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With Pandemic Hitting Donations Hard, the V.I. Salvation Army is Seeking Volunteer Bellringers to 'Save Christmas'

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The Salvation Army in the Virgin Islands announced that it is looking for energetic, giving, community-minded volunteers this holiday season to be bell ringers in-person at the Army's famous Red Kettles and virtually in an all-out effort to "Rescue Christmas."

The Salvation Army said it has implemented protocols to protect the health and safety of its bell ringers that include PPE, sanitizing products, social distancing, etc. According to the release, the funds raised through the iconic Red Kettles are at risk this year due to COVID-19 during a time when requests for services are at an all-time high. Those who need to take precaution but still want to volunteer will be able to ring from home, virtually.

The Salvation Army said it could see up to a 50 percent decrease in funds raised through Red Kettles due to economic impact from COVID-19, such as closed retail stores, less retail foot traffic, and people carrying less cash and coins – and estimates serving up to 155 percent more people nationwide this Christmas because of the pandemic. More volunteers at Red Kettles means more of the money donated can go to help our Virgin Islands neighbors in need.

“Bell ringing is fun, easy, and an excellent way to give to those less fortunate in our island communities,” said Tom Bolt, Chair of The Salvation Army Advisory Board. “It’s a holiday tradition for many people and a fantastic way to embrace the spirit of the season. “Volunteering at a Red Kettle for just one hour can raise enough money to help The Salvation Army put food on the table for 13 people.”

The Salvation Army’s signature Red Kettle was first developed in San Francisco in 1891 to provide a free holiday dinner to the poor. Presently, donations to the Red Kettles comprise 30 percent of gifts to The Salvation Army in the Virgin Islands for the entire year, assisting over 50,000 Virgin Islanders annually, according to the release.

For more information, contact The Salvation Army Virgin Islands Regional Coordinator Wanda Rivera at (340) 690-8173. If you don’t have the time to volunteer, you could consider a donation.