



NEIGHBORS  
HELPING  
NEIGHBORS  
SERVICE TOGETHER



SUMMIT ON  
VOLUNTEERISM  
A Response to  
Economic Crisis

### **Susan Silverie, Salvation Army**

Good morning, everybody. It's great to be here. The Salvation Army served alongside the Knights of Columbus and the YMCA back in 1918 during World War I, servicing the allied troops. So it's wonderful to be back. And many people don't know this but when the Salvation Army was started by William and Catherine Booth in 1865 in London, England, the actual name of the Salvation Army was a Volunteer Army. And then the name was changed to the Salvation Army, because William Booth believed in giving soup, soap, and salvation, meeting the physical and spiritual needs. And really, the Salvation Army is an army of volunteers and we have over 3.5 million volunteers nationwide, and here in the greater New York area, we have 22,000 volunteers. And the Salvation Army meets the needs of over 34 million individuals throughout the year.

And many people think of the Salvation Army in terms of bell ringers and thrift stores, but we're much more than that. We have homes for runaway teens. We serve the elderly, the veterans, we have programs for alcohol and drug rehabilitation. We are in 117 countries across the world. So just wanted to give you some facts on the Salvation Army.

And the greatest use of volunteers is during our kettle season. You're all familiar with the kettle and the bell when you go to the supermarket, right? I serve in the Southern California Division of the Salvation Army and this year I oversaw 9,000 kettles throughout southern California. And I was a little nervous, especially in this economic climate, thinking, oh my goodness, the economy and the recession and we've got 9,000 kettles out there and we need to fund raise. But what was really amazing was we were up 17% in donations this year. And this was right the week before Thanksgiving to Christmas which is our number one fundraising time with the kettles. And the reason we were up this year was because we had more volunteers as opposed to paid workers. So we're grateful for that.

And we are seeing our food pantries dwindling due to the fact that most people that came to our food pantries were usually single women with children, but now we're seeing people from all walks of life. We had an Operation Feed our Family and food program back in Los Angeles in the fall, and we just couldn't keep enough food stocked. So we definitely are seeing an increase. The needs are definitely great with food, with rent, mortgages and what we're doing now is stressing the need to help with the volunteer crisis by having our facilities open to serve everybody as best as we can.