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# Salvation Army kicks off bellringer campaign

Market in the Square matched opening-day donation

BY ALICE E. GERARD

The 2021 Salvation Army Bellringer Drive recently kicked off at the Market in the Square in North Tonawanda with speeches, the introduction of the new lieutenants for the Tonawanda district, and a performance of Christmas carols by the Salvation Army's four-piece brass band.

Grand Island resident Beverly Roesch, who has been a member of the Salvation Army advisory board for close to 20 years, said she and her husband, Peter, who just recently stepped down as chair of the advisory board, "are hoping that we have a nice turnout and we are also hoping that we get enough donations."

Julie Paluchowski, the store manager of the North Tonawanda Market in the Square, said, "Every year, we welcome the kettle ringers with open arms to come from Nov. 1 until Christmas. We've always had a good relationship with them."

She added, "Hopefully, we'll raise lots of money because the Kusmierskis, the owners of the store, will match whatever is in our kettles for today. We are very, very happy to do that. We'll be serving lunch for everybody and, hopefully, it turns out to be a great time."

Peter Roesch, a member of the advisory board for more than 20 years, said, "Annually, we try to do a kickoff for the kettle donations. This is a primary fundraising event for the Salvation Army in the Tonawandas, and a lot of kettles will be seen between now and Christmas Eve. Today, we are introducing our new lieutenants, who will be leading our organization for some years to come, Lt. Bassey Archibong and Lt. Goni-kachukwu Archibong. They are a young couple, very energetic,

very nice people, so we are most happy to introduce them to the community."

Paluchowski said, "We have a good relationship with Bassey from the Salvation Army, and he does a lot of the shopping for the lower-income folks around the area. Every year, with the exception of COVID, we had the Salvation Army come in with their four-piece brass band, just to let everyone know that the holidays are here and, if they can, to start giving."

Beverly Roesch acknowledged that raising money for the Salvation Army hasn't always been easy, especially in 2020, when COVID-19 restrictions were in effect: "It was very difficult. Our collections were very, very short, but, with the Lord's help, we can get through anything because, through God, and only through God, things that are impossible can be made possible."

"This year, we're hoping to come out on top, which is what many of the other districts are hoping and praying, but only God can do it, so we're just putting our trust in the Lord. We feel very blessed to be able to provide for the needy. (We're looking for) anyone who is able to help us with the kettle collections. We are always looking for helpers. They are welcome to call the Tonawanda corps, and we cover Grand Island. We cover the Tonawandas and part of Amherst. Anyone who is willing to provide a little of their time to help us would be much appreciated."

Bassey Archibong said the need in the community for the services of the Salvation Army was great: "The Tonawanda Salvation Army raises money that goes for services in Tonawanda, North Tonawanda, Amherst and Grand

Island. There is no national fundraising in the Salvation Army, but the funds raised in our community are dedicated to serving our community's people, recovering from many kinds of personal disasters. We serve approximately 300 families every month. As you may or may not know, the doors of the Salvation Army were never closed during the pandemic. We remained open Monday through Sunday, still serving, while others were closed."

North Tonawanda Mayor Arthur Pappas said, "The kickoffs are always great, and they are always exciting. This is a very exciting kickoff for the Salvation Army this year. The fact that there are representatives from the Tonawandas, Buffalo, Amherst, Grand Island and regular citizens who are closely connected with the Salvation Army. The other thing that I'd like to mention is that, thinking about salvation, is that, at most times in our lives, most of us have family members who have had a need for some type of salvation, whether it's on a small level, a large level, or a personal tragedy."

Town of Tonawanda Supervisor Joe Emminger said, "Government can only do so much. We need organizations and volunteers like the Salvation Army and many others to help us get to our goal. On behalf of the Town of Tonawanda, thank you for doing your mission and helping me do my mission to get there. We know that you're going to be successful. We had an off year last year. We couldn't do this last year because of COVID, and it's just great to see everybody out here as we start to normalize our lives. Thank you for everything that the Salvation Army does."

## Plan identifies 14 projects to enhance waterfront

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dents learned about the preparation and goals of the LWRP and provided feedback on waterfront priorities.

Supervisor John "Duffy" Johnston said, "The LWRP will provide the Town of Porter with a planning tool for appropriate waterfront development and a comprehensive approach to overall waterfront planning such as expanding opportunities for public access to the waterfront, protection of natural resources, economic revitalization,

development of recreational trails and preservation of agriculture as a viable component of the local economy."

The Department of State's LWRP, funded under Title 11 of the EPF, provides matching grants on a competitive basis to eligible villages, towns, cities and counties located along New York's coasts or designated inland waterways for planning, design and construction projects to revitalize communities and waterfronts. The DOS Office of Planning, Development

and Community Infrastructure works in partnership with waterfront communities across the state through the LWRP focusing on protecting natural and cultural resources, expanding public access opportunities and strengthening the local economy. This program is said to help communities "breathe new life into their underused waterfront assets in ways that ensure successful and sustainable revitalization."

## Niagara County to conduct suicide prevention survey

The Niagara County Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services announced the distribution of a community survey regarding suicide prevention in Niagara County. It said, "The survey will examine the community's awareness of resources, how to help yourself or someone you know who is experiencing thoughts of suicide, and what type of supports you would like to see available in our community."

Laura Kelemen, director of the county's mental health department, said, "Thoughts of suicide can affect anyone regardless of

age, gender or background. And, although the topic can be difficult to talk about, having open and honest conversations about suicide can help raise awareness and may save a life."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports suicide is the 10th-leading cause of death in the U.S., and suicide rates in the U.S. have increased about 33% from 1999 to 2019. Additionally, 1 in 3 high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness and 1 in 6 had made a suicide plan over the last year.

"We need to make a change and are asking for your help," Kelemen said. "It takes a community effort to let people know that help is available, link them to supports and reach zero suicides."

The survey is available for participants until Friday, Dec. 10, at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCSPCommunitySurvey>.

The county said, "If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis and in need of support, guidance, referral or intervention, please contact Niagara County Crisis Services 24/7 phone line at 716-285-3515."

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