

Student contest kicks off bell-ringing season

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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WOOD RIVER - Students from Roxana and Civic Memorial High Schools took shifts ringing bells for this year's Salvation Army Kettle Drive throughout the day Saturday at the Wood River Wal-Mart.

Alton Salvation Army Kettle Coordinator Greg Gelzinnis said the students ringing bells outside the Wood River Wal-Mart did a great job collecting money from people entering and leaving the store. He added the Roxana students did an "exceptional job," as they were able to cover both their shifts and some of the Civic Memorial shifts as well.

" students did a great job, but Roxana students did an exceptional job," Gelzinnis said. "I hope one of them can win the DJ coming to their school."

Saturday's bell-ringing campaign was also a competition between schools across the St. Louis area called "Mascot Day." Gelzinnis said the contest, which is managed by the regional Salvation Army of St. Louis, puts schools from Illinois and Missouri against each other to win the chance to have a DJ from 106.5 The Arch at their school dance or event. A more localized campaign from the Alton Salvation Army will continue from Nov. 25-Dec. 10.

"We will have a more localized challenge this year as well," Gelzinnis said. "The totals from Mascot Day will be added to those totals as well."

River Bend school districts will be competing during that time to see which can raise the highest total. The winning school will also receive a DJ as well as 50 pizzas and soft drinks provided by Dr. Pepper.

Roxana Student Council Faculty Advisor Kathy Wittich joined several student council members Saturday.

"Greg Gelzinnis called us up and said they were doing a Christmas challenge with students, so we put out a call for volunteers, and we were able to fill about 50 hours with volunteers."

She was joined by several student council volunteers including, Lauren Shaw, a junior, Kaley Nicosia, a senior, and Darby Hobbs, a junior. Each of the young women said they were happy to volunteer for the event. Wittich said Roxana High School has never had a shortage of volunteers when the call is sent. Besides student council, Wittich said the wrestling team, dance team and the Spanish club were among many groups volunteering to ring bells.

Gelzinnis said the Salvation Army is looking for more bell ringers throughout the area in order to reach this year's \$85,000 goal. He said Schnuck's decision to allow bell ringers on their property again has made those establishments "high priority" on Gelzinnis's schedule. Several hours and locations are still available for volunteers at www.ringbells.org.