

This is Lieutenant Roger McCort from The Salvation Army in Eureka with today's Community Comment.

If you will indulge me for a moment, I'd like to open today with one of my favorite quotes. The character speaking may be fictional, but the sentiment is all too real.

"If I could work my will," said Scrooge indignantly, "Every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart."

I'm sure I am not alone in thinking that Scrooge isn't the only one who has had this thought. I have been known to quote this line repeatedly throughout the holidays, often just before launching into a diatribe about how old Scrooge was just fine before those dratted spirits wrenched him out of his comfortable animosity towards the year's most pervasive and invasive holiday.

And yet, here I am. It's not even Thanksgiving yet, and I'm about to push you to think about Christmas and what it takes for someone to have a happy one. I'm sorry.

In The Salvation Army, we don't really change the kinds of service we do at Thanksgiving or Christmas time. We feed people and do what we can to make sure people are clothed. We try to offer a little joy to children who, for one reason or another, don't have much of their own. We try to help people keep their lights on through energy assistance programs and we try desperately to encourage people to take the steps they must to begin a journey from brokenness to recovery. We do all this year round, day after day, without ceasing. But even so, during the holidays, we always try to do a little more.

When you see our Red Kettles out at stores, that is part of how we do more. Every dollar dropped in helps us reach towards feeding an additional 800 families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Every volunteer who takes a shift of two or four or more hours ringing the bell gives us a better chance of being able to make sure that one more person has the clothing they need to stay healthy; which in turn means they can work the hours they need to so they can pay their rent or

mortgage and stay housed instead of joining the already crowded streets. Every check someone sends in the mail helps us keep the lights on and the doors open so that our local caseworker can make sure each person who comes to us looking for assistance gets the help or direction they need.

This year, the need in our community has grown so much. From the obvious problems of homelessness and drug addiction to the less visible problems created by a lack of housing compounded by homes lost to summer fires. It used to be that only the poorest of the poor found themselves out on the streets in our region, but these days one can be gainfully employed, receiving a full-time paycheck, and still not have a place to call their own. HSU representatives have said that there are over 2,000 students unhoused; so many that they are hosting workshops to teach these kids how they can live in their cars more efficiently.

We do what we can, but more needs to be done, and we cannot work alone. The Salvation Army has always been about being a part of the community, working together to

find solutions to the poverty and addiction which wracks our citizens. Working together to aid those whose homes have been threatened or lost to fire, flood, hurricane, earthquake, or whatever calamity may befall us. Working together to do the most good.

We need your help this year, or Christmas won't come to some of our neighbors. We need your help, or some will go hungry and cold. We need you. Will you help?

Grace and peace to you. This has been Lt. Roger McCort with today's KINS Community Comment.