



EL PASO CONNECTION

MARCH 2026

A Newsletter of The Salvation Army of El Paso

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED: STANDING WITH OUR VETERANS

The Salvation Army in El Paso works every day to help veterans and families facing housing challenges. Through programs that assist with rent and utilities, we help families stay in their homes and move toward stability, even during difficult financial seasons.

Michael Ramirez, a single father raising his two young sons, Kyle and Kevin, was doing everything he could to keep a roof over their heads, but the financial strain had become overwhelming. Living on a limited VA service-connected pension, he struggled to keep up with monthly expenses.

By mid-2025, he had fallen nearly \$2,000 behind on rent. With limited income and the responsibilities of caring for two toddlers, catching up felt out of reach. With timely assistance from The Salvation Army, Michael is now fully current on his rent.

With housing secure, Michael is now looking ahead. He has decided to return to school. Encouragement from his caseworker, Daniel Garcia, helped him see that education was still within reach.

"Most veterans who need help don't even know what options are available," says Daniel. "Many think it's too late to go back to school, or that they can't afford to attend because they need to work. They don't always understand how the GI Bill works, and that's why it's so important to seek help and explore what's possible."

Today, Michael is not just maintaining stability; he is building a future for himself and his sons.



In El Paso County, an estimated 40-80 veterans experience homelessness daily, indicating the ongoing need for targeted housing and support services.



MONTHLY IMPACT REPORT

February 1 - February 28



944

NIGHTS OF SHELTER



3,495

TOTAL MEALS



\$12,380

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



423

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Adventure Starts With Troops

Building character, confidence, and friendships all year long



A Leader's Joy

"Volunteering at Troops is so rewarding. I enjoy watching the kids experience new things and develop their interests," says Youth Leader Jessica Sawyer. "Every badge earned is a small victory and provides encouragement and reward for the children."



Confidence Through Every Challenge

"Let your light shine before others." — Matthew 5:16

Troops gives young people a place to belong while discovering what they can achieve.

Open to children from the community as well as those staying at the family shelter, this program from The Salvation Army blends structured learning, creative activities, and hands-on experiences that build practical skills and strong character.

Much like scout-style programs, participants earn emblems that recognize their progress and accomplishments along the way.

Each meeting builds friendships and confidence, creating a joyful place where young people grow and develop values and life skills that last far beyond childhood.



Music, Mentorship, and More: Spotlight on Hector Martinez

Hector Martinez has faithfully served as a volunteer with The Salvation Army since August 2007 and will celebrate nearly 20 years of service next summer. His journey began when his then-girlfriend—now wife, Leslie—invited him to Vacation Bible School. What started as a simple visit quickly opened the door to a deeper connection with the church and its mission.

In 2013, Hector took on key leadership roles, becoming Bandmaster of the brass band in June and stepping in as leader of the boys' programs that November. Through these roles, he has made a lasting impact both musically and in the lives of young people.

Hector especially treasures his work with the Explorers and Rangers programs, where he mentors boys and

teaches practical life skills like budgeting, carpentry, and safety. He enjoys creating opportunities for them to explore, learn, and grow together. As

Hector says, "It's a blessing to watch children discover new things and gain confidence as they learn and grow."



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For Hector, the most meaningful moments come when a child begins to understand something new, whether learning how to repair a bicycle tire, watching a bottle rocket take flight, or discovering something new about the world around them. These moments of curiosity and growth make his service so fulfilling.





SAVE THE DATE!

May 23, 2026

2:00 PM

Retirement Celebration

MAJORS FLOIRAN & ELOISA ESTRADA

The Salvation Army Worship Center
4900 Hercules Ave, El Paso, TX 79904

Please join us as we celebrate the ministry of Majors Floiran & Eloisa Estrada as they prepare for retirement after years of faithful service to the mission and ministry of The Salvation Army.

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