

2026 ANGEL TREE SPONSORSHIP MANUAL

THE SALVATION ARMY
NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA COMMAND



HELP US CELEBRATE 47 YEARS OF ANGEL TREE AND KEEP
CHRISTMAS ALIVE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED!

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1.0 THE SALVATION ARMY ANGEL TREE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Angel Tree is a holiday assistance program in which an individual or group sponsors a child, or “Angel,” and purchases new toys, clothing, shoes, or gift cards for children ages 0-12. Every Christmas there are children who do not receive gifts because their families cannot afford the expense. Especially this year, The Salvation Army is serving more working families who never expected to need help and now cannot keep up financially due to inflation and rising food costs. We invite you to share Christmas joy with kids in need this holiday season by being an Angel Tree sponsor for a child in Washington, DC! Online sponsorship registration will be open from July 24-November 20, 2026, at www.salvationarmynca.org/nca/angeltree.

Is it a lot of work to be a sponsor?

No, it’s not a lot of work! Our staff will assist and ensure the process is easy, and are available via cell and email. You will also be provided with Angel Tree tags, packaging materials, and our Packing Quick Guide. We typically ship these out; some companies pick up supplies to save on shipping costs. We can also send electronic Angel Tree Tags instead of mailed copies when requested.

The most important part of being a Sponsor is to shop early and get the toys to the warehouse by November 20th.

When deciding on how many Angels to sponsor, please note that sponsors spend an average of \$150 for each child. We encourage you to not exceed \$150, including items such as electronics. If you or your group would like to spend additional money, please sponsor additional Angels. All gifts must be **NEW and unwrapped**. We **cannot** accept specific requests about the age or gender of the child when you sponsor. If you would like to provide items for a specific gender/age, please consider also donating toys to the “Toy Shop” for Forgotten Angels.

Angel Tree Coordinators: How do I coordinate the collection of gifts?

1. Inform your team that the deadline to return toys to you is November 13th in order to make it to the warehouse by on time.
2. Establish an Angel Tree toy drop off area.
3. Ask everyone to turn in their gifts the week before the actual Salvation Army deadline (which is November 20th) to ensure that all gifts are returned. This gives you time to



organize and prepare for pick-up or delivery. The week before collection, remind everyone about the deadline.

Angel Tree Coordinators: How do I deal with multiple Angels?

The Salvation Army staff will send an electronic spreadsheet to the Angel Tree Coordinator with all the Angels' information listed. Here are a few ideas:

- Set up a Christmas tree and hang the Angel Tree tags. Have group members “sign-out” the tag they choose so you know who sponsored which child.
- Distribute flyers and emails promoting Angel Tree and include information on how to sign up.
- Departments can pool together funds to sponsor a specific number of Angels.
- Request a box from The Salvation Army and collect toys and promote to your employees, clients, and vendors.
- Include toy drives as a team building or company event.
- Build team spirit with a friendly competition between departments to see who can sponsor the most Angels or raise the most money toward gifts.
- Reward Angel Tree participants with dress down days.
- Host an interoffice fundraiser.
- Encourage family and friends to participate: remember, anyone can sponsor Angels!

“We’re unwrapping Christmas Early”: Help us ensure all families receive their toys on time. Shop TODAY!

How is Angel Tree different from other holiday programs?



NEW THIS YEAR- we are giving the gift of financial literacy! All parents/guardians who have registered their child(ren) for the Angel Tree Program at least 3 separate years are now required to attend a Salvation Army sponsored financial literacy class. We are dedicated to helping our neighbors in need become self-sufficient, and financial literacy is the first step!

The Salvation Army's Angel Tree program has officially been running for 47 years! Help us celebrate this magical milestone by assisting us in our mission to provide Christmas joy to children in need. In 2025, over 10,000 children in the National Capital Area received Christmas gifts including toys, books, doll houses, gift cards, shoes, and books through Angel Tree.



Angel Tree is different from other holiday assistance programs because a sponsor can feel a special connection with their sponsored Angel. The sponsor is matched and receives the child's first name and a personalized gift wish list for that child, prepared by the child's parents.

