

In South LA, a Salvation Army turkey giveaway creates ‘a sense of unity’

Volunteers join in to distribute 1,500 Thanksgiving meals.

As the sun rose Nov. 14, community members in South Los Angeles lined up around the block of The Salvation Army Siemon Family Youth and Community Center, arriving hours early for a Thanksgiving meal giveaway.

Among them was LA resident Irma Vasquez, who arrived at 7:30 a.m., more than an hour before the distribution began.



“As a single parent, there are times when it’s hard to put food on the table,” she said. “Receiving this food helps ease some of that stress.”

She said the free meal would allow her to save money for Christmas gifts for her children.

“It’s a blessing,” she said.



Photo by John Docter.

To support families like Vasquez's with a Thanksgiving meal, the CMA CGM Foundation, also known as Maritime Freighting Company, donated 1,500 turkeys and traditional trimmings to The Salvation Army—enough food to feed up to six people per recipient.

Now in its fifth year, the [CMA CGM Foundation's "Giving Across North America" campaign](#) seeks to deliver over 130,000 meals throughout the U.S. and Canada during the holiday season.

To achieve this, CMA CGM partners with The Salvation Army in the U.S. to reach individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. This year, anyone with a valid ID could receive a meal.



Photo by John Docter.

While LA locals waited in line, Edwin Perry, Director of The Salvation Army South Los Angeles Corps, outlined a plan of action to the [15 Salvation Army volunteers](#), 40 CMA CGM volunteers, and members of other community volunteer groups.



Photo by John Docter.

Next, everyone separated into groups, each with a specific task to assist those on foot or by car.

“You all will play a valuable role in making sure our community members leave happy,” Perry said to the volunteers.



Photo by John Docter.

Just after 9:30 a.m., George Goldman, President and CEO of CMA CGM, began handing out the first turkeys.

According to Goldman, the combined effort of volunteers makes the event possible.

“It takes teamwork to bring an event like this to life,” Goldman said. “The dedication of our volunteers and The Salvation Army ensures we can make a meaningful difference for families.”

He added with inflation and rising food prices, the need for support has grown, making food giveaways even more vital for families struggling to make ends meet.

For Wayne Rosemond, a Salvation Army volunteer and Youth Program Specialist at the South Los Angeles Corps, giving his time to support the community is a priority.



Photo by John Docter.

In his second year volunteering at the turkey giveaway, he said he volunteers to help foster a sense of community.

“Events like this bring people together and create a sense of unity,” Rosemond said. “It’s something I’m happy to be a part of.”

As people received their meals, he wished them a joyful holiday season.

“Sometimes, just smiling and being kind can make a difference,” he said.



Photo by John Docter.

CMA CGM employee and volunteer Jacob Burnell agreed.

“You never know what financial obstacles someone may be facing,” Burnell said. “Extending a helping hand and a happy face can make all the difference.”



Photo by John Docter.

Within three hours, all the individuals who had waited in line on foot received their meals, while the line of cars began to slow.

Perry credits the processes and divided responsibilities for creating an efficient system that allowed them to serve hundreds of individuals.

“Partnerships allow us to amplify our impact in the community,” Perry said. “It helps ensure that the traditions of Thanksgiving reach as many people as possible.”

Do Good:

- Whether it's through opportunities with The Salvation Army or elsewhere, your gifts are needed. *You are needed.* If you choose to cultivate these nine habits of impactful volunteers, you will make a difference in the lives of others. When you strive to do good, you help build a safer world for all *and* give others a lasting display of the love behind your beliefs. [Get the guide on How To Be An Impactful Volunteer](#) and join us in Doing Good today.