



NEWS BRIEF

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SALVATION ARMY RED KETTLES HIT THE STREET NOVEMBER 19

***Donations help fund grocery, rent, clothing assistance to people in need.
Donations are down this season in the Chicago area.***

Dec. 13, 2010 – (Chicago) - It's funny how life turns out. It rarely turns out the way you envision it when you are young and growing up in St. Anne's, outside Kankakee.

Just ask Sheila White, former Chicago television and radio personality.

She never thought she would need help, but a series of events led her down a path where she didn't know where to turn.

"It was a very humbling experience," she said with tears welling up. "I couldn't believe I was in this situation. It was a really, really horrible time in my life. I still cry when I talk about it," she said.

After an expensive and lengthy divorce, and a medical issue, White found herself a single mother of a now seven-year-old, with few resources of her own. Her beloved father had died, and her mother was in failing health.

Turned down for food stamps, she needed help with almost everything – including food and rent – not only for herself but also for her son.

White turned to several organizations, but it was The Salvation Army Metropolitan Division that stepped in to help. An Army caseworker with whom White met recognized her from her work with the media, which was a little embarrassing, according to White. But what was important was The Salvation Army was going to help her.

The Salvation Army was different from other organizations she had contacted. "It was the spirit of the people who worked there," she said. "It was a blessing."

White said she routinely put money into the Army's red kettles at Christmas and donated furniture and clothing to Salvation Army thrift stores, because she knew her donations would help the Army help people in need.

“I always loved The Salvation Army,” White said, “but I never imagined I would need its services.”

This year, White’s story is multiplied manifold as high unemployment and home foreclosures force more and more people into economic instability.

Requests for groceries at some Salvation Army Corps community centers in Greater Chicago have increased dramatically from just a year ago ... up 200 to 400 percent at some locations.

And as in White’s case, some people who once were donors now find themselves turning to The Salvation Army for help.

On November 19, the familiar Salvation Army red kettles will make their appearance on many street corners and at various shopping venues throughout Greater Chicago. The Army receives approximately 70 percent of donations for the year during the Red Kettle Campaign, which this year hopes to raise \$12 million.

Since the red kettle tradition began in 1891 in San Francisco, the kettles have become a familiar sight during the holiday season. They also have gone high tech recently. Computer savvy donors now can host a virtual red kettle, or sponsor a red kettle team, by going on The Salvation Army Metropolitan Division web site at www.salarmychicago.org. Visitors to the site can register individually, as a group, or a business by completing a simple registration form.

Instead of being defeated by circumstances, Sheila White has a 14-month plan for economic recovery. The year 2012 is her target year.

“I am on a comeback that is going to be better than Tina Turner’s,” she says. White is in an educational training program to become a life coach, still does fill-in radio work, and has plans for a media program.

While she’s not in a position to make a monetary donation to The Salvation Army this year, White encourages others to do just that, if they can. What she can give this year is of herself, which is what she is doing as an Army volunteer.

The Salvation Army Metropolitan Division serves people in need in Greater Chicago, northern Illinois and northwestern Indiana. Among the assistance provided are youth programs; early childhood development services; feeding programs for homeless adults, children and seniors; emergency lodging for families and individuals in crisis; disaster relief; senior housing; spiritual counseling and substance abuse rehabilitation programs. For more information about The Salvation Army Metropolitan Division or to donate or volunteer, please visit www.salarmychicago.org or call 1-800-SAL-ARMY (1-800-825-2769).

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