To qualify, families must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have monthly expenses exceeding income
- Have expenses equalling income
- Be experiencing a crisis



1.1 ANGEL TREE “LINGO”

- **Angel:** A child or children from a family in need whose family in the DC metro area registered and qualified for assistance through The Salvation Army’s Angel Tree Program.
- **Angel Tree Tag:** A paper tag or “ornament,” or digital tag, that has a specific child’s ID number, first name, age, gender, clothing sizes, and wish list.
- **Angel Tree Coordinator:** The point of contact from a group or company sponsoring Angels. They correspond with The Salvation Army staff on behalf of the group and ensures the assignment of Angels and collection of gifts runs smoothly and on time.
- **Angel Tree Warehouse:** 5160 Lawrence Place, Hyattsville, MD. This is where sponsors drop off gifts and where gifts are stored and organized until families pick them up.
- **Sponsor:** The group or individual that is sponsoring a child/children. The sponsor has agreed to purchase gifts from the Angel’s Wishlist.
- **Financial Literacy:** The ability to understand and use financial skills, including personal finance and budgeting. Families who have registered their child(ren) for Angel Tree at least 4 years are required to attend a financial literacy class.
- **Forgotten Angels:** Children enrolled in the Angel Tree Program whose sponsor did not return their gifts. When you donate items to the Toy Shop (as opposed to sponsoring a specific Angel), these items are distributed to Forgotten Angels.
- **Child ID Number:** Each family is designated a number and each child within that family is designated a letter. For example, Angels with IDs **DC1005A** and **DC1005B** are siblings.
- **3 Wish List Gift Items:** Each child has a wish list, including:
 - **Want**





- **Need**
- **Wish 1**
- **Wish 2**

Wish lists may include items like dolls, books, games, shoes, etc. Sponsors are encouraged to purchase items from their Angel's wish list.

- **Clothing Sizes:** pants, shirt, shoes, and coat
- **Corporate & Community Outreach Manager:** The Salvation Army staff member who oversees community outreach initiatives for the National Capital Area Command. This is your point of contact for Angel Tree sponsorship questions/concerns.

Please Contact:

Ruth Mwanza

Corporate & Community Outreach Manager

(202)341-9712

ruth.mwanza@uss.salvationarmy.org

1.2 IMPORTANT DATES

- **Christmas in July / July 24:**
 - Online **sponsor** registration opens: www.salvationarmynca.org/nca/angeltree
 - Registration for volunteer groups opens; email Ruth.Mwanza@uss.salvationarmy.org & LaShawn.Cook@uss.salvationarmy.org
- **August:**
 - Encourage your colleagues, friends, and family to sponsor Angels.
 - Start SHOPPING!
- **September:** Tags, packing material, and packing quick guide to be shipped or emailed to Angel Tree Sponsors.
- **November:** Online volunteer registration opens: <https://salvationarmynca.org/nca/volunteer>
- **October and November:**
 - Shop EARLY!
 - Once shopping for your Angels is complete, ship or drop-off completed Angel gifts to the Angel Tree warehouse. Open weekdays 9am-4pm.
- **November 13:**
 - Sponsor registration closes.



- Last day to ship gifts.
- **Dec 11-12:** Angel Tree distribution- volunteers needed!

1.3 SPONSORSHIP BASICS

What if I know someone who wants to help outside of DC?

The Salvation Army National Capital Area Command also has **Angel Tree programs in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William County, Prince George's County, Waldorf, and Montgomery County.**

Sponsorship forms can be found: www.salvationarmynca.org/nca/angeltree.

Why shop early?

We rely on volunteers to help us process thousands of gifts for children in need, so the earlier the better! Early drop-off of gifts ensures smooth processing of items. **Please note:** if your gifts are not delivered to the warehouse by the drop-off date, we cannot guarantee that it will be given to your specific Angel, but it will always to a child in need.

I want to help but I don't want to go shopping. Can I participate?

Of course! An Angel Tree electronic tag can be emailed to you, and you can ship gifts directly from online retailers to our warehouse. We recommend Amazon.

1.4 PACKING AND DELIVERING GIFTS

Please see the Quick Packing Guide at the end of this document.

1.5 SHARING THE JOY

Capture the fun and festivities of your Angel Tree experience and share on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Show us the pile grow each day or document your shopping trip. We love it all! Tag us @SalArmyNCA and #AngelTreeNCA.



The Angels and their families thank you with hugs and tears of joy!

Thank you!

Angel Tree Contact Information

Questions? Visit <https://salvationarmynca.org/nca/angeltree> or contact

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