

MEDIA ADVISORY

The Salvation Army Greater Houston Area Command
1500 Austin Houston, TX 77002 832.201.8025/phone
713.752.0078/fax
www.SalvationArmyHouston.org



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Contact: Juan Alanis, Media Manager
(832) 724-9730

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ALERT – Despite low donations and economic slump The Salvation Army delivers over 100,000 gifts to area children and seniors

Houston, TX (December 24, 2008) – This week, The Salvation Army of Greater Houston finished distributing the last of over 100,000 donated gifts to some 23,000 disadvantaged children and seniors in the local region who had signed up for Christmas assistance through the nonprofit organization’s Angel Tree program.

The Angel Tree Christmas assistance program relies on the generosity of individuals and corporations to fulfill the Christmas wishes of area children and seniors by making donations of new, unwrapped gifts and toys to The Salvation Army. Donated gifts are matched with registered participants and delivered, unwrapped, to area families before Christmas Eve.

“This year has been an especially challenging one for us because of all the difficulties we are facing as a community. Not only are we affected by a national economic downturn, but we have also been through a very damaging hurricane this year,” says Major Marshall Gesner, Area Commander for The Salvation Army of Greater Houston. “At the same time that our list of families in need has grown, our list of potential donors has decreased. We really need additional donations to make up for the money we have already spent.”

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, this year, The Salvation Army of Greater Houston was aiming to raise some \$2.5 million in support of their year-round programs and services, which include youth and senior programs, housing, rehabilitation, counseling, financial assistance, disaster relief, emergency response and Christmas assistance.

Gift contributions for the Angel Tree program have been so low, however, that Gesner indicates The Salvation Army of Greater Houston has had to spend much more this year in purchasing enough gifts to make up for the significant gap in donations than in other years.

In addition, monetary donations are also running low for the 119 year-old organization.

Overall donations for The Salvation Army’s 2008 Red Kettle Campaign – the oldest annual charitable fundraiser of its kind in the U.S. – have decreased by 16 percent this year, in comparison to the same timeframe in 2007. Mail campaign donations are down by 20 percent in 2008.

WAYS TO HELP:

Monetary Donations

Tax-deductible contributions may be made by calling 1-866-GIV-ARMY, online at www.SalvationArmyHouston.org, or by U.S. mail to The Salvation Army Greater Houston Area Command, 1500 Austin Street, Houston, TX 77002.

Red Kettle Campaign

Both online at www.SalvationArmyHouston.org and at area stores individuals can make a contribution to The Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign. Look for bell ringers and red kettles at most Wal-Mart's and other local retailers. Online individuals can make credit card contributions, and even sponsor their own Online Red Kettle.

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In this community since 1889, The Salvation Army Greater Houston Area Command serves Harris, Montgomery and Fort Bend Counties through youth programs, shelter, disaster relief, counseling, senior programs and rehabilitation. The mission of The Salvation Army Greater Houston Area Command is to meet human needs without discrimination. Each year over 33 million Americans receive assistance from The Salvation Army. About 89.5 cents of every dollar raised locally is used to support those services in Houston and at close to 9,000 communities nationwide. For more information about The Salvation Army, please visit www.salvationarmyhouston.org.