Flora is a loving mother with two sons, Jason (12) and Michael (10). Her husband is disabled, so Flora's family has always depended on her salary to pay the bills. Last spring, Flora was diagnosed with cancer. She had to take some unpaid time off from work to receive chemotherapy treatments. Things were tight, but she was still able to pay the rent, utility and food bills by dipping into their savings account. When Flora finished her treatments and returned to work, she was told that she no longer had a job. This was devastating to her family's financial security. Flora knew that she could lean on friends and family for some food, but she was worried that it wouldn't be enough to feed her boys. One of Flora's friends suggested The Salvation Army as a resource. Flora's pride made her reluctant to visit us, but with the cold weather months approaching, she knew it wouldn't be long before she had to make some difficult choices about which bills to pay in order to have enough money to feed her family.

With the unemployment rate in central New York remaining high, Flora's story is all too common. Many of the faces we see in our Food Pantry are coming to us for the very first time, and while some are unemployed, many are working several jobs and still not making ends meet. Research by the Food Bank of Central New York confirms the diversity of those who receive emergency food assistance in our community: approximately 37% are children, 5% are seniors, 63% have a high school or college education, 24% have a family member who works and 47% have a household income less than $10,000.

In 2011, The Salvation Army's Food Pantry provided 115,792 meals to families in Onondaga County, an increase of 38.5% from 2010 and more than twice the number of meals served in 2007 (see chart below). We are currently the only food pantry that is open Monday – Friday and the only one to serve all residents of Onondaga County. With more and more families needing help, several food pantries in our community have struggled to keep up with the demand and have been forced to reduce hours or even close their doors. This has resulted in more families turning to The Salvation Army for their emergency food needs.

In addition to providing healthy meals, The Salvation Army Food Pantry is able to connect families in crisis to a wide variety of community resources that help with medical, housing, mental health, employment and other basic needs. Our goal is to help those we serve find a path to self-sufficiency. In times of crisis, we know it is difficult to see options, so we give families hope by providing the tools necessary to weather the storm.

Flora is a great example of someone who benefitted from our Food Pantry's multi-layered approach, and her story warms our hearts. With some additional training, she was able to find a job with health insurance and is currently cancer free. With help from a variety of community resources, Flora's family was able to stay in their apartment, which provided stability for Jason and Michael. During the holidays, Flora found herself short on money and food, so she stopped by the Food Pantry for some meals to make it to the next paycheck. Thanks to a generous community donor, we were able to provide Flora's family with a turkey for their Christmas dinner. The smile on her face and the gratitude she expressed is what makes working at The Salvation Army so special. Each and every day, we feel blessed to be able to make a difference in the lives of those we serve. We hope and pray daily for a renewed economy with lower unemployment, but no matter what the economic conditions, The Salvation Army Food Pantry stands ready to provide nutritious food to any Onondaga County family that finds itself in a difficult situation.

HOW YOU CAN HELP
The Salvation Army Food Pantry appreciates the generous support we receive from our volunteers and food donors. If you would like to join our Food Pantry team, please contact our volunteer coordinator at 479-3668. In particular, we are looking for volunteers who can work a 2-3 hour weekly shift, preferably in the afternoon. Because we are frequently moving and unpacking boxes, it is helpful if you are able to lift 40 lbs.

We also welcome your non-perishable food donations. We especially need items containing protein, like canned meats and tuna. Food can be dropped off at our Food Pantry Monday – Friday between 8:30 and 4:30. Please call 479-1157 for directions and more information.
The Salvation Army is blessed with generous support throughout the year, but during the holiday season, we marveled at the way this community pulls together to lend a helping hand to struggling families. For more than 30 years, Christmas Bureau Distribution has symbolized this team effort, helping local families celebrate Christmas with a special meal and gifts for their children. On December 22nd at The Oncenter, 2,800 families received turkeys and food baskets and 7,300 children received gifts, books and stocking stuffers. We want to thank each and every person who contributed to Christmas Bureau and our other holiday efforts. While we can’t print every single name, we want you to know that we appreciate all that you do!

