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Export date: Thu Mar 28 15:39:33 2024 / +0000 GMT

Growing communities mean growing need for Kettle Drive: Salvation Army



By Brock Weir

Keep your ears open for the sound of jingling bells this weekend.

Yes, Santa Claus might be coming to Town on Saturday night, but any lingering tinkles in the air through the end of the holiday season just might mean a Salvation Army kettle is nearby and they need your contributions to help make Christmas merry for an ever-growing number of local families who need a hand.

And this contribution might be needed now more than ever this year as the local arm of the Salvation Army takes on more families from the Children's Aid Society of York Region (CAS) in working with the Lions Clubs of Aurora and Newmarket to provide holiday help.

?This year, we're actually transitioning in some ways with CAS which is passing their Christmas initiative to us now and that is going to require another 300 families,? says Major Brian Bishop of the Salvation Army's Northridge Community Church, which serves Aurora, King Township, Newmarket, East Gwillimbury, and Whitchurch-Stouffville. ?We are anticipating probably about 1,200 to 1,300 families we are going to be serving this Christmas season, which is very, very significant.

?The CAS just felt it was time to back off that. We work in cooperation with the Lions Club as well and it is now really under one umbrella. It is not that the CAS is not connected to it, but it is not a separate entity any longer in the way in which it once was. What next year has to hold, we're really not sure, but this is a transitional period.?

What is certain, however, is the number of people helped each year from the money people put into the Salvation Army Kettles not going down. The Salvation Army is actively looking for volunteers to fan out in the community beginning this Saturday with their kettles and bells to make this year's campaign a success.

?We simply value the support of the Christmas Kettle campaign from the community at large,? says Mr. Bishop. ?Their generosity affords us the opportunity to serve so many families.?

Adds Glenda Bishop: ?People who stand at a kettle help us make our quota for the year, not just at Christmastime. It helps us to manage the budget for community needs throughout the coming year.?

These needs, says Brian, include recovery support programs, camp initiatives for children, going into local schools for anti-bullying management programs for students, a ?sharing shelf? program for kids who might have forgotten to bring their lunch, or have been unable to bring an adequate meal, to school with them. All of these, they stress, are supported by community dollars through this campaign.

If you are interested in volunteering any time to the Salvation Army's kettle drive, contact Glennanne Phillips, Community Relations Representative with the Central York Salvation Army at 905-895-6276 (office), on her cell at 905-751-3493 or via email at glennannephillips@rogers.com.