

Progress, goals key issues at Salvation Army annual meeting

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
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One of the Salvation Army's most enduring members and advocates told members of the organization's Winston-Salem area command that they must diligently work to engage a wide range of people in the army's multifaceted mission.

"If we work together for the benefit of the community, we are all better off," said James "Jay" Parker, a past advisory board chairman of the Salvation Army of Washington, D.C.

Parker, who was the keynote speaker at the local Salvation Army's annual meeting last Thursday, urged members of the group to talk with people from all walks of life and all racial backgrounds about the good deeds the army performs each day. Parker, who currently sits on the board of visitors for the Salvation Army's College for Officer Training in Atlanta and the Salvation Army's National Advisory Board, shared that he has reached out to members of his wife's sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and to other African-American Greek groups. The result, he said, has been positive.

"We have to do a full-court press to go after people," Parker said. "The effort sometimes pays off. If we keep on swinging, we will knock a few out of the park."

During his humor-laden remarks, Parker talked much about his experiences working with The Salvation Army — a well-respected Christian-based service organization that fights poverty and hopelessness — over the last 30 years, work that has taken him to several continents.

"The army has done so much more for me than I could have ever done for it," Parker said.

At one point, he showed audience members his 2001 Salvation Army Yearbook, telling them that they should never leave home without it. In the



James Parker, a well-respected and longtime member of the Salvation Army, talks to an unidentified man after his keynote speech here last week.

book are listed the names and telephone numbers of army officers throughout the world. By simply opening his book, Parker said, he has met with members of the army in places such as Southern Africa, the Bahamas and Costa Rica.

"You get to see what others are doing... You can't buy experiences like that," he said.

Parker, who during his distinguished public service career also served as chairman of the transition team at the Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission during the Reagan administration, also talked about some of the challenges the Washington area command is currently facing. In one area particularly where the organization is working, the Hispanic population is increasing rapidly. Rather than bypassing that population, the army is having to adapt and broaden, he said.

"Things change and we have to change with it," he said.

The Winston-Salem area command, which is

headed by Major Dan Proctor, has already come to that realization.

The organization rejoiced during the meeting in the first-year success of its international outpost services division, which mostly works with the city's burgeoning Hispanic population, providing not only food and clothing but also after-school programs for youngsters and Bible studies. The international outpost was started here in July 2000.

"People have come to our Hispanic outpost and received joy and hope," said Major Francisco Zuniga, who heads the outpost.

The area command wants to do more to highlight the things it does for residents here in the city and in surrounding counties. Several years ago, the organization came up with a strategic plan, a sweeping list of goals that officials say will benefit area residents. The army hopes to fund the items in the plan through a capital campaign that is expected to kick off in January of 2003.

Before that, though, the army wants to spend time nurturing new leadership within its ranks and promoting itself and its value to the community at large, officials said.

"We need to have more local awareness that human needs are being met right here," said Charlie Stott, chairman of the advisory board for the city's area command. Stott added that the army meets needs that no other organization can meet.

In the city, The Salvation Army runs a variety of programs. Among them are the popular Boys and Girls Club; a shelter for the homeless as well as transitional housing for ex-felons; and a Christmas program that not only includes the well-known bell ringers but also efforts to generate money, toys and food for the needy during the holidays. Disaster relief, one of the other wings of the local army, recently helped in Washington, D.C., after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Library

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Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, director of Forsyth County Public Library, said in a news release, "Forsyth County Public Library has experienced a steady increase in technology resources available to our customers over the last 10 years. At Central Library alone, public Internet access computers (have) increased from a mere handful to over 50 workstations."

The Shepherd's Center of Winston-Salem is already using the library's Computer Learning Center. The Shepherd's Center is an interfaith ministry that supports and promotes successful aging through a variety of activities, including lifelong learning, said Sam Matthews, executive director. The Shepherd's Center is currently teaching a once-a-week computer class for senior citizens (for a total of six weeks), utilizing the library's Computer Learning Center. "What we're doing is a very basic introduction to computers," Matthews said. That includes

such things as an overview of what a computer system is and what its components are (computer, mouse, diskettes, etc.); an explanation of a workstation (desktop, icons, etc.); word processing (creating letters, documents, Christmas cards, flyers, invitations, etc.); how to get on and use the Internet; and how to access and use e-mail.

Matthews praised the library's Computer Learning Center. "The equipment is state of the art." He said there is an overhead projector tied into the computer system. The computers are networked. The workstations are good to work with. Monitors are recessed into the table, so as not to obscure the instructor or the screen.

"It's a very pleasant environment," Matthews said. "It's a wonderful facility."

"The only disadvantage I see to the lab, they know this as well, (is) it is limited to 12 (people). We could put 30 in there," Matthews said. "Computer skills for seniors is something a lot of older adults are particularly interested in."

Matthews said that as soon as The Shepherd's Center advertised its current computer class for seniors, it was quickly filled. (Sorry, the class can take no more students.)

Matthews said that, with the opening of the library's Computer Learning Center, The Shepherd's Center may be able to offer the computer skills class more often than the two to three times a year it has offered it historically. That's provided The Shepherd's Center can find enough volunteers to help with the class.

In the past, The Shepherd's Center has offered the class at such places as Forsyth Tech and Wake Forest University.

Dwiggins said the library's Computer Learning Center requires a lot of volunteer help, to help supervise the lab. The library would like a time commitment of two hours a week, but it is flexible. If you are interested in volunteering at the Computer Learning Center or if your group would like to train on the computers at the center, call the library at 727-2557.



At the official ribbon-cutting ceremony, from left to right are Elizabeth Skinner, library employee; Donna Staley a member of the Forsyth County Public Library board of directors; Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, library director; and George Taylor, library employee.

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