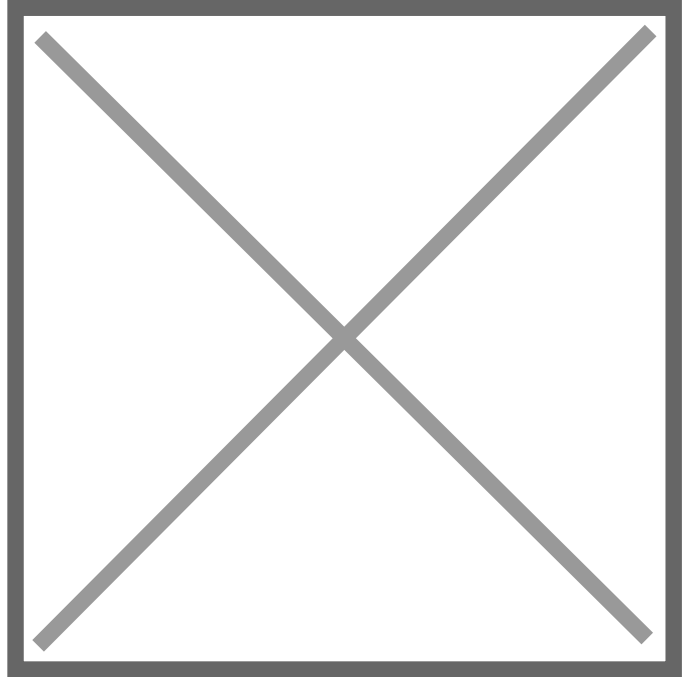


Preparing a warm welcome for winter games

The 2002 Winter Olympics are only one year away and, as the brochure put out by The Salvation Army's 2002 outreach asks, "What will *you* do in 2002?"

More Than Gold is the theme being used by denominations, para-church ministries, and resource providers around the world during major events like the Olympics. The phrase "More Than Gold" has more than one meaning. To the athletes in the Olympic/Paralympics it means they have worked long years to achieve success in winning a gold medal and all that goes with it. To hundreds of Olympic/Paralympic gold medalists who have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ, though, the phrase means something far more important. It means they realize that their faith is worth "more than gold" (1 Peter 1:7). These Olympians are choosing to partner with churches and ministries in every country with this goal: To let people know that even though they desire a gold medal, their faith is worth More Than Gold.



The legacy of the More Than Gold ministry continued during the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney Australia. Adrian Kistan, The Salvation Army More Than Gold 2000 Task force Coordinator, reports, "What The Salvation Army was able to accomplish during this period far outweighed the high expectations that it set out with. Over 1.5 million people came in contact with The Salvation Army during the Olympic and Paralympic games, all of whom were impacted for the gospel in creative non-threatening ways."

The 2002 Winter Olympic Games begin a year from now on February 8, 2002 and then the Paralympic Games begin March 6, 2002. Plans are well under way to insure that The Salvation Army is prepared to take advantage of the opportunity for ministry during these two events.

"We are only a year away from the world coming to Salt Lake City, Utah and our task force has been working for the last year to prepare for 2002," says Dan Williams, The Salvation Army More Than Gold 2002 task force coordinator. "Prayer is the most important thing right now. The flame that is going to ignite the ministry of More Than Gold 2002 is prayer. We are recruiting people to be a part of Prayer Team 2002."

Lt. Col. Mervyn Morelock (R) is heading up Prayer Team 2002. "Prayer partners are being recruited around the country to pray for the More Than Gold ministry," says Morelock. And Major Wayne Froderberg, Salt Lake Basin coordinator, emphasizes the call for prayer saying, "We will need volunteers to man our canteens, service teams to provide ministry, and most importantly prayer warriors to bathe our plans in the power of the Holy Spirit."

From recent reports, prayers are being answered. "This is the first time that I'm aware of that we have been able to work as closely with the Olympic organizing committee this far in advance to place our canteens in and around Olympic venues to provide water and warm beverages to spectators and volunteers," says Williams.

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Just recently, from January 19-21, The Salvation Army was granted approval to have a canteen at the ski jump test event in Park City, Utah. At this three-day event the Army handed out 2,500 cups of water. "People were thankful that we were there to serve them," says Williams. "Spectators had to walk 1.2 miles up a hill in which they gained over 500 feet in elevation by the time they reached our canteen. I can't think of a better opportunity to show Christian hospitality."

Because of the success of this test event Dan expects that The Salvation Army will be asked to have canteens positioned at three Olympic venues and in central locations throughout Salt Lake City.

Another unique aspect of the More Than Gold 2002 ministry is the recruitment of Mission/Service teams being sponsored by divisions and territories throughout the Salvation Army world.

Kevin White, programming & creative ministries specialist for the Western Territory, is coordinating this effort and sees the Olympics as a great opportunity for ministry and evangelism, "What a fantastic opportunity for the Army to reach out to the sporting world, not only building strong community relations but also reaching people through practical ministry."

What about those who want to take part in the ministry but won't be able to come to Salt Lake City? Can they minister through this event? Williams thinks so, "You don't necessarily have to come to Salt Lake City to take part in Olympic outreach. The Olympic Flame will be visiting many cities throughout the U.S. giving communities the opportunity to join together in ministry to reach their neighbors." Plans are underway to partner with other ministries throughout the United States to develop outreach along the Torch Run route. The Olympic Flame will travel more than 13,500 miles through 46 states in 65 days.

To equip the volunteers for outreach, Christian resources are being developed that 'speak the same language' as sports participants and supporters. Some of these resources such as a Winter Sports New Testament and Winter Olympic Interactive Pocket Guide have already been produced. Tools that are still being developed are trading pins and manuals on how a corps can utilize a community's interest in sport for outreach, such as: models of youth sport ministry, a viewing party planning guide, and a Olympic Torch Run outreach guide.

The world is coming to Salt Lake City in February 2002. The Games are a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Christians to leave a spiritual legacy in their community and with visitors and residents of Salt Lake City. If you are interested in volunteering or finding out how you can plan a More Than Gold ministry in your community you can call the More Than Gold 2002 office at (801) 323-5806.