

# Schnucks will no longer allow solicitors, bell ringing ends

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**ALTON** - St. Louis-based grocery chain, **Schnucks**, has decided to stop allowing non-profit groups to solicit funds on their property.

*"Schnucks has always been and always will be committed to community service and supporting organizations, entities and individuals in their community activities," Schnucks Markets, Inc. Senior Communications Specialist Paul Simon said in a statement. "However, our primary obligation is servicing our customers by providing the most pleasant and convenient shopping environment. Because of this, we have decided to end the solicitation of our customers or distribution of written or other materials at our stores."*

*"Schnucks will continue to offer all not-for-profit organizations an equal*

*opportunity to raise funds for a variety of purposes through our “**My Schnucks Card**” (eScrip) program (<http://www.escrip.com/merchants/identity/schnucks/index.jsp>). This program is true community relations because these funds will come from Schnucks and will be determined by our customers in their selection of the groups they choose to designate as their beneficiaries. (Last year, Schnucks gave more than \$1.8 million to not-for-profit organizations through this program.)*

*"We will also be exploring new and different ways to partner with community groups."*

This is bad news for non-profit groups such as the **Salvation Army**, whose bell-ringing kettle campaign utilizes at least three Schnucks locations across the Riverbend in order to solicit funds from the community. **Alton Salvation Army Kettle Coordinator Greg Gelzinnis** said the news was bad, but remained optimistic.

"While we certainly are disappointed in their decision, we certainly appreciate what Schnucks has done for us for so many years," he said.



Gelzinnis said the money falling into the kettles during the campaign did not come directly from Schnucks, but instead from its generous patrons. He said he hoped people

would continue to donate at the remaining 13 bell-ringing locations across the area this holiday season. Gelzinnis said the Salvation Army has national agreements with some organizations to use their properties, but added future local businesses are always able to invite bell-ringers onto their properties.

"We're hopeful other businesses in the area will contact us to be a bell-ringing location," he said.

If human bell-ringers are too much for a location, Gelzinnis said the Salvation Army also gives businesses "counter kettles," which are smaller versions of the traditional kettles utilized alongside bell-ringers. Gelzinnis said they could be utilized in the same fashion as other donation vessels located in storefronts and counter tops.

This year's bell-ringing campaign will have a soft start on Nov. 23 with the **Tree of Lights** lighting, and will officially kick-off on Nov. 25. Gelzinnis said it is not too early for people to volunteer to be a bell-ringer either.

"People can go to [ringbells.org](http://ringbells.org), click on Illinois, click on Alton and they will see our locations and time slots," he said. "It is open and up and running as we speak."