



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Salvation Army Angel Tree

Free life skills classes are a requirement for returning clients

Mississippi Gulf Coast (August 10, 2016) – Christmas is just around the corner! The Salvation Army's 2016 Angel Tree Christmas Assistance Program opens late October and the organization is inviting those who are struggling financially to register.

Angel Tree registration will be taking place Monday, October 31st – Thursday, November 3rd. Returning clients are required to participate in at least 3 life skills classes prior to registration, in order to receive another year of assistance.

Life skills classes are designed to help clients from needing assistance year after year and to get back on their feet in order to provide for their families. Classes that include budgeting, credit counseling, and communication skills, began in May of this year and will continue until September 8th. The Social Service Coordinator of The Salvation Army urges returning participants to not wait until the last minute to sign up for their 3 life skills classes.

The remaining classes are:

AUGUST

August 16th - Becoming Money Smart 5:00 PM

August 26th - Communication Skills 9:00 AM

August 26th - Dress for Success 10:00 AM

August 26th - Money Management 11:00 AM

SEPTEMBER

September 6th - Making Your Budget Work for You 10:00 AM

September 7th - Having a Back Up Plan 10:00 AM

September 8th - Communication Skills 10:00 AM

The Salvation Army Angel Tree program aims to give needy children, between the ages of 0-12 years, a Christmas they may not have otherwise.

Angel Tree Assistance Requirements:

Person applying must bring VALID State issued Photo ID

Parent or legal Guardian must apply for ONLY their own children. Guardianship/Custody documentation required if you are not listed on Birth certificate

State Issued Certified Birth Certificates for children 12 & under required. (no copies or hospital certificates)

The following is a list of proof of income and proof of expense that is required at the time of application for everyone in the household:

Income

Employment (All members of household)

WIN Job center registration verification form

Tanif Award Letter

Utility Allowance

SNAP Award Letter

Disability Award Letter

Social Security Award Letter

Pension

Insurance

Child Support or DHS statement of non-support

SSI Award Letter

School Grants/Loans

Other Income

Section 8 Paperwork

Must present notarized statement of any income help from anyone else

Rent

Utilities

Credit Cards

Gas Receipts

Water/Sewage

Grocery Receipts

Car Notes

Medical Bills Paying on

Cable

Phone Bill

Rental furniture payments

Loans & Other Bills

Bank Statement (if applicable)

Proof means that you must bring these items into the building at the time of application. If you do not have the items at time of registration, you will not be able to register until you have all of the items.

History of the Angel Tree

The Angel Tree is a unique program that started in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1979. It involves the community in a direct way allowing them to become personally involved by sharing with those less fortunate in their community. The program provides gifts of new clothing and toys to thousands of children who otherwise might not have anything for Christmas.

Children who are recipients of Angel Tree gifts are from families who have applied for Christmas assistance through the Social Services program of The Salvation Army. During the application process, the clothing sizes and special needs of the children are determined and written on the application and is then transferred to paper "angels" along with the child's first name, age, and sex.

The "angels" contain a code number which corresponds to the client's application number. All children in a family have the same code number, followed by "A" for the first child, "B" for the second child, etc.

The angels are then taken to area shopping malls and various local retailers and businesses where they are selected by shoppers who then purchase any or all of the items listed. After purchasing these items, the gifts are returned to the Angel Tree distribution centers.

Each Angel Tree family is given an appointment date and time to come back and receive their gifts for the children or "Angels". It is not based on a first come, first serve basis. Items that are carefully and lovingly selected and purchased for each child is what the child will receive.

About The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army, established in London in 1865, has been supporting those in need in His name without discrimination for more than 135 years in the United States. Approximately 30 million Americans receive assistance from The Salvation Army each year through a range of social services: food for the hungry, relief for disaster victims, assistance for the disabled, outreach to the elderly and ill, clothing and shelter to the homeless, and opportunities for underprivileged children. 82 cents of every dollar donated to The Salvation Army are used to support those services in 5,000 communities nationwide. The Salvation Army tracks the level of need across the country with the Human Needs Index (HumanNeedsIndex.org). For more information, go to salvationarmyusa.org or follow on Twitter @SalvationArmyUS.

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