



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

May 9, 2023

2022-2023 Board Members

President William Bradley

Pres Elect Edwin Peacock

Past Pres Carol Hardison

Secretary Kim Brattain

Treasurer Patrick Baker

Exec Sec Christine Cipriano

Directors 2021-2023

Ann Clark

Ellison Clary

Jesse Hite

Warren Kean

Vanessa Stolen

Directors 2022-2024

Will Barnhardt

Glenn Bouley

Margaret Donovan

Laura Little

Mark Norman

Diego Ramon

Robert Shaw

Membership Terri DeBoo

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Elly Clary



“Collaboration Is The Key”

**Major Todd Mason,
Area Commander, The
Salvation Army of
Greater Charlotte**

by **Marilynn Bowler**

Very shortly two of Charlotte's treasures will have been relocated to the Washington, DC area but, fortunately for our Rotary Club, Majors Todd and Wilma Mason graced our meeting on Tuesday to talk about our Salvation Army Chapter.

Major Todd Mason spoke about the Salvation Army of Greater Charlotte and its mission. Representing so much of what this superb organization does, its mission statement is concise and quite perfect: "To meet human needs by offering hope, promoting dignity and providing opportunity - all in the name of Christ."

With years of education and experience between them, the Masons have spearheaded the much-needed services offered by the Salvation Army during their three years of leadership in our city. They somehow marched forward through COVID-19, economic stresses, homelessness challenges, and the huge need for fundraising ... and have attained amazing successes in all areas.

"Collaboration is the key," Major Todd Mason told us. Whether it be with business partners, civic and governmental agencies, private individuals, or those within the faith community, it is imperative to work hand-in-hand with each of those entities.

To hear that the Salvation Army served over 23,500 this year alone is a stunning number. Perhaps because Major Todd spoke so eloquently of "Behind the Red Shield" and what that really signifies, we could clearly see that the Salvation Army is a catalyst for social, spiritual, and economic growth here in America as well as in 132 other countries of the world.

Tracing its roots back to its founders - William and Catherine Booth in London during the 1800's - the Salvation Army offers empathy and dedication to addressing women who've been trafficked, individuals and families in extreme poverty, and the homeless population which has been the mantra for the Salvation Army. It made its name known here in 1904 when it established its first office uptown on So. Church Street and, since then, has never paused in its supreme efforts to impact the lives of thousands who are desperate. Today alone, there are 3,000-4,000 individuals in our city who sleep on park benches, live under bridges, carry all belongings in Harris-Teeter plastic bags, and feel war-torn and hopeless.

The Major cited three venues of hope operated by Charlotte's Salvation Army: The Center of Hope is the main entry point for helping 250-300 individuals (mostly survivors of trafficking, veterans, and mothers with children) per night by teaching them steps to a better life; Booth Commons At Mulberry which provides transitional shelter (funding was raised for the purchase of recently closed hotels for sale with plans for the renovation of 120 units which will house 400 people); and the amazing Life Skills Program ~ teaching a life plan which will allow 252 residents to move out to affordable housing.

Major Todd spoke so positively of the important role the Boys And Girls Clubs have played to kids from Grades 1-12 in Mecklenburg and Union Counties, demonstrating the power of making good choices and fostering the idea of either job training or college to assure a stable life.

He spoke about Red Kettle fundraising; the Angel Trees; the Silverbell Program for seniors; the Worship Centers (in Charlotte and Belmont), the Adult Rehab Center where men 18 years+ are in alcohol and drug rehab with the expectation of developing spiritual growth (1,400 men last year); and the Emergency Disaster Services (our "unsung heroes" in Major Todd's words.)

All-in-all, Charlotte has been very, very fortunate to have had the excellent leadership of Majors Todd and Wilma Mason during these past three years.

We wish them well and are a bit sad that they couldn't stay in Charlotte a little longer.

*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/825218510>
The program introduction begins at 27:00 minutes.