

**Premier Gordon Campbell
Address to the Salvation Army
May 1, 2003**

Check Against Delivery

I was really pleased to have a chance to come and speak briefly to you this afternoon. It used to be something I got to do all the time when I was Mayor of Vancouver and we launched the Red Shield campaign there.

This is a pretty big night; your door-to-door campaign is going to start Monday. Hundreds of volunteers will be out asking people to be part of the Army's great work.

The Army is so successful in meeting some of the most challenging demands in our society that we take it for granted. But we should never take for granted the work of thousands who reach out to lend a hand to those who need it most.

It's not just in service in British Columbia; it's in service in a hundred countries around the world. It's Canada's oldest non-profit organization.

By being here today, you honour that work and over a hundred years of volunteering, giving back to communities and selflessness.

What you do has enormous impact. When volunteers go to your front door and ask for anything you can give, it makes a big difference.

Whether it's a loonie or a 10-dollar bill, a 20-dollar bill or a 100-dollar bill, every one of those dollars makes a big difference.

We are about to start National Volunteer Week in Canada. Volunteers are people who reach out to help other people and try to make the world better. They feel in their hearts that they want to do it.

In British Columbia, people put in more than 169 million hours of volunteer time each year. Just think of how much of their lives people are giving to their communities.

It generates about \$2.7 billion worth of work – but that is just the tip of the iceberg. Everything that underlies volunteer work is what really makes the difference and holds us together as a society.

The values that started the Salvation Army in 1891 are the same values it brings to our world today.

Those values create a framework of spiritual strength, commitment to one another and lending a hand to those who need it. Those values, in spite of all the changes we've seen, are immutable.

I want to thank you and the Salvation Army for continuing to reflect those values in your day-to-day activities. It makes a huge difference in people's lives.

Probably the single most important non-profit-sector partnership our government has is with the Salvation Army.

We provide about \$26 million a year in support. The effectiveness of those resources has made a huge difference.

There are 326 emergency shelter beds across B.C., including 16 in Victoria. The Victoria Salvation Army is in charge of them to ensure they are available to people.

Other emergency programs include meals for third parties; \$124,000 a year goes to make sure that food is available to people throughout this part of our province.

There are twenty spaces for Outward Bound out-of-school care, which is done through our Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services committee. There is \$7,100 a month to a local seniors' residence.

There is more we should do together, and I take my hat off again to the leadership of the army because they're thinking much longer term than next week or next year.

They are thinking about new tools and new vehicles to respond to our mutual goals and objectives, and how to apply thousands of volunteers to the right pursuits.

The right thing is not for volunteers to try to figure out what government wants. The right thing is for government to figure out how we can focus our resources so volunteer hours create maximum benefit.

In some cases, that means we have to rethink how we're delivering programs and how financial resources are made available to organizations like the Salvation Army.

We're going to do that, and we believe we can also help by creating an environment that encourages and celebrates volunteerism.

We are trying to build a stronger economy in this province. For the first time in the history of the province, we have over two million people at work, and that number is growing. In March of this year, we had the largest job growth in the country.

That's important, but it's also important that we try and create some new mechanisms that will allow organizations like the Salvation Army to fully capitalize on the benefits, the talent, the creativity and commitment that your organization has shown for over a hundred years.

We've committed \$20 million to the Vancouver Foundation Endowment Fund, to help people with disabilities find suitable, rewarding employment and lead the fullest lives they possibly can.

Just as the Army does with many of their clients, we are going to show them the possibilities and let them pursue their goals and their dreams their way.

We've increased support for people with disabilities. The income exemption has been raised to \$400 per month.

We've also added more people to support people with disabilities. Our goal is to make sure we give people the power to take control over their lives and pursue their own objectives.

I'm standing in front of a poster here that says the Salvation Army gave us our lives back. That is an incredibly powerful statement. What we want to do is learn from your experience.

We want to learn how we can give people their lives back in the Province of British Columbia. This should be a place of hope and opportunity – and it is.

Our incredibly powerful assets include living in a democratic society, a society that celebrates and recognizes our diversity, and a society that recognizes and celebrates volunteerism.

As you launch the Red Shield Campaign here and throughout the province, we're hoping to raise a substantial amount of money through the Red Shield campaign to help the Salvation Army continue its great work.

In Victoria, we're looking at raising at least \$45,000 through the door-to-door campaign over the two weeks starting on Monday. I believe British Columbians will do more than that.

I want to thank the Salvation Army for its spirit. As most British Columbians wander the streets in December trying to figure out what gifts to buy, none can miss that Salvation Army volunteer, reminding us that what we give to others is the most powerful gift of all.

You give that gift by being here today and on behalf of everyone in British Columbia, let me just say thank you once again.