



# NEWS BRIEF

The Salvation Army Metropolitan Division • 5040 N. Pulaski Road • Chicago, IL 60630

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## Salvation Army Places Final Steel Beam on Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center

### *Community Gets First Tour of the Kroc Center; Local School Children Create a Time Capsule*

CHICAGO – In front of a crowd of hundreds of cheering neighborhood residents and supporters, The Salvation Army celebrated the placement of the final steel beam today on the **Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center** at a dramatic **Topping Off Ceremony** in West Pullman. The ceremony marked the first opportunity for neighbors and supporters to take guided tours of the Kroc Center. The building is three quarters of the way through construction, and all of the walls and the roof are up. When it opens in the **Spring of 2012**, The Kroc Center will include the largest array of sports, arts, educational and supportive programs anywhere in the city.

“More than 200 people will work on this construction site at some point in this project, and The Kroc Center will create another 200 permanent jobs after it opens,” said **Lt. Col. Ralph Bukiewicz**, Metropolitan Divisional Commander of The Salvation Army. “For me, this represents so much more than the completion of a building. Like this steel beam, the Kroc Center will be a source of support, strength and stability for this community. It will connect us and bind us together. It will inspire all those who enter to reach for the sky, to aim ever higher.”

Local elementary school children dedicated a time capsule of their own creation, filled with personal mementos of what the Kroc Center means to them. During the ceremony, local community residents added their signatures to the steel beam and dropped notes into the time capsule. The time capsule will be buried in the Kroc Center courtyard.

“I am putting a life preserver in the Capsule to represent how The Salvation Army saves lives,” said **Ariel Taylor**, 14, a student at **Higgins Community Academy** who learned how to swim at Salvation Army camp. “When this capsule is opened in 50 years, and we pull out this life preserver, the kids attending the Kroc Center will all know how to swim. Maybe there will even be a banner on the wall of an Olympian swimmer who had their start in this Kroc Center.”

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When completed, the Center will make a tremendous impact on the far South Side, with a particular focus on violence and job loss. Helping to build a safer community will be a priority for the Kroc Center. More than 250,000 people live within a three-mile radius of the site. More than a third is under age 18. About **2,500 people are expected to use the Kroc Center daily.**

The Salvation Army announced that **\$33.5 million** has been raised so far in the ongoing fundraising campaign to build and endow the Kroc Center. This amount is in addition to the **\$109.8 million** from the Joan Kroc estate, awarded to the Chicago project by The Central Territorial Headquarters for the 11 Midwestern States. The Salvation Army capital campaign will establish an endowment large enough to ensure **operational start-up costs, funding for programming, program scholarships and materials, such as sports equipment and musical instruments.** The Kroc Center will represent a total investment of **\$159.8 million**, the largest single investment by a social service organization in Chicago's history.

### **Kroc Center Will Combat Violence**

"We have developed a terrific partnership with the local Police Department, and The Salvation Army's increased presence and public events in the parks, like health fairs and flag football have already begun to generate excitement about the Kroc Center's many outdoor playing fields," said **Major Dave Harvey**, Kroc Center Senior Officer.

In the Kroc Center programs, I planted a community garden, learned how to play drums, how to play golf and just last week I participated in a Chicago Bulls basketball clinic," said **Aaron Taylor**, 13, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Higgins. "The Salvation Army is allowing me, my family and my school to discover our talents and pursue our dreams. In the City of Chicago, we hear a lot about violence in the streets and how it takes the lives of many young men my age. The Kroc Center will provide a hope and a haven in response to the violence we see in the streets. The Kroc Center will allow dreams to stay alive."

### **A Destination for the Entire Family**

When completed, the Kroc Center will offer a wide array of activities and services for people of all ages, making the Kroc Center a unique destination for the entire family. Proposed programs and ministries include opportunities for worship, educational classes, sports, arts and support programs. **Recreational features** will include an indoor sports complex, an outdoor stadium, basketball and tennis courts, an aquatic center and a water park, a state of the art fitness center, a climbing wall, basketball courts and more. Outdoor recreational facilities will include a sports stadium, a golf training center, baseball diamonds, batting cages, tennis courts and running track.

The **Family Life and Education Center** will offer an array of classes and educational workshops for people of all ages, including job training, GED preparation, tutoring, computer literacy, financial planning, parenting classes and health screenings.

The Kroc Center's **Academy of the Arts** will include a performing arts center; an outdoor amphitheater; a media center with recording video production studios; as well as studios for instrument, vocal and art instruction.

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### **A Wide Variety of Programs Already Underway**

The Army has put together a Kroc Project Team of instructors and program officers who, for the past three years, has been running a wide range of arts, educational, sports and after-school programs and summer camps for students at four schools near the Kroc Center site: **Higgins Community Academy, Johnnie Colemon Academy, Songhai Learning Institute** and **Kipling Elementary School**. The Salvation Army Kroc Center Project Office has been open for more than two years, at 11357 S. Halsted, as a base of operations for the Kroc project team.

For more information about The Kroc Center, visit [www.kroccenterchicago.org](http://www.kroccenterchicago.org).

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### **About The Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army is the largest social service organization in the world and the single largest direct provider of social services in Chicago and the state of Illinois. The Army operates 200 points of entry in neighborhoods across the greater Chicago area, providing disaster relief, shelter, meals, rehabilitation programs, child care and head start, senior services and more. On any given night, about 900 people are sleeping under a Salvation Army roof. In 2010, The Army will celebrate 125 years of service in Chicago. The Salvation Army is there every day, 24-hours-a-day in Chicago and throughout the country providing disaster relief to people in crisis.