

NEWS BRIEFS

Salvation Army gets new rolling kitchen

Better to aid disaster victims



COURTESY PHOTO

Salvation Army area commander Berto Flores cuts the ribbon, opening the new canteen for business.

BY MICHELLE L. START
Florida Weekly Correspondent

Should another hurricane hit Southwest Florida, the Salvation Army will be better prepared to meet the community needs thanks to the purchase of a new canteen.

Although resupply trucks frequently fill up the canteens when food, ice and water run low, there have been times during past hurricanes when everything has been given out and services had to be shut down for the day, said volunteer Johnny Christmas.

"We take care of whomever with whatever is needed," said Christmas. "The Salvation Army does everything for free."

The new canteen cost \$130,000. Most of the money came from disaster services, but individual contributions amounted to \$20,000 and the Salvation Army received a \$10,000 grant from United Christian Giving.

The new canteen will be able to serve 1,000 meals at a time or up to 2,500 meals a day. This is almost twice as much as the old canteen was able to supply. It is one of seven new canteens distributed statewide, according to Florida Salvation Army spokeswoman Dulcinea Cuellar. She said the other canteens went to St. Petersburg, Tampa, Jacksonville, Miami, Panama City and Fort



COURTESY PHOTO

Pete Gunn, Todd Method and Beverly Ryschow cook and package hamburgers in the new canteen as part of the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Lauderdale.

The old canteen will go to a smaller community.

The canteens are not only used for hurricane response, but for any disaster services. Most recently, the old one was put into use during the Estero wild fires.

It was purchased in 1994 and used throughout Hurricanes Wilma and Charley. Between Oct. 25 and Nov. 8, 2005 following Hurricane Wilma, some 16,658 hot meals were served out of the canteen in Clewiston.

During that same time, it supplied residents with 6,664 sandwiches and 15,189 snacks. After Hurricane Charley, the Salvation Army canteens gave away 15,019 prepared meals, 1,822 sandwiches, 24,719 cold drinks, 4,000 cups of coffee and 1,700 articles of clothing from the canteen.

The canteen was also sent to Pascagoula, Miss. To help with disaster response following Hurricane Katrina for two weeks. The local team assisted in providing 2.6 million hot meals and 4 million sandwiches.

The Salvation Army has been working disaster response since Sept. 8, 1900 when a hurricane struck Galveston, Tex. and killed 5,000 people. The national commander Frederick Booth-Tucker ordered officers to Galveston for spiritual counseling. Newspapers across the country printed stories about the services being offered and disaster funding began. ■

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