



Jessie Poole/Index

Local volunteer Brandon Albright collects donations for the Salvation Army by ringing a bell Monday evening in front of Hy-Vee. The Kirksville Salvation Army hopes to meet their goal of collecting \$85,000 this year. They have generated 30 percent so far.

# Bells ring for charity

**Kirksville community raises money through Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign**

BY SCOTT HENSON  
Staff Reporter

Five days a week from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Salvation Army custodian Randy Curvin dons a coat and rings a bell next to a red kettle outside one of Walmart's entrances. This will be his eighth year ringing during the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Christmas Campaign, and he said this year's turnout has been especially pleasing.

The Red Kettle Campaign, a nationwide, yearly fundraiser for the Salvation Army, began Nov. 18 in Kirksville. Bell ringers are usually stationed outside Walmart, Hy-Vee, JC Penney, Walgreens and Westlake Ace Hardware, Monday through Friday. Ringers are volunteers or paid seasonal workers, and a few are finding that despite busy work schedules or a lack of funds, many Kirksville residents, like Curvin, still are giving their time and money to the Salvation Army's Kettles while braving the Kirksville cold.

Since moving to Kirksville in 2002, he said he's rung bells every year despite Kirksville's chilly temperatures. He has faced 5-degree temperatures with 15 mile-per-hour winds.

"I'm an old Georgia boy, and for me to come up here ... and face my first Missouri winter, a lot of folks, even my own family, didn't think I could do it, but do you know what I think it is?" he said. "I have always prayed that God give me the strength to be out there to collect during the campaign, and it's always worked for me."

Curvin's interest in working for the Salvation Army began in 1969 when a bell ringer outside a movie theater in Atlanta, Ga., near his hometown, led him to join the Christian faith.

Curvin said that this year he's noticed Kirksville residents have been more generous with their donations than past years. To stave off boredom, Curvin often counts the money that goes into his kettle for a final count at the end of his shift, and at the end of his first two or three days of collections, he said he's had donation counts as high as \$170 in cash and change.

He said the greater amount of cash donations might have to do with the organization's head start this year. They put out kettles the weekend before their normal black Friday debut.

"Usually it takes a little while to get rolling after Thanksgiving," he said. "This year, it's been great every day I worked."

To promote this giving spirit in many of the customers who pass him, Curvin said he has developed a few fundraising tactics. Often, smiles and eye contact are the key to a successful day of collections. He said this strategy has worked for him with nine out of 10 customers during years past.

Major Elmer Trapp, who heads the Kirksville Salvation Army with his wife Sandra, said he's noticed many residents haven't needed any prodding when it comes to giving money. When he and his wife moved from Cape Girardeau, Mo., to Kirksville this year, they often heard about how "poor" many of its residents were. Despite this, he said the city's spirit of giving hasn't been affected by a slow economy. During the first few days of donations, they encountered "the big bills" in collection kettles, including a few hundreds.

"Everybody has limited income, so it's a matter of putting things in perspective instead of saying, 'This is all I have,'" he said.

Even when shoppers drop small amounts of pocket change into Salvation Army Kettles, Trapp said through repetition, the gesture can amount to more than they often realize.

"Maybe someone doesn't have the ability to write out a check for \$50, but our kettles are out there for 30 days," he said. "They can probably, over those 30 days, drop in a dollar here, 50 cents here, a quarter here, and when it comes time for Christmas, they have given \$50. The kettles allow them to do that."

Trapp said that during past years, the organization has collected about \$50,000 in Kettle donations, which then have gone toward Christmas toys, food donations for needy families and Salvation Army programs and services during the coming year. This year, the end-goal of their Christmas campaign is about \$85,000, of which they've generated 30 percent so far.

But slipping money into a Salvation Army Kettle isn't the only charitable donation residents have been making this year, Trapp said. More than 20 local organizations have donated time to the Kettle Drive this year.

Tom Kent, a Kirksville Country Club board member, has witnessed volunteers from his organization spike from six to 35 bell ringers during the last year, allowing the Salvation Army to save \$58 a night on funds that usually would go to paying seasonal workers or Salvation Army employees to ring.

Kent said the Country Club probably will have more than 60 volunteers by the end of the holiday season, each covering bell ringing shifts from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at both Walmart doors.

Kent, who has wielded a bell this year, said witnessing younger children deposit change in the kettle has been heartening for him and educational for them.

"I think what we're doing is we're starting these kids learning to give back to the community at an early age," he said.

For Curvin, seeing the community's generosity at the yearly Kettle Drive has made the cold a little more bearable this year, he said, and has given him not only paid hours but the cheery feeling of a job well done.

"Even though I have a salary [with the Salvation Army] and stuff like that, I feel like I help a lot of people because they'll come up and thank me for what I do," he said. "This is my good work."

# Local policeman serves community

BY BETHANY COURY  
Staff Reporter

Justin Jones said he wanted to be a fireman when he was growing up, but he eventually followed another career path to serve the community — as a detective for the Kirksville Police Department.

It wasn't until after he graduated high school and had been work in a factory that he considered law enforcement. Jones said he became tired of seeing crimes happening in the community and wanted to help.

"It's kind of one of those things where the world is going to hell in a hand basket, and I can either

complain about it, or I can go do something about it," Jones said.

He graduated from the police academy in 1998 at The Law Enforcement Training Center in Moberly, and was a patrol officer for 10 years. When a detective position opened in 2008, he applied and was accepted.

Detective Jeremy Cordray, another of the department's three detectives, said Jones works hard, pays attention to detail and "gets the job done."

"I think that he genuinely wants to help people," Cordray said.

To become a detective, Jones was trained in investigation of

narcotics, crime scenes and homicide, as well as in interview and interrogation. Jones said the detectives use the computerized voice stress analysis, a tool similar to the lie-detecting polygraph, and are trained in other modern techniques.

He said being born and raised in the Kirksville community has been an advantage. Law enforcement and investigation, he said, is a lot of networking.

"I know just about everybody locally, and that helps when you're going out to talk to people [for investigations]," Jones said. "They see a friendly face that they've known for years, so it's easier for

them to talk."

Steve Feeney, the KPD Internet crimes against children detective, said Jones is able to persuade anybody he works with to talk. He said Jones has a charm about him that allows him to get on the interviewee's level and find out what's going on.

"He is without a doubt the best cop I've ever worked with," Feeney said. "I've learned a lot from him."

Jones said many students move to Kirksville from large metropolitan areas and think it's Mayberry, the fictional town in "The Andy Griffith Show." However, he said the Kirksville area has

the same crimes bigger cities do, just in smaller doses.

Jones said being a detective is nothing like the television shows "CSI" or "NCIS." These crime dramas, he said, obscure the reality that cases aren't always immediately resolved and, like any other job, there are good and bad days.

"A lot of people watch those shows and they have a really skewed view about what we do," Jones said. "I'm not a rock star."

Jones said he's just a man who wanted to try to make a difference.

"I feel in some cases I've done a good job, and maybe justice has been served," Jones said.

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