

December 15, 2019

Mission Moment

In 1891, Salvation Army Captain McFee was distraught because so many people in his beloved city of San Francisco were going hungry. He was resolved to provide a free Christmas dinner for the destitute and poverty stricken. But, he had one major hurdle, funding the project.

His thoughts drifted back to his sailor days in Liverpool England. The dock where the boats came in, there was a large iron kettle called "Simpson's Pot" into which passers-by tossed a coin or two to help the poor.

The next day Captain McFee placed a similar pot at the Ferry Landing with a sign that said "Keep the Pot Boiling". He soon had enough coins to see that the needy were properly fed at Christmas.

Six years later, this mission spread to the East Coast. That year, the combined effort nationwide resulted in 150,000 Christmas dinners for the needy. In 1901, the kettle contributions in New York City alone provided enough funds for the first mammoth sit-down dinner in Madison Square Garden.

Captain McFee's red kettle idea launched a tradition that has spread across the world. Salvation Red Kettles are now used in Korea, Japan, and many European countries.

Today, The Salvation Army assists more than four-and-a-half million people during the Thanksgiving and Christmas Season.

Public contributions to these Red Kettles enable this organization to continue its year-round efforts to help those who would otherwise be forgotten.