

Volunteers freeze to Heat-Up

Donations at Hardee's restaurants help residents with heating bills

By [Scott Bandle](#)

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Steve Neinkamp and Victoria Reaves stood outside of a Hardee's restaurant Friday morning, shivering in the below-freezing temperatures.

Both carried donation canisters, seeking money from customers in the drive-through lane. They were willing to tolerate the cold conditions to raise money to help the less fortunate stay warm.

"I've done this before, and it was just as cold then," said Neinkamp, 49. "However, as cold as it is outside, it's just as cold for some people inside their homes."

They joined hundreds of other volunteers at Hardee's locations throughout the area for the Seventh Annual Hardee's Rise and Shine for Heat-Up St. Louis fundraiser. All donations will go to Heat-Up St. Louis, a group that provides money for lower-income residents to pay their heating bills.

Neinkamp and Reaves, 45, volunteered at the Hardee's at Lilac Avenue and Interstate 270.

They know about Heat-Up St. Louis from their work in the Jennings office of the Urban League of Greater St. Louis.

"We receive funds from Heat-Up for our clients," Reaves said. "There just aren't enough dollars to go around. It's a very good cause."

The volunteers collected about \$65,000 on Friday, compared to \$50,000 in 2006. Since Heat-Up St. Louis started six years ago, it has collected more than \$2 million in public and private donations, helping more than 80,000.

Bella Kretzer of Wood River, Ill., gave Neinkamp some money as she waited in the drive-through lane.

"It's a very good cause," she said. "This is the first time I've given to Heat-Up St. Louis. This winter, it's been really bad."

Grants from Heat-up range from \$50 to \$600 and are available through a network of more than a dozen social service and community action agencies.

Although the Rise and Shine fund-raiser is over, Heat-Up is still accepting donations. Donations may be sent to Heat-Up St. Louis, c/o UMB Bank, P.O. Box 868, St. Louis, MO 63188, or donated through the organization's Web site at <http://www.heatupstlouis.org>.

Anyone requiring assistance should call the Heat-Up St. Louis automated hotline at 241-7668.