

Salvation Army Kettle Kick-off draws crowd



Red Kettle Campaign Coordinator for Florence Sam Spayd (far left) gives bell-ringing instruction during the Red Kettle Kick-off event, where Santa gave a surprise visit to volunteers.

More than 60 people came out to the Florence Airport on Saturday to support the Salvation Army Red Kettle Kickoff for the 2018 Holiday Season.

Overall campaign coordinator, Sam Spayd, opened his hangar to the event and provided a holiday venue to begin the "bell ringing" season. The outside of the hangar was decorated with Christmas lights and the interior was filled with decorations and a custom Christmas tree. A plethora of holiday bears occupied many of the chairs set up for the event.

This year's Kickoff Program garnered \$1,430 and signed up bell ringers for 121 hours of collections.

"These were fantastic figures considering that it's early in the season, and it shows the wonderful support our community

has given in the past and the enthusiasm with which they look to the coming season," Spayd said.

After last year's outstanding efforts to raise money for the Salvation Army, Spayd has solicited assistance from three "lieutenants" to help sign up bell ringers, collect funds and deposit them in the bank. The three lieutenants are Nancy Walker, Sandy Kuhlman and Linda Sharpe.

Spayd said without these co-workers he would have to perform these duties every day from Thanksgiving through Christmas Eve with only Sundays off.

"These ladies will be a big help in sharing the load and allowing me to have some time to enjoy the holiday season," he said.

A surprise visit from Santa added to the fun festivities and Santa drew the luck winners for door prizes, glass Christmas tree ornaments, that were custom made, just for this event, by Jayne Smoley of The Studios at Jayne Smoley Design.

The prizes memorialized the event with hand lettering by Patricia Ball. Santa also read a letter from an anonymous donor who matched all funds raised during the evening.

Homemade cookies and mulled wine were provided by Walker and her friends, Sherill Androsky and Mary Helen Brennan.

"When I was approached three years ago about helping organize this Red Kettle program, I asked the Salvation Army to provide some assurance that the money raised

here in the Florence/Mapleton area would stay in our community," Spayd said. "They were agreeable to this request and we established an account that is designated for Western Lane County. The Salvation Army determines where the need is in our community and, working with Pastor Dale Edwards from Cross Road Assembly of God Church, they identify those who need assistance. The program is primarily administered through a voucher system.

"We formed a Service Extension Committee here in Florence that monitors the distribution of funds in our community. We meet monthly and receive a financial summary report from Deby Leighton with the Salvation Army out of Klamath Falls," Spayd said.

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