

Salvation Army in Alton bell ringing campaign has solid beginning, needs volunteers

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The Salvation Army in Alton came out strong with kettle donations the first weekend of the campaign over the Thanksgiving holiday, collecting \$11,000.

The red kettle campaign is conducted throughout the holiday season up until Christmas and is extremely important to the Salvation Army for its overall mission in Alton, Greg Gelzinnis, kettle coordinator, said.

Last Wednesday, the Salvation Army lit up its tree for the first time in about three decades at the Alby Street office in Alton. Young and old attended the ceremony and kickoff.

Gelzinnis stressed the Salvation Army has a long ways to go to reach the kettle goal of nearly \$100,000 and he said with consistent contributions and giving, they will get there.

“We are hoping to fill every kettle spot and shift over the six weeks and we need more than 1,000 volunteers to do that,” he said. “Anybody who wants to volunteer should contact the Salvation Army office in Alton.”

Alton Mayor Brant Walker shared with the crowd at the tree lighting, "Eighty-six cents of each dollar placed in the kettle is used for programming and services by the Salvation Army right here in Alton."

Walker feels it is important for the community to participate in the campaign as he plans to do himself.

"I greatly support the Salvation Army and encourage you to ring bells this season like I plan to do," Walker said. "Let's make sure the kettle goal of 99,000. is achieved."

Alton Middle School Drama Club & Director, Mr. Pitts, presented **Lt. Bryan Ellison** with a check for \$780 as a part of the Drama Club Cares Initiative. This money was collected by club members at the conclusion of the most recent musical, Hairspray Jr.

"This is a most generous gift to the Army and we thank you for your leadership in this year's campaign," Lt. Bryan Ellison said. "You young people have certainly showed the way for the community, and we sincerely hope that they will follow your lead."

Gelzinnis shared how awesome it was that area high schools are participating in the campaign with challenges from Dec. 1 to Dec. 15. He said the donation by the Alton Middle School Drama Club was also most touching last week.

"We have some awesome young people in our area," he said.

Bell ringers will be seen at several stores throughout the area over the next six weeks.

To volunteer for the Red Kettle Campaign or to contribute to the cause, contact 618-465-7764 or mail or drop contributions by to Salvation Army, 525 Alby St., Alton, IL., 62002.



