift store, located at 600 Northgate Mile, served more than 500 people.

The Salvation Army's percentage of each donated dollar that goes directly to the person in need ranks among the highest of any non-profit in the world.

The Salvation Army dates back to 1865, when Methodist Minister William Booth formed an association dedicated to the welfare of the poor living in London, England's East End. Almost 150 years later, Booth's Army, originally called The Christian Mission, feeds and clothes the hungry and homeless in more than 100 countries, sharing its message in more than 160 languages.

In our time, the organization offers more than food and clothing. Its original tenets are reinforced with other services, such as disaster relief, shelters for battered women and children, family and career counseling, and substance abuse rehabilitation. The current Salvation Army boasts a membership of 3,500



Major
Goodwin,
Salvation Army
Corps Officer

"officers" or clergy; 60,000 employees; 113,000 soldiers; 430,000 adherents; and more than 3.5 million volunteers.

When terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center in 2001, The Salvation Army was providing disaster relief only a half hour after the first plane hit. Donations from the American public toward the Army's 9/11 relief amounted to more than \$86 million, all of which were used toward aiding victims of the attack in more ways than can be mentioned here.

The Salvation Army proudly upholds a reputation for "doing the most good." And their work in communities often warrants fewer headlines than do their disaster relief efforts.

The Salvation Army opened its doors in Idaho Falls in 1898 and has served our community ever since.

"Each morning when I walk into my office, I wonder what the day will bring," writes Lori Christensen, Social Services Director for The Salvation Army in Idaho Falls. "Having worked at The Salvation Army for many years, I have learned to never be surprised, no matter what the situation might be. Each person's situation is unique to them: sometimes it requires dollars, and sometimes it only requires an ear to listen."

The Army's Holiday Assistance program, perhaps the most visible service it offers, provides more than 1,200 meals and 750 food baskets during the holiday season.

"Without the help of area churches, the Thanksgiving Dinner would not be possible," says Major Goodwin. "And without the help of local businesses and individuals, we would not be able to provide all of those children with toys and warm clothes."

As the cold sets in during the next several weeks, many in our community will be in need of food, clothing and some type of social service. The Salvation Army is an organization that is worthy of your donation.



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—Lori Christensen,
Social Services Director

MORE THAN MONEY IN THE RED KETTLE

As I sat in the board meeting and listened to the appeals for bell ringers, I tried to sink down in my seat unnoticed, but to no avail. After a heavy silence for some time, I regretfully found my hand going up. To my dismay, before I could yank it back down, my name was added to the schedule. Oh great! I'll freeze to death for sure.

But, bundled warmly, on the night appointed, my two grandsons and I marched up to Wal-Mart and took our stations, red aprons donned and bells in hand.

Even before I could grit my teeth for the task ahead, I noticed a friendly face and heard money being dropped into the kettle. Soon people I know came out of the store, stopped to visit, left a deposit and wished us a Merry Christmas.

The visits with friends, the wishes for a blessed season and the donations from generous neighbors continued apace until suddenly our replacements appeared and we had to relinquish our bells and our station.

The next year found me in front of Smith Food King with my son, ready to go again. And again I was inspired and warmed by the generosity of our community members, some of whom have been blessed in the past by the assistance of the Salvation Army, some who know only largesse.

I am thrilled by the great numbers who give every year. The motivation for sharing at a time when every penny seems to have a place

to go, is inspiring and testifies of pure intent.

It also testifies of the esteem in which the Salvation Army is held in this community. My respect and appreciation for their great charity has continued to grow from year to year as I have observed their contribution to those in need.

Nothing can compare to watching my grown nephew who was my aide last year. He relished the opportunity to help dispense Christmas packages and bicycles to needy families a few days before Christmas. He has been on the receiving end of Salvation Army blessings elsewhere in the country, and he was eager to repay.

When I close my eyes, I can still see his face, a smile impossible to erase, tears streaming and freezing on his face. I couldn't drag him away. It occurs to me that with all the numbers of dear people who have been blessed by the Salvation Army, we need to add five more—five of us who will never forget what we learned in the Army's service.

—Kathy Stanger
Salvation Army Advisory Board Member



 Melaleuca

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