

NEW YEAR'S EVE LAUGH AND LEARN

THOUGHTS:

The measure of life is not its duration, but its donation.
Peter Marshall

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.
Winston Churchill

And now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.
Bible, Source: *I Corinthians 13:13*

THE LEARN:

What do Americans do at the end of one year in preparation for the new? (1) They plan a New Year's party; (2) they write resolutions of things they will do better in the new year; and (3) they make their yearend gifts to **charities**.

The U.S.A., with 308 million people, has one million not-for-profit charitable organizations. These include educational and health research institutions, 350,000 churches, and charities...hundreds of thousands of charities. Gifts to charities are tax exempt, so, as the old year closes, if you want your money go to something more useful than Washington D.C., you give to charities.

GATES STEPS DOWN

The chairman of Microsoft, Bill Gates, is stepping down from his daily job at the world's largest software company today. Gates, who made his fortune through developing computer software, plans to devote his time to charity work. [Summer, 2009]

WHAT IS A CHARITY?

A charity is a voluntary organization which is set up in order to do good. Charities aim not only to help and support people but also animals, the environment, etc. In size they range from small, local organizations to large, international organizations.

Americans favorite charity is called the Salvation Army. Every American admires the Salvation Army and many of us give to this charity. In the Links part of L&L you will meet Bill Schmidt, a Salvation Army Bell Ringer. Nancy and I, along with thousands of others, have been bell ringers for this charity.

This article is from America's national newspaper, USA Today, 24 December, 2009.



Salvation Army bell ringers sound the call of giving

By Nanci Hellmich, USA TODAY

CLIFTON, Va. — It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas this morning: Snow is falling, shoppers are bundled up as they hurry into the grocery store, and Bill Schmidt, 63, is ringing a hand bell non-stop near a bright red kettle as he collects donations for the Salvation Army.

He greets passersby enthusiastically even if they don't make a donation, and after people drop coins and bills into the kettle, he exclaims, "Thank you very much. Have a beautiful day. God bless you. Merry Christmas."

Schmidt, a lawyer in a suburb of Washington D.C., has volunteered here every Saturday during the holiday season for 17 years because, he says, he believes in the work done by the Salvation Army. That work includes feeding the hungry, giving Christmas gifts and food to those in need, providing disaster relief and running rehab centers, food pantries and thrift stores. [*Food pantries give away free food. Thrift stores provide used clothing at low prices or at no cost.*]



"God calls all of us to various services, and this is what he called me to do," Schmidt says. "Jesus said, 'Whatever you do for the least of my brothers, you do for me,' and I believe no one in this country should go to bed hungry."

Across the nation, an estimated 25,000 bell ringers have been working throughout the holiday season, standing outside grocery stores and malls, says Maj. George Hood, a spokesman for the Salvation Army, a Christian-based charity.

The money is used to provide Christmas gifts and food for local needy families. [The Salvation Army does many kinds of charitable services]

The kettle program was started in 1891 by a young Salvation Army captain in San Francisco who needed money to feed the area's poor. So he placed a big kettle for donations on the dock of Fisherman's Wharf, Hood says.

Since then, it has expanded across the United States and around the world. It also has gone beyond the kettles: The Salvation Army now accepts online donations at www.salvationarmyusa.org.

Last year, about \$130 million was raised nationally during the Red Kettle Christmas Fundraising Campaign, up from \$118 million in 2007, Hood says. "The American public has a fascinating way of digging deep when they know their neighbor is struggling. They give with their hearts, and we know they will come through again."

Children almost always want to give and get such joy from doing it, he says. "They like the bell, and they want to give money. Children are absolutely wonderful."

Schmidt remembers the time a girl was pulling on her mother's skirt as they left the grocery store, saying: "Mommy, mommy, I want to give the man money. I can change the world."

Sometimes people share stories about how the Salvation Army has touched their lives.

A woman once told Schmidt she donates every time she sees the kettle because one year when she was a child and her father was out of work, the Salvation Army provided Christmas gifts and food for her family, which included seven children.

Another time, Schmidt says, a man who donated money said he had been among the first responders at the Pentagon after it was hit by a hijacked jet on Sept. 11, 2001. The man recalled that the Salvation Army had been on the scene, feeding and taking care of emergency crews.



'A family affair'

His work now involves his entire family. He often gets help from his wife, four adult children, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, four grandchildren and friends. "It has become a family affair," he says. "That's what's so heart-warming."

