

# The Salvation Army Of Pen Argyl Sees Red Kettle Donations Decline; Pursues Digital Giving To Help Residents In Need Save Christmas

By Gwen Owens, M.A. / Public Relations & Marketing Manager

PEN ARGYL — More than 10 percent of the residents of Pen Argyl live in poverty, according to government reports. That means at least one in 10 of our neighbors struggles to put food on the table or shelter above their heads. They must choose what, if any, bills they can pay each month. And Christmas presents for the kids? Not many.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only made things worse for those who have lost their jobs and are losing hope.

For decades, The Salvation Army of Pen Argyl has offered hope and assistance for those who need it most. Now, though, The Salvation Army, is struggling due to the effect that the pandemic is having on the traditional Red Kettle campaign and other fundraising efforts.

To Rescue Christmas for those who need it in Pen Argyl, The Salvation Army is appealing for online donations and volunteers.

"Last year, we raised over \$16,000 with three kettles, but Kmart closing has left us with only two places to stand kettles, and we've barely raised \$3,000," said Capt. Barbara Cure of The Salvation Army of Pen Argyl.

The loss of a kettle is magnified by the difficulties of finding people to serve as bell-ringers.

"I can't find workers," she said. "At this point donations are down so much that, I can't pay the workers. I have to rely on volunteers who are willing to stand and ring a bell in the cold for a great cause."

The Salvation Army follows all CDC procedures, including gloves, masks and other sanitization measures for bell ringers.

Pen Argyl is not alone in needing help. Lower foot traffic, tightened pandemic restrictions and the big snowstorm this week have resulted in a nearly 50% reduction in Red Kettle donations across The Salvation Army of Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware. This year, people are asked to visit [PenDel.SalvationArmy.org](http://PenDel.SalvationArmy.org) to donate quickly and efficiently.



"Hunger isn't virtual," said Lt. Col. Larry Ashcraft, Divisional Commander of The Salvation Army of Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware. "It's real. It's gnawing. It's unrelenting."

Last year, the division raised \$3.3 million in Red Kettle donations, which were used to support a wide variety of charitable programs. In Pen Argyl, these services include a Food Pantry that provides drive-by service on the first four Tuesdays of every month from 10 a.m. to noon. The Pen Argyl Corp also handed out an assortment of food, toys and Giant gift cards to 150 people this week.

Other services include rental and utility assistance and programs for children, youth and seniors. The Pathway of Hope program helps low-income families receive job training, mental health assistance, child care and other services.

"Visit a Virtual Red Kettle and be as generous as you can," said Lt. Col. Ashcraft. "We don't know what Christmas 2021 will look like, but I know that you can act today to make Christmas 2020 more bearable for someone in need."

For those who prefer donating the traditional way, the Red Kettle stands in the Pen Argyl area are located at the Hobby Lobby at 3750 Easton-Nazareth Highway and at the Main Street Market at 90 located at 90 North Main Street in Bangor.

For more information, or to volunteer as a bell ringer, please call Capt. Cure from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 610-256-7418.

For more information, please visit [www.SalvationArmyPA.org](http://www.SalvationArmyPA.org)



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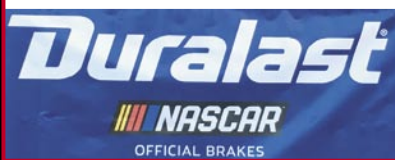
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