

RINGERS: *This year's goal is to raise \$20,000*

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this year the red kettles in DeKalb County are manned by 20 volunteers, as well as the 12 residents of the Shelter Ministries Long-term Recovery Center.

"We try to keep them manned on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays," Swanson said. "We'd also like to be able to run Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday."

Swanson said collections at the kettles increase when the kettles are manned by bell ringers.

"We still need volunteers. We have lots of available spots," Swanson said.

Last year's kettle drive raised \$15,300 in DeKalb County. This year's goal is \$20,000. Laher said a dollar-for-dollar matching grant also is available for money raised through the kettle drive.

Roger Johnson of Garrett volunteers as a bell ringer because he is a firm believer in the Salvation Army, he said.

"I think they're one of the most efficient and dedicated non-profits out there in this area. I like the Salvation Army. They're very well-meaning," Johnson said. He volunteers for a four-hour shift one evening a week. He usually can be found ringing his bell at the west door of the Auburn Walmart.

"You get to see people you've not seen for a long time," Johnson said. "It's kind of refreshing. It almost gives you back faith in human nature. You see a lot of people you know who are not exactly wallowing in money, and they give. You also see people who have been helped before who maybe are not hurting as much as they were before, and they are very giving. It's really neat when they help their kids put money in and they are teaching them to be givers."

Johnson said he receives personal satisfaction from being a bell ringer.

"It's an area where I can help a little bit and maybe

even help build a better community. Not everybody wants to stand in the cold, but I can do it," Johnson said. "I'm hoping to not be part of the problem, but to be a part of the solution. You get a warm, fuzzy feeling even when it's cold."

Nusbaum said the holidays provide the perfect opportunity for people to share their gifts with others.

"Everybody has a gift and a talent," Nusbaum said. "I'm not afraid to put a goofy elf hat on, and I love to talk to people. I have a gift for that. Why not use it for good?"

Nusbaum said that as a bell ringer, she receives much more than she gives.

"That feeling you get when you give can't be compared to anything," she said. "The difference you can make — it's pure joy, and it's the easiest thing to do."

For more information or to volunteer to be a bell ringer, call Swanson at 925-9200, ext. 24.