

RMLD Encourages Households in Need to Apply to Good Neighbor Energy Fund

(READING, MA), April 25, 2023 – Despite the end of the winter heating season, help is still available for residents in need of assistance paying their energy bills. Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD), a sponsor of the Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund, encourages those in need to apply for assistance to the Fund as soon as possible by visiting their local Salvation Army Corps Community Center. If unsure of where the nearest Community Center is located, please visit magoodneighbor.org.

The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund is often the last resort for families who are in temporary financial difficulty and do not qualify for federal and state fuel assistance programs such as LIHEAP. The Salvation Army Massachusetts Division, which administers the Fund, pays the energy provider directly for households whose gross income falls between 60 and 80 percent of the state's median income levels. For example, a household size of 4 would need to have a total gross yearly income of between \$81,562 and \$108,748 to qualify. This campaign year's Fund disbursement is \$500 per eligible household per heating season.

“During the lead up and end to the statewide moratorium on energy shut-offs, we have seen a steady increase in requests for energy assistance,” said Julie Blackley, Good Neighbor Energy Fund Board Member and RMLD Communications Manager. “Households that are having trouble making ends meet due to inflation or another crisis shouldn't delay in looking to the Fund as a potential source for help.” Blackley added that the easiest way to determine if a household qualifies is to visit the Fund's website at magoodneighbor.org.

The Fund's 38th annual “Give The Gift of Warmth” campaign is a cooperative effort between the Fund's 19 sponsoring energy companies, the general public and the corporate community to raise \$500,000 and help an anticipated 1,500 households. The campaign relies on the generosity of individuals, families, local corporations and foundations for support and has raised more than \$23.5 million and assisted over 93,250 households since its inception in 1985.

Massachusetts residents and businesses that wish to donate to the Fund are encouraged to use the Good Neighbor Energy Fund donation envelope found as an insert in monthly energy bills. Some energy companies offer an 'add a dollar' program which allows customers to

contribute on their monthly bill payment by one dollar or more. Anyone can also donate with a credit card online at magoodneighbor.org. Donors can also simply mail a check payable to “Good Neighbor Energy Fund,” c/o The Salvation Army, 25 Shawmut Road, Canton, Massachusetts 02021-1408. Participating energy companies support their respective customers’ generosity through various giving programs.

For more information about how to apply for the Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund, visit your local Salvation Army Corps Community Center or call 800-334-3047 if you live in area codes 508, 617, 781 or 978 or 800-262-1320 if you live in area code 413. Web: magoodneighbor.org.