

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 12, 2024**

**The Salvation Army to Open Monday Night as
Emergency Overnight Warming Center**

Cape Girardeau, Mo. – After months of planning by many community nonprofits, The Salvation Army (TSA) in Cape Girardeau is prepared to open their doors as an emergency overnight warming center beginning Monday. Due to the weather prediction, the facility anticipates being open every evening for a week.

When AccuWeather predicts temperatures at or below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, the building will open at 7 p.m. with lights out at 11 p.m. The doors will be locked at 10 p.m. with no re-entry, and guests must leave at 7 a.m. TSA hopes to serve a hot meal in the evening and have breakfast items and coffee available in the morning. The building will be vacated and close at 7 a.m. to allow time for TSA staff and volunteers to clean and prepare to open during normal business hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The facility will not open if another group scheduled an event at the facility or there are not enough volunteers to ensure the safety of everyone.

According to Capt. Stephen Reinier of The Salvation Army, “We have always wanted to open our facility, but we wanted to wait until we had everything in place, especially, trained volunteers.” TSA is in need of volunteers in many areas, not just assisting with the overnight warming center. The program also seeks volunteers to serve on its board and to help with their free lunch program, Meals with Friends. Lunch is served every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and is funded in part by United Way of Southeast Missouri (UWSEMO). United Way has led the charge in communicating with local social service agencies, churches, and concerned community members to coordinate a comprehensive plan to shelter our homeless during extreme winter weather.

Elizabeth Shelton, Executive Director of UWSEMO, presented a proposal to the Cape Girardeau City Council on behalf of United Way, The Salvation Army, First Call For Help, and Community Partnership requesting financial support for sheltering the homeless during life-threatening conditions, which the Council denied. Shelton explains, “These United Way funded partners and other organizations serving the homeless have remained committed to finding solutions. We have looked at other buildings in Cape Girardeau and even considered transporting people to the Restoration Community Church in Scott City. We are thrilled The Salvation Army is now able to open their doors, and we need our community to show their support.”

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The Restoration Community Church (RCC) has committed volunteers who have received the required Safe from Harm training. RCC is part of the Wesleyan Church, a branch of Methodism, which founded

The Salvation Army and gives global support to the nonprofit. Many people, including volunteers from Street Level and The People's Shelter, took the same training last year and are encouraged to volunteer in the coming week and beyond, as the training certification is good for four years. Anyone interested in volunteering in any capacity should visit The Salvation Army to learn more about their needs and opportunities.

TSA did not meet their Red Kettle Campaign goal due to insufficient volunteers to ring bells. The Reiniers also are asking members of the Cape Girardeau City Council to volunteer. As Capt. Lily Reinier stated, "We cannot meet the needs and expectations of the community, if the community doesn't step up to help us." Donations of individually packaged breakfast items, such as granola bars and muffins, and canned and boxed ingredients for soup and other meals can also be taken to The Salvation Army at 701 Good Hope Street in Cape Girardeau.

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