

Holidays: It's a giving time

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

The most important holiday giving a person can do is for people they don't know, area charity organizers say.

Buying a toy for a needy child, putting nonperishable food in a collection bin or ringing a bell for the Salvation Army are just some of the things people can do to make a big difference in someone's holiday. Area residents can help by putting cash in a Salvation Army red kettle, delivering holiday meal baskets to needy families or by "adopting" needy families for Christmas.

Salvation Army offices throughout the region all are seeking cash donations, nonperishable food, toys, clothing and most importantly, volunteers,

particularly to assist in the annual bell ringing campaign, which brings in about 25 percent of the charity's income.

Salvation Army Corps offices in Farmington Hills, Plymouth and Westland are planning a variety of activities this season.

The Farmington Hills Salvation Army, which serves Farmington/Hills, Novi, Livonia and part of Redford, is in need of a few good bell ringers. Interested persons should call (248) 477-1152.

"We desperately need volunteer bell ringers," said Karen Guerrero, office manager.

The charity, like all other Salvation Army offices, also needs cash, volunteers, nonperishable food, winter clothing and toys. Businesses, individuals and others

interested in adopting needy families also are needed.

Bill Moritz, director of social services at the Plymouth office, said donations of food and clothing come in every day from residents and local groups such as churches. This allowed the charity to help roughly 300 needy families from Plymouth, Canton and Northville last year.

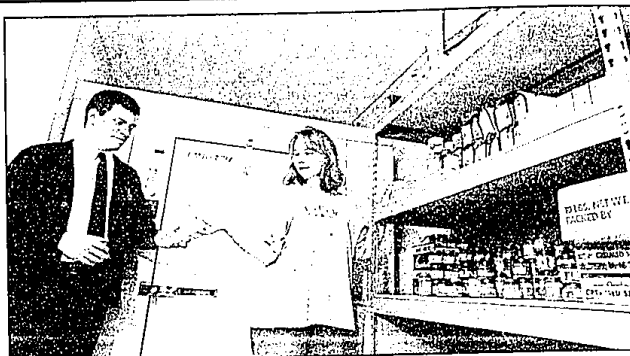
"We have tremendous support and plenty of volunteers," Moritz said, though the charity could always use more volunteers, particularly for the bell ringing drive. In recent years, the Salvation Army has had to pay some people to ring the bells, he added.

Helping families

The Salvation Army's Adopt-A-Family program pairs needy families with area businesses. The participating businesses provide gifts and dinner for selected families, Moritz said.

Eligible needy families can also pick up food boxes and toys at some Salvation Army branches right up to the last minute, according to Moritz.

The Salvation Army will launch its annual red kettle bell ringing drive Nov. 27 at various



In need: Lt. Andrew Stouder and Kathleen Sarkozi, caseworker, sort food in the pantry of the Salvation Army.

local businesses. The annual fund-raiser runs through Christmas and provides about 25 percent of the charity's funding.

Lt. Chuck Yockey, spokesman for the Salvation Army's Westland branch, which services Westland, Giving season

Other metropolitan area agencies getting into the giving spirit include Gleaners Community Food Bank, Capuchin Soup Kitchen and Focus:HOPE. All are mobilizing to help feed and provide toys for needy families, mainly through fund-raisers and "adoption" programs. They all are seeking cash donations, volunteers, nonperishable food and toys to help make the holidays merrier for the needy.

Gleaners, located at 2131 Beaufort in Detroit, has distributed more than 170 million pounds of food in its 21 years. Each year,

The Salvation Army will launch its annual red kettle bell ringing drive Nov. 27 at various local businesses.

The agency collects, stores and distributes more than 15 million pounds of food to agencies serving the hungry. Some of the agencies served include Wyandotte's Little Angels Home for Children and the Salvation Army.

Ruth Ellen Mayball, vice president of development for Gleaners, said this year the food bank plans to raise \$200,000 to help put turkey and all its trimmings on needy peopled tables, totaling about two million meals.

The fund-raising activities planned include:

Selling paper turkeys for \$1 at Rite Aid drugstores throughout the tri-county (Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties) area now through Dec. 12. This is expected to bring in \$100,000.

A charity dinner 6 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 17, at the Rattlesnake Club at Strub River Place, also expected to bring in \$100,000.

For more information about the fund-raisers, call (313) 923-3535.

Focus:HOPE Ministries, located at 990 Oakman in Detroit, is offering programs such as "Share with a Senior" and "Family to Family" during the holidays. These programs match low-income seniors and families with gifts of food and special items, according to Kevin Robinson, communications director for Focus:HOPE.

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