

Orange Aid brings just that

The Salvation Army partners with other organizations in central Calif. to bring freeze relief.

by Jennifer Byrd –

When you mention Orange Aid, someone might think you are talking about a new soda. Far from it.

In January, the Golden State Division's Central Valley Salvation Army locations—including Fresno, Visalia, Tulare, Hanford and Porterville—along with other local community organizations participated in "Orange Aid Valley Freeze Relief." The media-sponsored, 16-hour event that began at 6 a.m. on January 23 and went until 10 p.m. was aimed at raising cash, food and other public donations for the working families who were affected by the weeklong freeze in January.

"The need caused by this freeze was much larger than anyone realized," said Captain Richard Larson, Fresno county coordinator and Fresno corps officer.

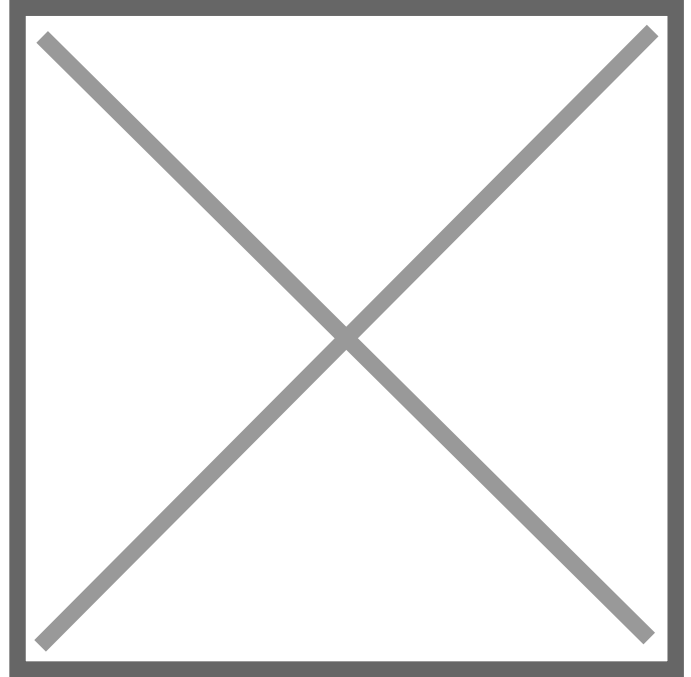
He said that workers displaced by the freeze damage faced challenges including paying for shelter, heat and food.

Salvation Army volunteers staffed donation drop-off points in Visalia, Tulare, Fresno, Hanford and Porterville.

"Bring a chair and your Bible," Larson told his crew. "It is going to be a long day."

The freeze wiped out much of the Central Valley's \$1 million citrus crops. Hundreds, even thousands, of Valley packinghouse workers face layoffs in the coming weeks since there will be no citrus fruits to harvest.

Volunteers brought a Salvation Army kettle to collect money. The Army expects to receive approximately \$100,000 in donations. The funds will be sent to the Fresno Corps and rerouted back to the communities from which they came, commented Larson.



“The event went well,” said Larson. “It made people aware of the circumstances happening here in the valley and it was our way of helping those who put food on our table by putting food on theirs.” KSEE 24 News kicked off the fundraiser at 5 a.m. on Tuesday and continued with live updates during the day. There was a live telethon from 8-10 p.m. on the evening of the event.

Another boost for the field workers came from Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s REACH-Plus program. With an increased donation of \$400,000 to those affected in the valley, hundreds of families will be able to pay their electricity bills.

“It is a reminder of how timely God’s blessings are,” said Larson.