

Immediate Release

For News Editor and/or Community Editor and/or Religion Editor(s)

Aurora Salvation Army unit opens Red Kettle campaign, celebrating 125 years of giving

Not your average after-dinner speech.

AURORA, Ill., Nov. 15, 2013 ([The Religion Wire™](#))

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That was Rick Jorgensen's chronicle Wednesday how the Aurora Salvation Army facility rescued him from homelessness and unemployment.

Jorgensen, formerly of Naperville and Aurora, keynoted the Aurora Army's Red Kettle kickoff, and 125 years of serving Aurora, at Gaslite Manor in Aurora.

Wearing a blue button-down dress shirt with the Salvation Army logo, and admitting to being slightly nervous, Jorgensen recounted without notes how his mother kicked him out of the family home after he served a jail sentence.

He couldn't find work and landed at a local homeless shelter.

Then a chance meeting with a Red Kettle bell ringer changed his life. He asked the ringer if he could become a paid volunteer. He could and did.

Ringling a bell led to Salvation Army officials helping Jorgensen turn his life around.

"I don't know where I would be today without the Salvation Army," Jorgensen said.

Capt. Antonio Romero, Aurora Corps Community Center director said, "Rick Jorgensen has been a firsthand witness to what happens when we all do our part together, with God's help, to make a difference."

Jorgensen is employed at the Aurora Corps Center, 437 E. Galena Blvd. in Aurora, as a facility assistant. He staffs the reception desk, handles clerical duties and assists the center's food pantry.

In addition to Jorgensen, the kickoff event featured volunteer awards, seasonal songs by a children's choir, music by an eight-piece Army brass band and a ceremonial dropping of the first Aurora Red Kettle coin.

After a countdown by Capt. Romero wielding a handbell, Dan Barreiro, Aurora chief services officer, dropped the symbolic first donation.

"Volunteers are among the best types of blessings to the Salvation Army," Capt. Romero said.

"Volunteers are folks who show up at the just the right time. They bring the right amount of good cheer and determination to help in as many ways as possible.

"Of our resources, the army of volunteers is one of our most cherished treasures."

Culminating award presentations was a "Special Award' to Bill Sage of Naperville. Capt. Romero said Sage has given almost four decades of volunteer service, including as a kettle coordinator, vehicle driver and advisory board member.

"You name it," Romero said. "His passion for helping those in need and determination to help the Salvation Army carry out its mission encourages us to present this special award for exemplary service to Mr. Bill Sage.' He also received a framed "Exemplary Service" certificate.

Others awarded framed appreciation certificates were Jimmie Delgado, Aurora Noon Lions Club; Craig Zimmerman, Aurora Golden K Kiwanis Club; Larry Frieders, Aurora Kiwanis Club; and Ken Mrnak, Montgomery, and Rev. Phil Sheets, pastor, Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, Oswego.

Capt. Romero said the Aurora Corps Community Center has set a \$240,000 goal for its 2013 Red Kettle bell ringers. The campaign opened Friday, Nov. 15, and will run through Dec. 24.

About 30 Red Kettle locations are planned for Aurora, North Aurora, Sugar Grove, Montgomery, Oswego, Plano and Yorkville, the Aurora Salvation Army's service area.

"This is a very special Red Kettle campaign kickoff." Capt. Romero said, "since we are celebrating 125 years of Salvation Army service in the city of Aurora. We are blessed to be part of the greater Aurora family.

"The Red Kettle campaign has been a traditional part of the holiday season. The support that is generated during this time goes a long way in providing help for those in need in our community.

"We pledge our best efforts to preserve and further the Salvation Army's legacy of being both a helping hand and partner in making a difference and promoting better lives for our people.

"We thank God for our local Salvation Army: members, staff, volunteers, board members and friends," Capt. Romero said.

The Army strives to offer a wide range of programs aimed at serving people physically, emotionally and spiritually. An international movement, the Salvation Army is an evangelical part of the universal Christian church.

Capt. Romero listed three ways the public can help the Salvation Army help children and families in need in the local community for Christmas this year.

1. Make a donation to the online Red Kettle by using the red “Donate Now” button. Any gift will help serve anyone in need this Christmas and throughout the upcoming year.
2. Create a personal kettle to help raise funds. Click the “Join” button. Set a personal fundraising goal and ask friends, family and coworkers to help the cause. When one joins the team kettle, all the funds raised will count toward the fundraising total on this page.
3. Create a team kettle to help raise funds. Get family, friends or coworkers involved. Just click the “Create new team” button. Set a team fundraising goal, recruit team members and multiply fundraising impact. All the funds a team raises will count toward the fundraising total on this page.

Donations or fundraising efforts help the Salvation Army to do the most good all year long, Capt. Romero said.

Red Kettle background

The Salvation Army Red Kettles have been an American tradition since 1891, helping raise financial support for critical Salvation Army programs and services year-round. Over the years, the Red Kettle Campaign has grown into one of the most recognizable and important charitable campaigns in the United States – providing toys for kids, coats for the homeless, food for the hungry and countless social service programs year-round.

Volunteers and donations are needed.

Call (630) 897-7265 or visit salarmyaurora.org.

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Digital photos available:

http://uploads.religionwire.com/DSC_1060.JPG

http://uploads.religionwire.com/DSC_1082.JPG

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Caption for photo 1060:

?Rick Jorgensen (Al Benson photo)

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Caption for photo 1082:

Honoring Sage--After 40 years as a volunteer, Bill Sage of Naperville, right, received a “Special Award” plaque and an “Exemplary Service” certificate from the Aurora

Salvation Army unit at the center's Red Kettle kickoff dinner at Gaslite Manor in Aurora Wednesday. Left is Capt. Antonio Romero who presented the awards.(Al Benson photo)

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Caption for photo 1086:

First Donation--Dan Barreiro, right, Aurora chief services officer, dropped the symbolic first donation coin into the Aurora Salvation Army's red kettle at a campaign kickoff dinner at Gaslite Manor in Aurora Wednesday. Left is SA Capt. Antonio Romero who presided at the kickoff and counted down the donation with a handbell.

(Al Benson photo)

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Mission Statement of Salvation Army Aurora Corps: 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.



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