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THE SALVATION ARMY'S GRATE PATROL Program Description

The Salvation Army's Grate Patrol is a mobile meal program that brings an evening meal and fellowship to the homeless on the streets of Washington, DC. Begun more than 20 years ago, the Grate Patrol operates 365 nights a year and serves approximately 100-150 meals each evening (more than 3,000 people served each month). It is currently staffed by a Salvation Army driver, the outreach worker, and volunteers from 24 local churches and other organizations. The volunteer groups purchase and prepare the food for their assigned night, and then the Grate Patrol driver picks up the volunteers and drives them to the distribution sites around the city. Volunteers hand out the prepared meal and blankets, clothing, etc. as available.

How it works: Organizations that want to volunteer to prepare and deliver meals for the Grate Patrol need to designate a contact person to coordinate their efforts. The contact person is responsible for organizing the group's volunteers, scheduling a date with the Grate Patrol Coordinator, coordinating the food purchasing and preparation, and distributing the meal on the assigned night. The contact person does **not** need to go out on the Grate Patrol van each month, but does need to recruit and organize the group's other volunteers to ensure that the group's scheduled evening is covered.

For example, the group from St. Alban's Parish organizes itself with different committees for each stage: the designated shopper, the sandwich-making committee, the soup committee, and the distribution committee (those that actually go out on the van and serve the meal).

When: Grate Patrol drivers pick up the evening's volunteers at a designated meeting place by 6:30 PM. Distribution is usually completed by approximately 9:00 PM, but often earlier.

Most groups sign up for one evening a month, but others are scheduled for 3-4 nights per month.

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