

# Salvation Army makes goal despite the economy

Just like the storybook ending, the economic Grinch could not spoil Christmas for thousands of Southwest Florida families. The Salvation Army of Lee and Hendry counties is forecasting that it will reach its goal of \$500,000 from the Red Kettle program. The goal was a 10 percent increase over last year's fundraiser despite the need increasing 30 percent. A few sources are still sending in funds, so a final figure for the red kettles is expected later.

"We are grateful and humbled by the generosity of this great community," said Major Art Penhale, corps officer. "The residents in Southwest Florida continue to share their abundance with those in need. We are truly blessed to have such a

caring community."

The Salvation Army began its Christmas Cheer distribution to registered families on Saturday, Dec. 13 and continued through Saturday, Dec. 20. During that week, The Salvation Army distributed new toys and Christmas food to more than 3,700 families and individuals struggling economically throughout Lee County. This year, the number of people seeking help reached the highest ever recorded in Lee County for The Army — more than 60 percent were new families seeking help during the holidays. The Army helped bring Christmas to approximately 11,000 kids this year as well as feed their families. ■

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