Christmas Bureau Partners
The Salvation Army works with an amazing group of partners throughout the year to make sure that struggling families in our community will have food and gifts for their children at Christmas. These partners include United Way of Central New York, The Hayner Hoyt Corporation, 174th Fighter Wing, Delaney Moving and Storage, Food Bank of Central New York, Wegmans Food Markets, The Post Standard/Old Newsboys, United Parcel Service, United States Marines/Toys for Tots, Catholic Charities of Onondaga County, Contact Community Services Helpline, The Oncenter, Onondaga County Sheriff’s Office, Syracuse Fire Fighters, Success by Six, Interreligious Food Consortium and the Onondaga County Department of Social Services.

Volunteer Support
At The Salvation Army, we refer to our volunteers as our Army of Hope. On Distribution Day, our Army was more than 900 strong, including students from Cicero-North Syracuse, Christian Brothers Academy and Jamesville-DeWitt. Hundreds more helped to sort food and toys at The Oncenter during prep days. The rest of our holiday troops included bell ringers at our Red Kettles, Christmas Bureau registration volunteers and those who donated their time to our many programs. Thank you for generously committing your time and energy to help others!

Food & Toy Drives and Angel Tree Campaigns
We appreciate the hundreds of schools, companies, and community groups who participated in food and toy drives and Angel Tree campaigns in November and December. Christmas Bureau could not function without the dedication of these wonderful organizations. We give special thanks to the United States Marines and their Toys for Tots program, which provided thousands of toys for Christmas Bureau. In addition, we are grateful to the Syracuse Crunch and Stanley Steemer for providing thousands of stuffed animals for Christmas Bureau and Crouse Hospital for its extraordinary Angel Tree efforts. Finally, we couldn’t have done these drives without the wonderful logistical support provided by our friends at UPS and the 174th Fighter Wing.

Christmas Bureau Distribution Day
On Distribution Day, United Way of Central New York once again organized book tables and provided food and beverages for 900 volunteers. The Food Bank of Central New York provided fresh produce for the food baskets and a variety of non-perishable food items. Wegmans Food Markets came through with 17,000 lbs. of food and 2,900 loaves of bread. Organic Valley provided milk and half & half for all of the food baskets and Dot Foods contributed hundreds of pounds of pasta. Delaney Moving and Storage once again handled the bulk of our transportation and storage needs. G&G Foods donated 100 turkeys and provided valuable transportation and storage of food items. C&S Companies, Syracuse Fire Fighters, Carrier Corporation, Saab Sensis Corporation, First Niagara, Lockheed Martin, Hunt Real Estate and UPS sponsored toy tables. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to the staff at The Oncenter for being such wonderful hosts for this event, and to the 174th Fighter Wing and Onondaga County Sheriff’s Office for their logistical support.

Community Kettle Campaign
This year, we broadened our traditional Red Kettle Campaign to include Online Red Kettles, Dorne Day, Mini Red Kettles, and our Turkey Drive, which together helped to raise approximately $213,000. We give special thanks to News Channel 9 and Bridge Street hosts Chris Brandolino and Kayela Nixon, who served as our honorary campaign chairs, with sponsorship support from C&S Companies and Galaxy Communications. Thanks to Carousel Center, Shoppertown and Great Northern Malls, Tops Markets, Price Chopper, K-Mart, Wal-Mart and Herb Phillips’ for hosting our traditional Red Kettles, and Bob Ellis from Solvay Bank for serving as our Red Kettle Campaign Chair. C&X and SU once again teamed up for a successful Dorne Day, and Tom and Becky from B104.7 joined YNN, Jim Hortons and Great Northern Mall to promote our Turkey Drive. Online Red Kettles were a great addition to our holiday campaign this year, with participants raising more than $20,000. The Online Red Kettles were jump-started by our Young Leaders Advisory Council, which raised more than $7,000 online for our Tickets for Teens program. Finally, thanks to the many corporations who served as Mini Red Kettle hosts. Each dollar you collected will help us secure three additional dollars in matching funds from government grants.

