

## Store mourns bellringer's death

### Ambassador for the Army will be missed

*By Hillary Jackson –*

For nearly 20 years, James Conrad spent the six weeks of kettle season ringing bells at Howie's Market in San Gabriel, California. He was known around Howie's, and the store would often offer him lunch or allow him to ring bells indoors when it rained, said Pasadena Tabernacle Corps Officer Captain Terry Masango.



In 2017, Conrad was unable to ring bells at the kettle because he lived in Covina, and the 20-mile drive through Los Angeles-area traffic was difficult.

"He missed bellringing so much that he made an arrangement with Access," Masango said, and the public transit service transported Conrad from his home to the store for the 2018 season, which would be his last.

When Conrad passed away at the age of 92 in January, Howie's mourned his loss on their [Facebook page](#): "It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our dear James, the bell ringer for The Salvation Army in front of our store. He worked in front of our store for many years and will be missed."

Along with the statement, Howie's posted a letter from Conrad that was dated Dec. 31, 2018.

"Dear friends at Howie's, I have written 20+ names of you and I see your faces as I read them and remember the individual kindnesses. Carlos who drove me home one day and Vanessa who helped me in my phone problems and on with blessed memories. Overcoming heart troubles was only possible by the good support of owners Mike and wife and all of you there. Now I rest in recovery, gratefully, for a miraculous tour of duty. Even now I feel some symptoms, troubling, but memories of what I survived makes me pray that Christmas 2019, I'll be back. I thank you all, which is inadequate to fully express the gratitude I feel."

What Conrad may not have realized, was that others were grateful for his presence as an Army bellringer.

"I'm so glad I took the time to talk with him when I was there a couple of weeks ago! Such a sweet man," a Howie's patron commented on the post. "I shared with him that I rang The Salvation Army bell the week before...He thanked me for serving The Salvation Army."

Conrad was one of Pasadena Tabernacle's top bellringers, often in the top four during his two-decade run. "He went above and beyond the call of duty," Masango said.

This year, Pasadena Tabernacle experienced a 16 percent increase in kettle earnings over last year. Masango credits the increase to the combination of four elements: engaged volunteers; maximized times at their best sites; a solid team of bell ringers and the kettle coordinator; and daily motivation from the morning's devotional and updates of each location's totals for friendly competition.

*What's your kettle story? Write us at [new.frontier@usw.salvationarmy.org](mailto:new.frontier@usw.salvationarmy.org).*