

# Eight gold rings may help Salvation Army reach holiday fund-raising goal

By Cindy Iutzi/Gate City Staff Writer

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5 Eight gold rings gave the Salvation Army a bright Christmas filled with hope and possibility. When the rings are sold, the organization hopes it will be able to reach its funding goal.

The local Salvation Army, based in Keokuk, serves Lee County and a 10-mile radius of the Tri-State Area.

10 In my 30 years of Christmases with the Salvation Army, this is the first time we've ever gotten a ring in a kettle, said Maj. Diana Amick. She and her husband, Maj. Jim Amick, are in charge of the Keokuk and Fort Madison Salvation Army facilities and programs.

15 The Daily Gate City publicized a story in early December about kettle collections not going well. The money from the kettles undergird Salvation Army programs. Also, the Salvation Army was finding it difficult to recruit volunteers, and three

weekends of wintry weather and a general decrease in giving were setting up a bleak picture for the year ahead.

The weekends are the best for kettles but the weekends were nasty, Amick said.

Our bell ringers were faithful, but people weren't shopping. But the community  
5 really responded by calling in to be volunteers and our kettle donations increased.  
The community responded when we had a need.

Then the first ring dropped into the kettle at County Market on Dec. 18. The ring is 10-karat yellow gold with a blue sapphire and cut diamonds.

That started it all, Amick said. In the next kettle we opened was a \$100 bill. It  
10 was an exciting day. It gave us hope things were going to turn around. We were  
flabbergasted. It was unreal.

When Teresa (Neuweg) called from Fort Madison and said she'd gotten a very beautiful diamond ring, we had no idea of its value. The first time we saw it was awesome.

15 The ring, actually a set of rings, was dropped into the kettle at Shopko in Fort

Madison on Dec. 22. The engagement ring is 14-karat yellow gold with a half-carat diamond. The band has 14 diamonds.

Several hundred dollar bills showed up in kettles and then one right after another came a 14-karat yellow gold engagement ring with a solitaire marquise diamond  
5 and another 14-karat yellow gold marquise diamond ring with four diamonds on each side.

Rings five and seven are 14-karat gold wedding bands and ring six is a white gold wedding band. Ring eight is a band of less marketable value but a symbol of sacrifice and caring for others, Amick said.

10 Seven of the rings, two of which are appraised in four figures, will be sold by silent auction. The rings and bid sheets will be on display from about noon to 4 p.m. Sunday at the Scrapbook Patch in the River City Mall, Keokuk, during the Bridal Show sponsored by the Daily Gate City and Big River Rentals.

We've been looking at these as gifts that keep on giving, Amick said. These  
15 were given to us and whoever purchases them can give them as gifts. This would be a unique gift for Valentine's Day.

In the days following the bridal show, the rings will be on display from Monday through Friday at the Salvation Army office in Keokuk and from Feb. 4 through Feb. 7 at the Salvation Army in Fort Madison. Bids may be left at both places.

Bids close Friday, Feb. 8, and the winners will be notified by telephone.

- 5 If the rings sell well, the Salvation Army may reach its \$80,000 Christmas goal. Collections for the kettle campaign stand now at \$1,400 below the goal and behind last year's \$80,059.

We are very grateful for the anonymous donors of the rings because of the hope they gave us and to all of the people who contributed money and time and toys to the Salvation Army this year, Amick said.

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This Christmas season the Salvation Army served 914 people, about half of them families, filled 416 grocery orders and distributed 955 toys. The prison toy program gave one toy each to 157 children.

Call the Salvation Army at 524-1144 for more information.