

# Alton Salvation Army announces \$100,000 total following last year's kettle campaign

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**ALTON** - Following its annual luncheon to thank volunteers for its **Red Kettle Campaign**, the **Alton Corps of the Salvation Army** was given an anonymous donation of \$1,572 to give its official campaign drive a whopping total of \$100,000.

Inspired by what they described as the hope, dedication, service, and volunteer spirit recognized at yesterday's Red Kettle Volunteer Appreciation Lunch, an anonymous donor believed that the announced total of \$98,428.00 just needed to be rounded up to an even \$100,000.00, and their \$1,572 contribution did just that.

Greg Gelzinnis, Kettle Coordinator, and Holly Allen, Social Service Director, were both smiling from ear to ear when they received the news.

Gelzinnis said, "From achieving our initial goal of \$85,000.00, to taking the thermometer to \$98,428.00, and now reaching \$100,000.00...I am just so very proud of our team." Ms. Allen remarked, "I have seen first-hand the impact of our Social Service Programs and Pathways of Hope in making lives and families better...giving them Hope." She continued, "Having the resources now as a result of our 2016 Red Kettle Campaign will only allow us to reach farther and share more...it is a very happy day!"

"It was a wonderful and very inspiring day," **Gelzinnis** said following the luncheon. "Our gymnasium was packed with more than 120 people."

During the luncheon, the Alton Salvation Army Corps awards its volunteers. Gelzinnis said awards were given to year-round volunteers as well as those who volunteer specifically during the Red Kettle Campaign, which lasts through the Holiday Season. Awards were also given based on categories such as: small business, large business, faith-based organization and community group. **Roxana High School** was also awarded for raising more money during the campaign than every other Riverbend high school participating, and were given a traveling trophy for that honor.

**Tree of Lights** co-chairs, **Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick** and his wife, **Cookie Factory Bakery and Cafe owner Linda McCormick**, were also honored at the event.

"We were so appreciative of them and their leadership helping with this campaign," Gelzinnis said.

Barbecued pork steaks, cheesy potatoes and cole slaw was among the fare served at the luncheon, which Gelzinnis described as having "very good vibes throughout the room."

"We shared from the spirit of providing hope for families and individuals whose lives are being put back together piece by piece," he said. "It really provides both endorsement for our work, and gives us a platform with resources helping us to continue to do the work we are called to do."

The luncheon was held at noon on Wednesday, Feb. 1 at the **Salvation Army Booth House**, located at 525 Alby St. in Alton.

**Lieutenant Bryan Ellison** remarked, “To look out this afternoon and see our gymnasium full to capacity with volunteers who believe in the work of the Salvation Army was an amazing gift in itself...but to then receive such a heartfelt gift to elevate our campaign to \$100,000.00 is quite an inspiration to us all.” Ellison added, “The generosity of our community – individuals and companies is simply unparalleled, and Teri and I are so honored to be the Officers of the Alton Corps.”

**Kevin Botterbush**, Corps Advisory Council Chairman said, “This is the first time since the Alton Corps has gone to all volunteer bell ringers that we have reached this level of giving.” He added, “Having this kind of community support certainly endorses the work of the Alton Corps, and will provide us with a swell of momentum to begin our strategic work during 2017.” Botterbush continued, “The Riverbend area will continue to see the Salvation Army taking a leadership role in improving the quality of life for all residents over the next couple of years and we are so thankful for your support.”

If you or your organization would like to join our Bell Ringing Team in 2017 (the site is now live and you can begin registering) by going to [www.stlsalvationarmy.org](http://www.stlsalvationarmy.org); click on the “We Can’t Do It Without You” Tab (right hand side of the page); Scroll to Southwest Illinois - Alton and click on Volunteer and follow the instructions as provided from there. If you have questions or need any additional help call Lt. Teri or Greg at (618) 465-7764.

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)