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Salvation Army announces statewide poverty initiative

Special to The Sun

NORMAN — On Thursday, The Salvation Army in Norman will present the free “Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities” training.

Bridges Out of Poverty represents a powerful tool for change that reaches out to service providers and businesses whose daily work connects them with the lives of people in poverty. Salvation Army is partnering with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services for the initiative. They are providing certified Bridges trainers for local events as well as other materials.

The event will be from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thursday at McFarlin United Methodist Church, 419 S. University Blvd., Fenn Hall, in Norman. Register at: <http://normanbridges.eventbrite.com/>. Training is free and includes lunch.

Organizations invited include persons representing health care, social services, faith-based groups, legal, housing, educational, civic, municipality and various other entities.

The program is implemented in stages with the first stage — a community “bridging” event. The event is presented by The Salvation Army to connect resources, discuss poverty locally and begin promotion of the Bridges Out of Poverty training and Getting Ahead program.

The second stage is to provide training in the community to increase understanding of generational poverty and the cultures of economic class.

The next stage is to form a local steering committee to identify resources for the “Getting Ahead” program and to remove barriers for program graduates.

The fourth stage is the “Getting Ahead” program. Weekly sessions facilitate a process for a person in poverty to investigate the impact poverty has had on their lives and surroundings, and to use this information to build resources for a better life and community. After completion of the program, a graduation ceremony and reception are presented and the graduate is supported by allies (or mentors) as the move through the transition process.

Bridges brings sectors together to build sustainability in all aspects of communities, schools, higher education, business, health care, criminal justice system and more. By gaining an increased understanding of the language and hidden barriers of economic class, organizations and communities can develop effective poverty reduction strategies.

For more information, contact Deborah Price at 254-1177.