More Thank You
Last, but not least, thank you to:  
• Eric Mower & Associates, SRC, Inc., Christian Brothers Academy, the Schultz family, Summit Federal Credit Union/Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways and the members of Onondaga Tabernacle for adopting specific Salvation Army programs and making Christmas special for the program participants.
• Students from F-M and J-D and the residents of State Street Apartments for decorating our stocking stuffer bags.
• M&T Bank for sponsoring our Bell Sale in Clinton Square.
• Richard and Lisa Bruno for their support of Christmas Bureau.
• Laura McNally for organizing thousands of stocking stuffers.
• The Salvation Army’s Advisory Board for its leadership and guidance.
Investing in Our Community

by Major George Polarek, Area Coordinator-CEO

In my life, I have been blessed to witness some incredible acts of kindness and generosity. As Incident Commander for The Salvation Army’s relief operation at the New York World Trade Center following 9-11, I helped to facilitate a grieving and healing process that is beyond words, one in which hundreds of thousands of people donated their time and resources to help those who were most in need, physically, emotionally and spiritually. The same was true for my experience with Katrina in Louisiana, the Tsunami in the Pacific and earthquakes in both Haiti and Japan. In all of these places, The Salvation Army has been invested for the long haul, helping not only with the healing and rebuilding process, but also providing the tools necessary for individuals, families and communities to become self-sufficient.

On December 22nd at The Oncenter, I had much the same feeling that I’ve experienced in these other situations. While we were not responding to a terrorist attack or natural disaster, our community came together to make sure that families and children were cared for at Christmas time. I was incredibly touched as I watched members of our Armed Forces working alongside school children, bankers, engineers, teachers, social workers, firefighters, broadcasters and so many others to celebrate the true message of Christ. Rather than worrying about our last minute shopping, we gathered together to make an investment in our community. My guess is that the satisfaction each of us received from this investment far outweighed the joy we felt opening presents on Christmas Day.

As we head into 2012, we continue to face economic uncertainty. In this challenging financial climate, we know that you put a lot of thought into your investments, including your charitable contributions. This is why we work so hard to make sure we put your donations of time and resources to good use. Whether we’re helping preschool students get a good start in life, keeping teens out of gangs or assisting seniors to maintain their independence, supporting The Salvation Army is an investment in members of our community who are working to improve their lives. Our success is measured not by the number of people we serve, but rather by the number of people who no longer need our services…and in many cases, move on to serve others.

I often hear these words from our supporters: “I’d like to do more, but I don’t have much to give…” Please know that it is all of our investments together, no matter what the size, which allows us to serve more than 40,000 individuals each year.

May God bless you and your family in the year ahead.

Forging Partnerships to Meet the Needs of our Community

by Linda M. Wright, ACSW

As I begin my 36th year with The Salvation Army, I am extremely grateful for the generous and consistent support we receive from this wonderful community. Each year, Christmas Bureau Distribution causes me great anxiety as I see more and more families in need and wonder whether we’ll have enough food and gifts to go around…but without fail, companies, schools, churches, community groups and individuals pull together to make sure that thousands of our friends and neighbors are able to take a break from their financial stresses to celebrate a joyful Christmas. We are very thankful to have so many partners in this community who share a common goal of providing for the basic needs of those going through tough times. In 2012, our programs will continue to feel the impact of an uncertain economy. In 2011, we served a record number of 41,161 individuals and we expect that trend to continue. I’d like to share a few of the ways that your continued partnership with The Salvation Army will help Syracuse area families in the days ahead.

The number of homeless individuals and families in our community continues to increase. We are currently partnering with Onondaga County to determine the best way to provide for the needs of those who have lost everything and no longer have a home. Over the last few years, we have increased the number of beds in our Family Shelter, but there is still more work to be done to ensure that all families have a roof over their heads during times of crisis and are connected to the resources they need to find permanent housing.

