

December 16, 2018

Mission Moment

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

As he pondered this issue, his thoughts drifted back to his sailor days in Liverpool, England. He remembered 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 place a similar pot at the Ferry Landing at the foot of Market St. with a sign that said "Keep the Pot Boiling". He soon had enough money to see that the needy were properly fed at Christmas.

Six years later the idea spread from the west coast to the east. That year, the combined effort nationwide resulted in 150,000 Christmas dinners for the needy. In 1901, kettle contributions in New York City alone provided funds for the first mammoth sit-down dinner in Madison Square Garden, a custom that continued for many years.

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

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

Public contributions to the Salvation Army Kettles enable the organization to continue its year-round efforts at helping those who would otherwise be forgotten.

