

The Salvation Army Allentown Corps Receives \$285,000 Grant For Community Center Upgrades

By Mylin Batipps Jr.

ALLENTOWN (Sept. 21, 2021) — The Salvation Army Allentown Corps today announced its receipt of a \$285,000 state grant, secured by Pa. Sen. Patrick Browne, as part of the state's long-standing commitment to help The Salvation Army serve the underserved youth of the area.

The grant will be used to update the men's and women's restrooms in the gymnasium at The Salvation Army Al-

lentown Citadel, which serves as a community center for local children and adults. The existing shower room in the Citadel will be transformed into two separate men's and women's shower rooms, complete with toilets and lockers.

In addition to the restroom and shower renovations, the grant will also go toward creating a fitness room and class area located in the third floor game room and storage area.

"The Salvation Army Allentown Citadel is extremely grateful to Senator Browne. The Citadel is a place where young individuals can stay active by using our gymnasium and our soon-to-be fitness room. But it also serves as a safe space for those who are experiencing homelessness, trauma, and other challenges," said Deirdre Govan, Resource Development Manager for The Salvation Army Allentown. "That is why, with the help of Sen. Pat Browne's grant, we are looking to refurbish these spaces and offer comfort and privacy for these individuals who are in need."

Renovations to The Salvation Army Allentown Citadel began in January 2020, thanks to an initial \$75,000 state grant secured by Sen. Browne for renovation of its gymnasium. Although the onset of COVID-19 slowed down the process, the project of painting the gymnasium walls, replacing the flooring and updating the basketball backboards were eventually completed over the following months. A ribbon cutting of the new gymnasium took place in October 2020, and during the holiday season, the gym was used to sort, organize and package Christmas toys and gift bags for at least 3700 children in need.

The \$285,000 state grant is a continuation of both the state's and The Salvation Army's Allentown's collaborative effort to renovate spaces in the Citadel and provide a clean, safe space for local residents of all ages whose needs vary.

"The Allentown Salvation Army has long been a pillar of strength and hope for neighborhoods and community members," Sen. Pat Browne said. "Day-in and day-out, many of Allentown's youth participate in sports and activities at The Salvation Army and countless local families rely upon the supportive services it provides. This translates into real positive impacts on the community. I am proud to support their mission by securing funds to renovate the Citadel and help ensure that these services will be available now and for future generations."

"We are truly thankful and blessed for Sen. Pat Browne's and the state of Pennsylvania's support to help The Salvation Army Allentown Corps keep our struggling neighbors on their feet," said Major Ismael Correa, Commanding Officer of The Salvation Army Allentown Corps. "For 17 months and through this challenging pandemic, we have received unwavering support from the state to help us transform the Citadel into a more modern, accessible space that brings our community members together. We cannot wait to unveil the new restrooms, shower rooms, fitness room and class area when the projects are completed."

Over the last year, The Salvation Army Allentown Citadel has been used by children in the Day Youth Program for help with their online schoolwork and for activities, such as dodgeball and basketball. The Children's Home of Reading has used the space for basketball. It is The Salvation Army's hope that the recreational space will be occupied more as the pandemic begins to subside.

"I'd love to see basketball tournaments in this space like there used to be over a decade ago," said Govan. "But, whether or not that is the case, I know that youth and adults will appreciate the renovations and will feel at home, thanks to the support from Sen. Pat Browne."



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