



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**MERRIMAC MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THE 2011-
2012 MASSACHUSETTS GOOD NEIGHBOR ENERGY FUND
IS NOW OPEN TO ALL QUALIFIED CANDIDATES**

Merrimac, MA, January 11, 2012 – Merrimac Municipal Light Department(MMLD), a sponsor of the 2011 – 2012 Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund campaign, and The Salvation Army which administers the Fund, announce that the Fund is now open to all qualified candidates. The Fund was available to households on an emergency basis since December 1st. A cooperative effort between the state's energy companies, their customers and The Salvation Army, the Fund helps families in temporary crisis who do not qualify for federal or state assistance with the payment of their energy expenses. The Fund's 27th Annual "Give The Gift of Warmth" campaign's goal is to raise \$650,000 and help more than 2,250 families.

"With the struggling economy in mind, we are thrilled to announce that the Fund is now available to all candidates who qualify," said Daniel Folding, Manager of MMLD.

Major Robert Goding with The Salvation Army's Divisional Headquarters in Canton, added, "We've seen a high 'urgency of need' as we processed the emergency cases in December and requests for assistance will most certainly continue to rise throughout the coming months as the colder temperatures move in." Goding added that the Fund has raised more than \$17.7 million and assisted over 78,600 needy families since its inception in 1985.

The Fund is often the last resort for families who have not qualified for federal and state assistance programs. To qualify for assistance from the Fund, an applicant's gross household income must fall between 60 and 80 percent of the state's median income levels. For example, a household size of 2 would need to have a total gross yearly income

of between \$40,824 and \$54,432 to qualify. A household of 4 would need to have a yearly income of between \$60,035 and \$80,047 to qualify, etc. This year's Fund disbursement is \$350 per eligible household per heating season.

(more)

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Massachusetts residents who wish to support the Fund can “Give the Gift of Warmth” by using the mint-colored Good Neighbor Energy Fund donation envelope found as an insert in monthly energy bills or through the 'add a dollar' program some energy companies offer which allows customers to increase their monthly bill payment by one dollar or more. Customers can also donate with a credit card by either visiting www.magoodneighbor.org or calling 1-800-SAL-ARMY, or simply mail a check payable to "The Good Neighbor Energy Fund" and send it to The Salvation Army Divisional Headquarters at 25 Shawmut Road, Canton, Massachusetts, 02021-1408. Participating energy companies support their respective customers' generosity through various giving programs.

For more information on the Fund and how to apply, visit your local Salvation Army Service Center or call (800) 262-1320 if you live in area code 413 or (800) 334-3047 if you live in area codes 508, 617, 781 or 978. Web: www.magoodneighbor.org.