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Taking Back Our Neighborhoods: Kroc Center

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By Joe Birch - [bio](#) | [email](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

MEMPHIS, TN (WMC-TV) - A gigantic gift is Memphis bound, thanks to McDonald's heiress Joan Kroc. The Kroc Center is a futuristic, state of the addition, is coming soon to the heart of Memphis.

"When you look at a map, this area is dead center of the city within I-240," Director Steven Carpenter said. "Within a three mile radius, there are 125,000 citizens."



A chain link fence now surrounds the 15 acre fairgrounds parking lot that will be transformed into the Kroc Center, a community show place designed to unite Memphians.

"We see it as a wonderful opportunity to bring people together from different walks of life for the common purpose of doing good and building up the family and building up one another," said Major Mark Woodcock of the Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army says it asked Memphis focus groups what it wanted in Kroc Center. Answers included two world class soccer fields, an NBA quality basketball court, a 300 seat performing arts center for Sunday worship, and all kinds of programs the rest of the week. The center also includes meeting rooms, a fitness center, arts and performance rooms, a two story slide into an enormous swimming pool and even a lazy river!

"Our goal, in order to receive the \$60 million dollar match from the Kroc Estate, is to raise \$25 million dollars locally," Carpenter said. "We have raised \$22.5 of the \$25 million dollars."

The Salvation Army quietly raised most of the money to win the matching Kroc grant from generous Memphians with deep pockets. To raise the last \$2.5 million, they are appealing to the rest of us:

"We are this close," Woodcock said. "We're certainly not going to quit now."

Memphis beat out a number of competing cities to be among only 25 communities receiving Kroc Center grants. The dream is to finish fund raising by October, and in 18 months, the new center will rise from the Fairgrounds to take back a neighborhood for generations to come.

If you want to help out, [click here](#) to visit the Kroc Center's website.

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