

# Salvation Army looks for 'Christmas miracle'

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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The annual Salvation Army bell-ringing campaign in Alton winds down at noon on Wednesday, Christmas Eve.

Last week at mid-week the count for the Alton Salvation Army was only at 45 percent of its goal after a solid weekend.

“We do have about a third of the kettles than we normally have with going to an all-volunteer force at the kettles,” Lt. Teri Ellison said. “We did recently see some \$100 bills in kettles. I have asked for people to give generously in the media. One gentleman wrote a check for \$5,000. It is very heartening when people walk in with a \$20 and want to give this to the cause.”

Some just give time to the bell-ringing effort and it is most appreciated. Lt. Ellison said it is because they use an all-volunteer group.

Ellison said she and the other Salvation Army members love the Alton area for their commitment to the organization.

“We have so many shifts,” Ellison said. “We have 1,800 for the entire season and that is a lot of volunteers. It is hard to fill all the shifts. We are seeing more organizations and churches doing challenges.”

“One thing that is really important is the partnership and awareness in the community,” she said. “The neighbors and family members of everyone who are giving and helping are right in the middle of the community.”

Recently there was a gold coin put out in one of the kettles and Ellison said that was very appreciated.

Ellison said it would be a “Christmas miracle” if the Salvation Army could reach its goal in the final two days.

“The Christmas miracle I am talking about is because we are trying to build partnerships and the bell-ringing kettle has been a tool to build relationships,” she said. “What the Salvation Army does is try to break the cycle of homeless and helps every area of a family situation from their electric bill to every aspect of their life. The volunteers try to promote reaching the monetary goal to make Alton and the River Bend better, trying to help people financially, spiritually and socially. We are looking for a Christmas miracle of reaching our goal of \$103,000.”

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