

Ground Breaking For Kroc Center

Melissa Moon

1:22 PM CDT, March 22, 2010

FAST FACTS:

- The Salvation Army breaks ground for the Kroc Center in Midtown
- The 100,000 Square Foot community center is being built at the site of the old fairgrounds
- It will offer a variety of athletic programs and art classes for people of all ages in the community

(Memphis 3/22/2010) After four years of fund raising and planning, the Salvation Army broke ground Monday on the \$31million state of the art Kroc Center at the old fairgrounds in Mid-town.

The Kroc Center is being funded in part by the Joan Kroc Foundation and will serve as a giant community center for several surrounding neighborhoods.

The Kroc Foundation donated \$62 million for the project and the Salvation Army had to come up with \$25 million in matching funds. All the money will be used to build and operate the facility.

Memphis Mayor A C Wharton was on hand for the ground breaking and was surrounded by children from several neighborhoods. They represented the kids who will benefit from the center.

The 100,000 square foot facility will include two NCAA regulation size soccer fields, two NBA quality basketball courts, a water park, a fitness facility and a performing arts center.

The center will offer a number of classes like art, music, dance and cooking and be geared toward people of all ages.

"It's going to be awesome. There is going to be a pool place and there is this Autozone teen building thing where you are on a mission to build stuff," said Preston Roberts.

Memphis is just one of 25 cities in the U.S. selected to receive a center. The Salvation Army and Mayor say it wouldn't have been possible without generous donations from groups and individuals.

"This was too good to pass up and, thankfully, Memphians who are generous understood that," said Major Mark Woodcock with the Salvation Army.

"We are one of the few cities where the support exists to create and sustain one. Nashville doesn't get one, Austin doesn't get one, St. Louis doesn't get one, New Orleans doesn't get one. Memphis gets one because Memphis deserves one," said Memphis Mayor AC Wharton.

Construction of the Kroc Center will begin immediately.

The center is expected to open late summer or early fall in 2011.