

Water: the gift of life

By Jennifer Johnson / Photos by Tony Silva

Ford Motor Company and 13 metro Phoenix-area Ford dealerships recently teamed up with Big Surf Waterpark and the Salvation Army in support of the Extreme Heat Hydration Program to collect bottled water. As a result of the 4th annual "Fill an F-150" water drive, approximately 175,000 bottles of water were collected at Valley Ford dealerships.

"The Salvation Army is grateful to the Metro Phoenix Ford dealers for their annual support of our Hydrate Arizona campaign," said Major John Brackenbury, Salvation Army, City of Phoenix coordinator. "As temperatures continue to rise, clean drinking water becomes a life and death issue. Thanks to the partnership with Ford Motor Company, we are able to provide relief to thousands of men, women and children exposed to extreme conditions."

Anyone who donated a case of water in late April or early May received a half-off voucher to Big Surf Waterpark in Tempe, redeemable this summer. For the fourth consecutive year, Glendale-based Sanderson Ford collected more bottles of water than any other Ford dealership at more than 79,000 bottles.

"Phoenix has the highest temperatures in the entire nation, so we have an obligation to help the less fortunate with food, shelter and of course

water, here in the desert," said David Kimmerle, president of Sanderson Ford. "The Salvation Army provides all of this and so much more for anyone that needs it and that's why we're proud to support the Extreme Heat Hydration Program."

Chapman Ford of Scottsdale also put up a solid effort, collecting more than 44,000 bottles, followed by Berge Ford of Mesa at 10,000 and Earnhardt Ford of Chandler at 8,000.

"This is our fourth year hosting a bottled water drive in conjunction with Big Surf and the Salvation Army and we nearly tripled last year's total of 61,000," said Steve Papanikolas, Phoenix Regional Manager for Ford Motor Company. "Our dealers strive to go further in the communities where we do business. Thanks to the teams at Sanderson Ford and Chapman Ford, and to all our dealerships for their efforts in making this 4th annual bottled water drive a success."

The Salvation Army's Extreme Heat Hydration Program was launched in 2006 to distribute water and provide respite and safety information to those in need at mobile hydration stations in Metro Phoenix on days with excessive heat warnings. According to the Arizona Department of Health Services, more than 1,500 weather-related deaths from exposure to heat have occurred in Arizona since 2000.

In addition to conducting the Valley-wide bottled water drive, Ford Motor Company has granted \$10,000 to the Salvation Army this year in support of the important programs they offer to the Greater Phoenix community like the water drive and the annual turkey drive. ■

