

The Ben Lear South Citadel

The Ben Lear South Citadel represents the merger of two powerful and historic Salvation Army ministries—the Ben Lear Corps and the South Side Corps (A “corps” in The Salvation Army’s terminology is analogous to a church, while a “citadel” is the main corps within a community.) The Ben Lear Corps originated in the 1950s and is named for General Ben Lear, a longtime supporter of The Salvation Army and close friend of Brigadier Bramwell Purdue. It merged with the South Side Corps in 2001 to form the Ben Lear South Citadel.

The Citadel’s membership includes individuals from throughout Memphis, as well as individuals seeking treatment at the Army’s Adult Rehabilitation Center. Among the Ben Lear South Citadel’s members are 20 soldiers, members of its congregation who have been formally enrolled in The Salvation Army. The Ben Lear South Citadel presently worships at the Army’s location on Alabama Avenue near Poplar, which has been the Ben Lear Corps’ home since 1950. Weekly activities and programs of the Citadel include Sunday School and worship services every Sunday morning, youth programming and special ministries on Tuesday evening, and Family Fellowship Supper and Bible Study on Wednesday evening.

Following its completion, the new Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center will become the Citadel’s full-time home. In the Kroc Center’s 300-seat, state-of-the-art chapel, the Citadel will enter a new era of growth and service within Memphis. Specific goals include **expanding its regular programming** for members to four-five days per week; **developing its children’s ministry**, in particular using the AutoZone Multi-Challenge Area to perform life-skills training; and **creating partnerships with other churches in the area** to increase the amount of “hands-on” service and outreach in the vicinity of the Kroc Center.

The Kroc Center will begin construction at its location near East Parkway and Central Avenue as soon as the Memphis Area Command of The Salvation Army has raised \$25 million to support its endowment. At that time, the Kroc trust will provide \$60 million to pay for construction costs and supplement the endowment. Construction is expected to begin in October 2009, and the center is expected to open to the public in early-mid 2011. More information is available at krocmemphis.org.

