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## KHON News

# Holiday Dollars In Short Supply

By Andrew Pereira

### STORY SUMMARY>>>

It may not be the Grinch who stole Christmas, but Hawaii's economic downturn is having a definite impact on the holiday season.

Some non-profit groups and charities are finding it difficult to raise funds as families struggle to pay their own bills in the midst of what many economists say is a worldwide recession.

"We're currently facing a shortfall of about \$50,000 to continue services for all the seniors in the program," said Marlena Willette, Marketing and Communications manager for Lanakila Pacific.

The non-profit agency runs the Lanakila Meals on Wheels program that serves as many as 750 seniors every day throughout Oahu. Willette says many of the elderly who receive meals don't have anyone else to turn to, especially during the holidays.

"The volunteer who delivers the meal may be their only personal contact," said Willette. "So that meal and that personal visit from the volunteer is very important to them."

The Salvation Army is also playing financial catch-up as the charity prepares to serve a free Thanksgiving Day meal to as many as 2,500 people at the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall.

"We're a little short in a couple of areas, particularly turkey and stuffing," said Maj. Edward Hill, commander of the charity's Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Division. "We're trying to do more and more with the resources that we have," added Hill, "but we're always reaching out to our donors."

Also extending a hand to donors is the River of Life Mission in Chinatown. Executive Director Bob Marchant says the Mission gets forty percent of its annual funding during November and December, so it's too early to tell if the charity will face a deficit.

"I talk to guys on the mainland who run similar type programs and a lot of them are struggling," said Marchant. "I've just found Hawaii people to be phenomenal and it's a blessing really."

The shortage of holiday dollars is also forcing the city's annual Christmas celebration to do more with the same amount of funding as last year. Honolulu City Lights director Joan Manke says her budget of \$50,000 has remained steady the past several years.

"We have some old stuff that we found in the warehouse that I'm refurbishing," said Manke. "Bringing it out is like something new, so we're looking at ways to really use what we have."

To donate, call the following numbers:

Salvation Army - 440-1830  
River of Life Mission - 524-7656  
Lanakila Meals on Wheels - 531-0555

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