

# Salvation Army volunteers celebrate bell-ringing campaign success

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
February 19 2016 2:50 PM



**ALTON - The Salvation Army in Alton** had an opportunity to express a heartfelt appreciation to a large group of volunteers at Wednesday's Red Kettle/Tree of Lights Volunteer Appreciation Lunch.

**Lieutenant Bryan Ellison** said that everyone's effort is priceless to the Salvation Army in Alton and the clients they serve.

“The efforts that each one of you, and the organizations that you represent made this past Christmas season are priceless to the Alton Corps and the clients that we serve,” he said. “The 2015 Campaign was the most successful, not only in terms of money raised, but also in group involvement that Teri and I have seen in our **three years in Alton.**”

**Lt. Terri Ellison** agreed with her husband and said: “We are so proud to serve here in this community and cannot imagine a better first appointment.”

Lts. Bryan and Terri Ellison made a special presentation to Sam Stemm and Nick Darr of **WBGZ** for over 50 years of service and support to the Salvation Army through their sponsorship of the **Children’s Day Radio-a-Thon**. The two also thanked all of the area media for their overwhelming support of this year’s campaign.

**Holly Allen**, social services director for the Alton Salvation Army office, recognized six organizations that played a major role in this year’s Christmas season efforts.

“Without the efforts of Fountains IV, Alton City Hall, Central Elementary in Roxana, Simmons, Hanly, Conroy Law Firm, Argosy Casino and Abundant Life Community Church, Christmas would not have been a joyous holiday for families that register for assistance here at the Alton Corps.”

**2015 Kettle Coordinator, Greg Gelzinnis** shared historic numbers with the volunteers in attendance. Gelzinnis recognized four extraordinary volunteers who volunteered seven or more shifts throughout the 2015 campaign and presented them with a Salvation Army T-shirt.

“While the lifeblood of our annual campaign may be the efforts of our groups and organizations, the heart and soul of this campaign resides with these four individuals – Mike Cleary, David Hickerson, Dane Rockafella, & Larry Goss,” Gelzinnis said. “Our overall Red Kettle Campaign total was \$83,588.34, and of that figure, over \$38,000.00 was raised during the shifts that were covered by our groups and organizations.”

Gelzinnis created a little “friendly competition” amongst community groups and area businesses which resulted in the following awards being presented:

Faith Based Champion – St. Paul UMC - \$810.99

First Responder Champion – Roxana Police & Fire Departments - \$761.31

Small Business Champion – Woodman Collision Center - \$1,764.48

Large Business Champion – Alton Memorial Hospital - \$1,253.63

Bank & Credit Union Champion – CNB Bank & Trust - \$1,014.74

Club Champion – Bush Pilots Motorcycle Club - \$2,380.42

Gelzinnis was also very proud of a special “Red Kettle High School Challenge” that was created amongst area high schools and even Alton Middle School joined in the competition. Gelzinnis said, “Our area schools were responsible for helping the Army raise over \$4,000.00 and our first High School Champion for 2015 is Alton Senior High School whose Kettle Total was \$1,722.67.”