

**Cleveland does a good job of taking care of its own,
but more help is needed for the poor**

by Major Lurlene-Kay M. Johnson

This past year Cleveland shone brightly in the national spotlight on a number of occasions. Our Cavaliers won a national championship, as did our Cleveland Monsters hockey team, and the Indians advanced to the World Series. We hosted the RNC for which the City received tremendous accolades. But while these high-profile successes were capturing most of the attention and headlines locally and across the country, an even bigger success story was unfolding behind the scenes—Clevelanders were demonstrating their generosity in taking care of their neighbors who were less fortunate.

Too often our local news coverage focuses on the inadequacies and shortcomings of our community. It's time to focus on some of the important things the community is doing right and say "thank you." Our gratitude goes to all those who continue to support the valuable programs working on behalf of those living in need through organizations such as The Salvation Army.

Thanks to individual and corporate financial support and volunteerism, The Salvation Army of Greater Cleveland was able to serve the community in many meaningful ways, working to tackle some of our city's most serious problems, such as gang violence, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, hunger, literacy and education deficiencies, domestic violence and human trafficking.

Among other things, The Salvation Army of Greater Cleveland accomplished the following in 2016:

- 1,055,821 meals were served in our pantries, shelters and programs
- 70,114 individuals were assisted with utilities, groceries and clothing vouchers
- 36,052 bags of groceries were distributed
- 137,884 nights of shelter were provided
- 15,928 meals were provided to seniors
- 617 individuals were supported with detox assistance
- 3,000 visits to veterans

Clevelanders additionally demonstrated their generosity with strong support for our Annual Christmas Distribution. This past Christmas, 1,331 families were assisted and over 3,100 children, who would have otherwise gone without anything under the tree, were able to have a merrier Christmas thanks to local contributions and nearly 1,000 hours of volunteer time.

Through the generous support of the community, The Salvation Army completed construction on one of four new facilities with the remaining three to be completed this year.

- Zelma George Family and Human Trafficking Shelter (Opened November 2016)
- East Cleveland Corps Community Center (Ribbon Cutting February 12)
- Temple (Collinwood) Corps Community Center (Ribbon Cutting March 19)
- West Park Corps Community Center Expansion (Ribbon Cutting June 4)

In the new Corps Community Centers spiritual guidance, education, emergency assistance, music and arts, assistance to seniors, recreation along with health and fitness will be offered. Our goal is to be a beacon of hope and offer healing and support for the body, mind and spirit.

The Salvation Army is determined to be on the front lines battling the long-standing, as well as emerging, challenges that threaten the safety and welfare of our community. Thankfully, we have the heart and soul of a caring community behind us to help us accomplish even more in 2017.

We continue to be Cleveland proud.

Sincerely,

Major Lurlene-Kay M. Johnson
The Salvation Army Divisional Secretary for Greater Cleveland Area Services