



NEWS BRIEF

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 6, 2009

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SALVATION ARMY RED KETTLES HIT THE STREET NOVEMBER 13

Need for assistance is great, with jobless rate still over 10 percent

When Toya Maddox passes by a Salvation Army Red Kettle this year, she probably won't toss anything in. But when she gets back on her feet, Maddox vows to help The Salvation Army anyway she can.

"I didn't know all they do," said this 43-year-old Southside mother of a teenage girl who lost her job of 11 years this June, after being diagnosed the previous October with cancer, and still is in treatment.

Maddox was in shock. She had never been fired before, nor let go, nor laid off. This was new, and it wasn't comfortable.

Providence put Maddox in the sights of The Salvation Army, when a friend called to ask how she was doing, and then told her to call The Salvation Army immediately. "Don't be too proud to ask for help," her friend had insisted.

The Salvation Army helped Maddox, with rent, her Cobra payments, and utility payments. "The Salvation Army assistance gave me a little leeway, a little cushion. It was a blessing," she said.

"You have all this one day, and it is gone the next," she said. Unemployment and a small amount of child support doesn't make ends meet, and she makes just enough to be disqualified for food stamps.

Maddox always told her daughter not to judge people, who were on the street. "They weren't born on the street," she says, never thinking she would need help too.

The Salvation Army kicks off its annual Red Kettle Campaign November 13, with the state unemployment rate the highest it has been in 26 years – 10.5 percent in September.

It is not just those at the poverty level needing services. More and more middle class families, like Maddox's, and previously employed individuals are finding themselves in need of assistance.

The Salvation Army traditionally raises about 70 percent of the money it uses year round for client services through the Red Kettle Campaign. This year's goal is to raise \$12 million. Individuals can give at Red Kettles placed throughout the city and suburbs, or contribute to the virtual Red Kettle at www.salarmychicago.org.

Salvation Army statistics show that the number of individuals needing assistance this fall has more than doubled, in some instances, as compared to a year ago.

For example, at one city corps community center, the numbers of those receiving housing assistance was up more than 300 percent in September compared to September of last year. The center provided rent and/or mortgage assistance to 120 individuals compared to 29 individuals the previous year.

At another Chicago corps community center, the number of first-time clients served increased 148 percent in September compared to a year ago, grocery orders increased 156 percent, and housing assistance provided increased 125 percent.

Although the stock market has started to rebound, a record number of people are still without jobs. And that means, more are coming to The Salvation Army for assistance this year than the year before.

"Traditionally, people in need turn to The Salvation Army for assistance three or four months after they've suffered a setback, such as losing a job or their home," said Lt. Colonel David E. Grindle, Divisional Commander, Metropolitan Division. "They first try to make it on their own, which usually means depleting all their resources and seeking help from family, friends and other organizations before coming to us for help," he said.

As for Maddox, she and a longtime girlfriend are planning a unique birthday celebration. Instead of gifts, they are going to ask for food donations and money for The Salvation Army when they have their traditional birthday celebration on Dec. 30 this year.

Did Maddox and her girlfriend ever think about getting donations for Maddox at that party? "I wouldn't want it for me," Maddox says. "I will be okay."

Maddox says she has become such a fan of The Salvation Army that she keeps searching The Army web site for a possible job. Barring that, she may go back to school and learn medical billing.

"I will be okay," she repeats. "It will all be okay."

For more information about The Salvation Army or to volunteer please visit www.salarmychicago.org. To donate on line go to www.salarmychicago.org.