'What Christmas is about'

Schmidt is out here today in freezing temperatures despite the fact that he's going through radiation treatment for prostate cancer. He says he feels fine, but his family wants him to rest more. He says he's not ready to turn in his bell yet.

"If God calls me home, then he's got a purpose for that," Schmidt says. "And if he doesn't, then he wants me to accomplish more things on Earth — not for me, but for him."

This work provides a chance to feel the true spirit of Christmas, which is "thinking about others and forgetting self," he says.

"The older I have gotten, the more I realize that this is truly what Christmas is about. It's giving to others. If you had all the love in the world, it wouldn't be worth anything unless you gave it away. If you accumulate all the money in the world, it doesn't do any good unless you give it away.

"When you give, the gifts multiply."

QUIZ...SELF SERVE...FOR FUN.

- What famous person recently quit his job to give all his time to charity?
- A charity is a _____ organization which is set up in order to do _____
- In the USA, if you don't want the government to take you money, what will many people do with it?
- The USA has how many not-for-profit charitable organizations?
- No one should go to bed in what condition?
- Salvation Army kettles are what color?
- How many volunteers ring Salvation Army bells during the Christmas Season?
- The kettle program started in 1891 in what city?
- Schmidt says, "If you accumulate all the money in the world, it doesn't do any good unless you" do what with it?

THE LAUGH



Charity Begins In The Home

A local charity office realized that it had never received a donation from the town's most successful lawyer. The person in charge of contributions called him to persuade him to contribute. "Our research shows that out of a yearly income of at least \$500,000, you give not a penny to charity. Wouldn't you like to give back to the community in some way?"

The lawyer thought this over for a moment and replied, "First, did your research also show that my mother is dying after a long illness, and has bills that are several times her annual income?"

Embarrassed, the charity representative mumbled, "Um...no."

"--or that my brother, a disabled veteran, is blind and confined to a wheelchair?"

The stricken charity man began to stammer out an apology but was interrupted, "--or that my sister's husband died in a traffic accident," the lawyer's voice rising in indignation, "leaving her penniless with three children?!"

The humiliated charity volunteer, completely beaten, said simply, "I had no idea..."

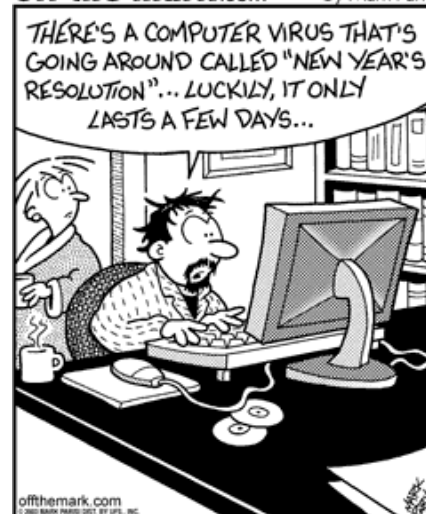
The lawyer interrupted him off once again: "--so if I don't give any money to them, why should I give any to you?!?"



off the mark.com by Mark Parisi



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Overheard at the World Volunteer Conference

In response to the observation that volunteers are too often seen as amateurs: "Just remember: Noah's Ark was built by amateurs. The Titanic was built by professionals."



A Legend in the Middle East

A skinny little sparrow is lying on his back in the middle of the road. A horseman comes by, dismounts and asks the sparrow what he's doing lying upside down like that. "I heard the heavens are going to fall today," said the sparrow. "Oh," said the horseman, "and I suppose your spindly little legs can hold up the heavens." "One does what one can," said the sparrow. "One does what one can!"

- Source: The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs

THE LINKS

Salvation Army Bell Ringer:

http://www.usatoday.com/news/sharing/2009-12-24-1Abellringers24_CV_N.htm

The Salvation Army Bell Ringers - Channel 6 News

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXtRgn1KujU>

Charge your donations to The Salvation Army bell ringers

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG3hqbPvEDM>

Michael Jackson charity song what more can i give

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7baeBy7E-w>

New Years Eve 2008/2009 - Times Square Balldrop

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3ktVvub-mU>

THE QUIZ RESULTS: Bill Gates, voluntary, good, give to a charity, one million, hungry, red, 25,000, San Francisco, give it away

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