

MEDIA ADVISORY

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**DOING
THE MOST
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ALERT – As Christmas approaches donations are still running low: 91 local State Farm Insurance agents respond with \$26,420

PICTURE ATTACHED BELOW

Houston, TX (December 18, 2008) – Just in time for Christmas – and in response to an urgent call out for additional donations – 91 local State Farm Insurance Agents presented The Salvation Army of Greater Houston with a donation of \$26,420. This critical contribution will help The Salvation Army provide Christmas gifts for some 25,000 disadvantaged children and seniors in the local region who have registered for Christmas assistance through the agency’s Angel Tree Program, as well as to help fund many of The Salvation Army’s year-round programs.

Due to the slumping economy and the damages left behind by Hurricane Ike, The Salvation Army of Greater Houston has been reporting significant decreases in both material and monetary donations this year. Especially critical during the Christmas holiday season, toy donations have been unusually slow in 2008, says Major Marshall Gesner, Area Commander for the organization.

Overall donations for The Salvation Army’s 2008 Red Kettle Campaign – the oldest annual charitable fundraiser of its kind in the United States – have decreased by 16 percent this year, in comparison to the same timeframe in 2007.

“We have had to purchase many more gifts this year than in the past, and at seven days before Christmas we are still urging people to make donations,” expressed Major Gesner. “Our resources are running low and if we don’t receive the donations we so urgently need, this may translate into some children having to settle for minimal or no gifts this Christmas.”

State Farm Agency Field Executive Will Martinez, who works along with the State Farm Agent Charity Group, heard about The Salvation Army’s troubles. They decided to do something about it. Ninety one State Farm insurance agents in the Greater Houston region have donated part of their own earnings to The Salvation Army. The amount they put together: \$26,420.

“The decision was made because historically we know what The Salvation Army has done for our community. Their shelters like Sally’s House, and their many other outreach programs, have

greatly impacted our community,” Martinez noted. “What The Salvation Army does, is exactly what we were looking to support.”

WAYS TO HELP:

Christmas Gift Donations

Individuals interested in making a Christmas gift donation to The Salvation Army of Greater Houston may do so by dropping off new, unwrapped toys at all participating area Malls, Casa Ole restaurants, Randalls grocery stores, and Keller Williams realty offices. A complete list of donation drop-off locations may be found online at www.SalvationArmyHouston.org.

Monetary Donations

Tax-deductible contributions may be made by calling 1-866-GIV-ARMY, online at www.SalvationArmyHouston.org, or by U.S. mail to The Salvation Army Greater Houston Area Command, 1500 Austin Street, Houston, TX 77002.

Red Kettle Campaign

Both online at www.SalvationArmyHouston.org and at area stores individuals can make a contribution to The Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign. Look for bell ringers and red kettles at most Wal-Mart’s and other local retailers. Online individuals can make credit card contributions, and even sponsor their own Online Red Kettle.

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In this community since 1889, The Salvation Army Greater Houston Area Command serves Harris, Montgomery and Fort Bend Counties through youth programs, shelter, disaster relief, counseling, senior programs and rehabilitation. The mission of The Salvation Army Greater Houston Area Command is to meet human needs without discrimination. Each year over 33 million Americans receive assistance from The Salvation Army. About 89.5 cents of every dollar raised locally is used to support those services in Houston and at close to 9,000 communities nationwide. For more information about The Salvation Army, please visit www.salvationarmyhouston.org.