



Freer Auto Body Donates a Makeover to the Big Red Kettle of The Salvation Army.

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What's big, red, weighs over 2000 lbs. and can hold up to \$350,000? The Big Red Kettle of The Salvation Army – Greater St. Louis of course!! If you attended the Tree of Lights or the Memorial Day parade here in Alton, you would have seen the 2800 pound replica of the familiar kettle we see around Thanksgiving each year.

After more than 15 years of wear and tear, the kettle had lost some of the original shine. At one time believed to have been the world's largest kettle, this massive steel structure caught the eye of a local auto body company in Godfrey - Freer Auto Body. Margaret and Mike Freer, along with their son Tim and his wife Carrie, took on the challenge of giving the kettle a complete makeover.

Originally, the materials and labor to build the kettle and the signature red paint were donated by the Carpenters' Union of Greater St. Louis and the Painters' District Council No. 2 respectively. What began as a minor repair and paint job this summer has resulted in a transformation which has Lieutenants Bryan and Teri Ellison, the local Salvation Army officers, beaming! They were astonished at the work invested, not only by Freer,

but also some other local businesses. The final effort involved complete new stairs fabricated by Dave Wilmouth, owner of Wilmouth Machine in Brighton, IL; roughly \$400 worth of red paint donated by Colormaster paint of Alton; and a new logo decal of the familiar Red Shield donated by Mike Turk of Motorsport Graphics in Alton. All in all, there were over 40 hours of labor.

Transformation is what The Salvation Army is all about. From a new start through the Booth House homeless shelter, to after school children's programs and activities, the officers and staff as well as the church care about people reaching their full potential in spite of life's barriers.

The Salvation Army would like to thank the Freers for their wonderful contribution and partnership.