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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE SALVATION ARMY SEEKS HELP AS THEY COME TO THE AID OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Largest provider of poverty relief anticipates need for additional funding in order to meet high demand for services

Waco, TX (2/24/20) — With the COVID-19 pandemic increasing rapidly in communities throughout the state, The Salvation Army of Waco has significantly amplified its efforts to diminish the spread of the virus and ensure critical service, especially among the homeless and other vulnerable populations.

Requests for service have risen and a further spike is expected in the next few weeks and months. While services remain in place for the most vulnerable citizens, such as the homeless and others living near the poverty level, many people who have been able to pay their way prior to this outbreak may now face extreme difficulties due to mandated business closings. Countless residents now have no income and are in need of financial assistance.

“We are already seeing the effects and expect that to grow significantly as this situation plays out,” said Major James Taylor of The Salvation Army. “So many people living with extremely tight budgets aren’t able to skip just one paycheck, much less weeks or months without pay. **People who never expected it are now turning to us for help.**”

The Salvation Army continues to provide service to individuals and families in every zip code in the state and is working diligently to ensure people have access to food, shelter, and desperately needed services like housing and utility assistance. **In Waco & McLennan County this includes:**

- Community Kitchen, serving breakfast and dinner 365 days a year, lunch Mon-Tues (all now take-out)
- Sally’s House, emergency and transitional home for women and families with children
- Red Shield Lodge emergency and transitional home for men
- Booth Garden Apartments, low income housing for seniors or handicapped adults of any age (activities, pantry and meals have been altered or cancelled as residents must ‘shelter in place’)
- Fresh Start a housing & reintegration program for those leaving federal prison (job & visit restrictions)
- Food Pantry (limited hours and supplies)
- Emergency assistance
- Re-Housing collaboration with Heart to Home
- Social Services and Case Management Teams
- Thrift Store, providing free goods for those in poverty, crisis or disaster (closed during crisis)
- Hygiene services including showers, laundry, hygiene supplies
- Special services throughout the holidays providing food and gifts
- Fellowship programs and outreach to veterans and elderly (nursing home and VA visits now cancelled)

Our Family Thrift Store has closed, in accordance with county mandates. In addition to giving away clothing and items to those living in poverty, it has also been a source of revenue that is used to fund the services we provide. This unexpected loss of income being felt by our neighbors is also being felt by us. In our Community Kitchen, meals are now packaged as take-out, requiring increase of supplies and unexpected expenses being incurred. In addition, inside The Salvation Army’s residential facilities, adapting to additional cleaning & safety efforts are in place to help curtail the spread of the virus. Proper use of sanitation supplies are part of every location’s infectious-disease protocol. If a resident or staff member gets sick, isolation/quarantine areas will be established, additional healthcare will be needed, and staff needs will increase. “All of these extra measures have a price tag attached,” said Taylor.

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The extra need is daunting, particularly due to the extremely contaminous nature of the virus, which has caused the postponement or cancellation of numerous Salvation Army fundraising events, many that had been scheduled for the spring. "There is a concern that the effect of this unprecedented event could be felt for a while, as individuals, families and organizations like ours try to recover from the financial setback," Taylor said. "We want to be here to provide basic needs to those we already serve and to have plenty for those who may find themselves needing us in the future."

Public support is essential, maybe moreso now than anytime in recent history. "If those able are willing to help those who are in need, our state and nation will likely rise out of this devastating situation more quickly with fewer residual effects on the men, women and children suffering right now," Taylor said. "The Salvation Army is committed to serving those who need our help, and we are thankful for generous public support that allows us to do so. We don't want to turn anyone in need away, and the only way we can accomplish this is through generous public support."

Financial donations are the best way to support the ongoing work of The Salvation Army as they work to ensure the safety of those who depend on Salvation Army programs and services, along with the safety of staff and volunteers, while having the funds needed to purchase supplies, meals and other local needs. Support their local efforts online at give.salvationarmytexas.org, by calling 1-800-SAL-ARMY or 254-756-7271 or by mailing a check to 4721 W. Waco Drive, Waco, TX 76710.

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About The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army annually helps nearly 23 million Americans overcome poverty, addiction, and economic hardships through a range of social services. By providing food for the hungry, emergency relief for disaster survivors, rehabilitation for those suffering from drug and alcohol abuse, and clothing and shelter for people in need, The Salvation Army is doing the most good at 7,600 centers of operation around the country. In the first-ever listing of "America's Favorite Charities" by *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, The Salvation Army ranked as the country's largest privately funded, direct-service nonprofit. For more information, visit salvationarmytexas.org/waco. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: @SalArmyWaco