

Disney sponsors annual Thanksgiving dinner

Army's Southern California Division serves 2,200 Thanksgiving dinner.

by Janet Chismar –

For the ninth consecutive year, The Salvation Army, Southern California Division, played host to more than 2,000 homeless individuals and families during its annual Thanksgiving Eve Dinner Celebration at the Hollywood Palladium.

Johnny Grant, honorary mayor of Hollywood, shared master of ceremony duties with Constance Marie of television's George Lopez Show. Also present were Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; Los Angeles City Councilman, Tom LaBonge; Dick Cook, chairman of The Walt Disney Studios; Vanessa Williams of Soul Food and William Allen Young of CSI: Miami.



A Salvation Army band greeted the guests as they stepped off chartered buses and onto the red carpet, while a large contingent of local media captured their arrival on film. Once inside, a team of Salvation Army and Disney VoluntEARS escorted them to their tables. Lt. Colonel Paul Bollwahn delivered the welcoming remarks and opening prayer.

James Tormé and Doc Anello & his Swing Band performed several well-received numbers. Tormé then treated the audience to "The Christmas Song," made famous decades earlier by his late father, Mel Tormé.

Later, Cook acknowledged the year-round efforts of The Salvation Army. The event marked the fourth year Disney has partnered with Salvation Army. The evening was capped off with appearances by Mickey and Minnie Mouse and other Disney characters.

"This year's event was our most successful to date," said Steve Allen, executive director of development, Southern California Division. "Our team of volunteers and our Disney partners went out of their way to make this a night to remember."