



Around the Kroc News

January 2010

W.E. O'Neil Makes Christmas a Reality for more than 250 Salvation Army Families

South Side businesses and residents donate time and gifts to holiday assistance programs



Collette Wallace, Chester Jones, Neil Bossard and Rod Clark of W.E. O'Neil Construction helped distribute toys and food to South Side families at Marshfield Plaza on December 17.

W.E. O'Neil Construction Company provided a much needed boost to Salvation Army Christmas assistance programs this holiday season. W.E. O'Neil employees participated in The Salvation Army's 'Angel Tree' program, purchasing gifts for more than 250 children and their families in the West Pullman and Roseland communities. They also helped The Salvation Army sort and distribute the donations. W.E. O'Neil is The Salvation Army's General Contractor for the Kroc Center. In addition to providing supervision to the construction of the Center and much needed jobs to the community, they are also reaching out to the community to make a difference.

Staff and students at Higgins Community Academy, an elementary school located next door to the future Kroc Center, also got into the holiday spirit, organizing a canned food drive to benefit The Salvation Army's holiday assistance programs. The Salvation Army has partnered with Higgins Community Academy for the past two years, providing music instruction, character building and after-school activities to students.

The new Marshfield Plaza retail center in West Pullman generously donated a vacant store for the toy and food distribution, which took place December 17. The Panda Express at Marshfield Plaza also bought toys and gifts for 20 families through the 'Angel Tree' program.

In the West Pullman area, The Salvation Army provided holiday assistance to **1,340 individuals**, including **847 children**. More than 40 crates of canned goods were collected and 337 food baskets were distributed.



Give hope

A Campaign to Transform Lives

About the Kroc Center

The Kroc Center will be a state-of-the-art community and social services facility in one of Chicago's most underserved areas, a community center of unprecedented scope and size. It will provide thousands of people of all ages with new opportunities and become an anchor for the community and a beacon of hope. The array of sports, educational, arts and supportive programs has never been offered in Chicago.

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Off the Field and Sam's Club Partner with The Salvation Army to Provide Christmas Presents to Deserving Families

Salvation Army reunites family for the holidays



Claudine (right) rings the bell for The Salvation Army's Red Kettle outside the Kroc Center project office in Chicago's West Pullman neighborhood.

The wives of several Chicago Bears football players joined forces with Sam's Club retail chain for the third annual 'Dream Drive' to shop for Christmas presents benefiting The Salvation Army Ray Metropolitan Division. This year, families were chosen from the Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center service area. The local effort was part of a nationwide program called Off the Field (OTF).

On December 10, the participating Bears wives received wish lists for ten deserving families and went shopping at a local Sam's Club to load their shopping carts with items from the lists. Then, they wrapped the presents and loaded them on a truck for delivery. Families also received \$200 gift cards to Wal-Mart.

One of the families who received Christmas gifts through the program was Claudine Johnson* and her son, Dontrail, 16. Claudine and her son moved to Chicago from Indiana this fall. After prior arrangements to stay with family members didn't work out, Claudine and Dontrail stayed in a shelter, while Claudine looked for work. Alderman Carrie Austin's office referred Claudine to apply as a bell ringer for The Salvation Army.

Through her holiday job as a Salvation Army bell ringer, she was able to save up enough money to secure an apartment in West Pullman, three blocks from her son's school. Claudine and Dontrail have also become more involved with The Salvation Army, attending church and Bible study. It was there that they met Rev. Vincent Johnson, Salvation Army Director of Outreach and Evangelism, who submitted the family's name to the Off the Field program. Off the Field helped Claudine stock her apartment with toiletries, clothes, dishes, a microwave and a word processor for her son, just in time for Christmas.

"I'm overwhelmed. I can't believe how much they've helped me, especially it being our first time involved with The Salvation Army," said Claudine. "I've never met people like this before, people out there who actually care. You don't forget about the people who help you. It's been a blessing."

Founded in 2006, Off the Field is comprised of active and retired NFL players' wives dedicated to raising funds and creating awareness for local and national charitable organizations. Since its inception, Off the Field has donated more than \$350,000 to worthy charities.

**Names have been changed to protect the families' identity.*

The Salvation Army in Chicago and the Nation

The Salvation Army is the largest social service organization in the world and the single largest direct provider of social services in Chicago and the state of Illinois. The Army operates 200 points of entry in neighborhoods across the greater Chicago area, providing disaster relief, shelter, meals, rehabilitation programs, child care and head start, senior services and more. On any given night, about 900 people are sleeping under a Salvation Army roof. In 2010, The Army will celebrate 125 years of service in Chicago. The Salvation Army is there every day, 24-hours-a-day in Chicago and throughout the country providing disaster relief to people in crisis.

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.