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## An Army of One

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If he hadn't gone in to buy a bagel that morning, the Thanksgiving holiday might have been different for Rick Teed.

While waiting for his order he picked up a copy of The San Francisco Chronicle, which featured a story about The Salvation Army's desperate need for donations. Before he even had time to spread his cream cheese, Teed, 42, was on the phone to several friends with an urgent request. The Salvation Army needs toys. They don't have anything. We have to help them.

Instead of enjoying a nice long weekend, Teed rallied his friends and collected checks and toys to make sure the needy children had toys this Christmas. And he was relentless. He asked for money from those he thought would "forget" to give him a toy and those who said they didn't have their checkbook he followed them home to help them find it.

"There was no getting away from me," he said, laughing.

First, he thought he could get a couple of hundred. But as he continued with his mission, Teed's vision and enthusiasm quickly grew and by the end of his adventure he had collected nearly a thousand toys. He bought the gifts at K\*B Toys. So generous were the donations that he had almost \$5000.00 to spend. The manager had no problem opening the store early on Saturday morning.

He bought so many that the cash register crashed.

"It was unbelievable," said Teed.

In the end, all the toys were delivered to his living room and like several Santa Clauses, complete with a Santa cap, he and his friends delivered the toys to The Army's Service Center to a shocked and very surprised Claire Dunmore, Director of Family Services.

"What a Christmas miracle this was!" Dunmore said. "We were able to serve hundreds of children with this amazing gift. It is because of people like Rick and his friends that The Salvation Army is able to fulfill its mission of serving the underserved."

Rick has promised that he will go on his toy-shopping spree next year. We sure hope he does.