For 61 years, The Salvation Army has provided a safe and uplifting place for our community’s seniors to gather and form friendships. In 2011, we responded to changing needs in our community by doubling the number of seniors we are able to serve on a daily basis. Each day, nearly 90 seniors drop in for breakfast and/or lunch, to play cards or bingo, to create art projects, or to speak with our nurse. Soon, thanks to City Parks and Recreation, they will also be able to play pool. Once again, partnerships have played a key role in the success of our seniors, as we continue our work with Onondaga County’s Office of Aging and County Executive Joanie Mahoney to figure out how we can best serve seniors in our community.

As we think about ways in which we can expand our partnerships in the days ahead, much of our focus is on at-risk youth. Programs like Booth House and Barnabas Center have partnered with many community groups to provide support and guidance to children who have very little hope in their lives. Our recent collaboration with Say Yes to Education is helping put more youth on a pathway to college. We are constantly seeking new partnerships to make sure that we are able to reach more teens in underserved neighborhoods.

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It is our partnership with you, our volunteers and financial contributors, which makes all of this work possible. With your continued support, we will work tirelessly throughout 2012 to meet the needs of all who seek our assistance. Over the years, I have had the pleasure of taking many of you on program tours, which offers an up close and personal view of how your partnership with The Salvation Army is making a difference in the lives of so many. As our partner, I thank you for your commitment and invite you to see how, together, we are “doing the most good for those in the most need.”
Citadel Corps Coat Drive keeps hundreds warm this winter

By Majors John and Anita Stewart

Over the last three months, The Salvation Army’s Citadel Corps has provided more than 1,000 coats to Syracuse area families. On behalf of those we’ve served, thank you for your generous donations. We especially appreciate Herb Phillipson’s Syracuse and Liverpool stores for assisting us this year with coat drives.

Citadel Corps is a worship community that gathers for Sunday Services each week at 11:00 a.m. in our chapel at 749 South Warren Street. We also have adult and children’s programs throughout the week. For further information, please contact us at 479-1163 or visit sasyr.org.

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• Volunteer in one of our programs. We serve everyone from infants to seniors, so we have a wide variety of opportunities. We also need volunteers for special events and to support our administrative and clerical needs. Call 479-3668 to learn more.

• Become a monthly giver. Many of our donors make an automatic credit card donation of $10, $15, or $20 each month to avoid check writing and postage costs. This type of giving makes it easy for you to budget your contributions and it provides us with steady, predictable funding for our programs. Call 479-1321 to become a monthly giver.

• Donate Online: It’s quick, easy and secure. Just go to sasyr.org and click on the Donate Now link.

Gifts That Give Twice

Gifts in honor of another or memorial gifts to our Salvation Army of the Syracuse Area have chosen a meaningful, tangible way to demonstrate not only how much they care about someone they love, but how much they care about people in need. These gifts may be sent to the Development Office at 677 South Salina St. Syracuse, NY 13202.

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IN MEMORY OF

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Rev. and Mrs. Lawrence V. Black

Elton Burnham

Mrs. Ruth F. Burnham

Isabelle Corvan

Mrs. Hazel Phipps

Brig and Mrs. Alfred Davey

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Your Lasting Touch

Each year, we receive calls from friends who want to include The Salvation Army in their will, and also want that gift to specifically support programs in the greater Syracuse area. To achieve that goal, the following exact wording should be used: “I bequeath to The Salvation Army Syracuse Area Services with offices at 677 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202, to be used solely and in its entirety for the ongoing programs and services provided by The Salvation Army Syracuse Area Services, the following:

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Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin O. Hughes

Margaret and Bill Moran

Ms. Josephine M. Fowler Cleveland

Barbara Perez

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Syracuse Area Salvation Army News

677 South Salina Street

Syracuse, NY 13202

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