

## Salvation Army's Kroc Center only \$2.9 million from starting development

By Richard J. Alley

Friday, May 8, 2009

The Salvation Army's plan to build the Kroc Center on a 15-acre site at the Mid-South Fairgrounds moved closer to reality this week with the announcement of a \$1 million grant from the Kresge Foundation.

The community center, on land along East Parkway south of Fairview Middle School, will be funded by a Kroc Foundation grant of \$60 million. The Salvation Army is required to raise \$25 million to get the Kroc grant.

Stephen Carpenter, Kroc Center director, said \$21.1 million already had been promised, and the money from the Michigan-based Kresge Foundation means there's less than \$3 million to go.

"We had \$3.9 million to raise," he said. "Now we have \$2.9 million to raise. Our goal is to complete our fundraising by Oct. 1."

The Kresge Foundation donation is a challenge grant. The Salvation Army must have \$24 million by Dec. 31 to receive it.

The 100,000-square-foot community center -- with a pool, basketball courts, worship area, meeting spaces and fitness center -- also will include an AutoZone Multi-Challenge Area.

"Getting involved was an easy 'yes' response for AutoZone," said Trina Poquette, director of AutoZone communications. The amount of AutoZone's contribution was not disclosed.

The AutoZone Multi-Challenge Area is planned as a three-story urban maze, with lasers, performance stages and mezzanines -- a sort of high-tech, kid-friendly Thunderdome with the potential to inspire participants to cooperate.

It will be a team-building and problem-solving obstacle course designed to give kids from disparate neighborhoods a creative way to work together.

"When you give people of all backgrounds a place to work together and learn to work together, when you have a goal, a task, differences fall away," said center director Carpenter.

Ty Cobb, the low-key, high-energy program director and designer of the AutoZone Multi-Challenge Area, says, “It’s not just a ropes course, but a real-life video game in about 13 rooms.”

When AutoZone first became interested in working with The Salvation Army on the Kroc Center, Cobb wanted the company to see plans for the multiuse area because of its own style of corporate enthusiasm.

“AutoZone has actually adopted this area, putting their blood and sweat into it,” he said.

AutoZone’s loss prevention department, in addition to designing and implementing the technology, which has been likened to “Star Wars security,” will also provide volunteers to work with youths at the center. Carpenter says the atmosphere will make it easier to attract mentors.

“It’s hard to get mentors to come in without structured activities,” he said. “It’s easier to get mentors to come when there is something fun to do.”

Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center

Moving forward: \$1 million promised for the project by Kresge Foundation

Additional feature: AutoZone Multi-Challenge Area

Donor: AutoZone

Online: [krocmemphis.org](http://krocmemphis.org)

On Twitter: [twitter.com/krocmemphis](https://twitter.com/krocmemphis)

On Facebook: Kroc Center of Memphis

Video: Click on Crossfire Commandos at [krocmemphis.org/partners.php](http://krocmemphis.org/partners.php)  
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