



Te Ope Whakaora

your support in action

Reporter

2013 ISSUE 4



Bringing Christmas home

The end of the year can be a dark and desolate time when you have little or no disposable income to provide Christmas for your children.

For one Christchurch Salvation Army client, who was adjusting to life on a benefit following the recent death of her partner, the run-up to Christmas was a time of dread and despair.

The manslaughter of her partner and father of her youngest daughter, on top of the death of her parents, had left Nicky in shock, grieving and deeply depressed. Her four children were naturally deeply affected by her partner's death.

The family's emotional turmoil was exacerbated by the household's sudden reliance on a benefit, which meant a large income cut and a struggle to make ends meet. The family had to adjust to living with the stark choices of having their power cut off and eating, or keeping warm and having little or no food.

The Salvation Army targeted their most urgent problems first, providing food parcels to take some of the pressure off the family budget and helping to negotiate with Nicky's power company.

Nicky says with Christmas looming—the first without her partner—the emotional and financial pressures were becoming too much and she was intending to cancel Christmas.

With key family members absent, The Salvation Army suggested remodelling Christmas Day by having photographs of missed loved ones displayed and celebrating their lives and contributions to the family.

The Salvation Army provided presents for the children and a hamper of food for Christmas Day.

'But the most important thing was they were there when I needed them—having people to talk to at that time,' Nicky says.

Since those dark days, Nicky has grabbed every opportunity to change her life.

She enrolled in The Salvation Army's Positive Lifestyle Programme, which guides participants through the process of dealing with and overcoming emotional obstacles in their lives.

Nicky and her family also enrolled in The Salvation Army's Family Mentoring Programme, which matches screened and trained mentors with families. The mentor provides regular guidance and

moral support to all family members, as well as friendship as families negotiate and move beyond difficult times.

An important part of the programme is goal-setting, which Nicky says was beneficial for all family members. Nicky's eldest son's goal was to get a job, which he achieved.

Nicky also took part in parenting and life skills programmes.

She is now employed and independent of Salvation Army support and helps to train candidates for the Family Mentoring Programme.

Liz Adams, a Salvation Army staff member who has worked closely with Nicky, says her transformation, and that of her children, has been breath-taking.

'Nicky progressed incredibly well and she has sustained that progress,' Liz says. 'Nicky did all the work—we just walked alongside her.'

Thanks to your help, The Salvation Army's community support for the year to 30 September 2013 included:

56,489 Food parcels distributed

14,871 Budgeting sessions provided

19,038 Community meals served

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One good turn

A Salvation Army project bringing together unemployed people with Christchurch residents in need of help is opening up training and employment possibilities for dozens of people.

The project, called DALTA (Deliberate Acts of Love to All), is part of The Salvation Army's Sydenham Community Ministries in Christchurch.

DALTA volunteers are people on benefits who take part in mainly gardening and maintenance projects for local residents and community organisations, particularly those affected by the earthquakes.

Sydenham Community Ministries Manager Eric Turner says the work has turned the volunteers' lives around, with many entering paid employment or further training.

The scheme brings together several strands of Salvation Army welfare services. Following the quakes, the centre was inundated with requests for help as the community set about rebuilding. DALTA was one response.

On the other hand, volunteers—many of them long-term unemployed and some emerging from addiction—learn



new skills and develop a solid work ethic and self-confidence. As part of training, volunteers complete a first aid course and are able to get their driver's licence.

Eric says one of the most important benefits has been to lift volunteers out of their shells and help them become part of their communities. He cites Damion, a volunteer with a natural talent for

computing but who lacked confidence and isolated himself. Today, he is a confident young man who recently graduated from a Salvation Army Employment Plus computer programme and has begun further studies.

DALTA volunteers' dedication and quality of work was recognised at the recent Volunteering Canterbury Awards.

Playing ball for a good cause



Crown Relocations is an ardent Salvation Army supporter, collecting over 4000 cartons of food and other household items from their customers this year for our food banks and Family Stores.

Crown staff also organise random Big Sallie Surprises—one-off collections of

donated items delivered to Salvation Army centres across the country.

For their greatest Big Sallie Surprise yet, the company sponsored the New Zealand Breakers vs Adelaide 36ers basketball game in Auckland on 15 November, turning the event into a huge

fundraiser for Salvation Army food banks in time for the high Christmas demand.

Leading up to the event, Crown collected donated cans of food from the grocery sector, other companies and the public. Spectators at the game purchased cans of food for one dollar each to donate. The Breakers then matched every purchased can with a can of their own. The combined value of the 90,000 donated cans along with \$40,000 of sponsorship was around \$150,000.

Crown Worldwide (NZ) Country Manager James Logan says The Salvation Army inspires the company by its commitment to caring for those less fortunate. 'This Big Sallie Surprise will help provide one of life's necessities to those most in need.'

The Salvation Army very much appreciates the support of Crown Relocations and the New Zealand Breakers along with sponsorship from Dexion, Packaging House, McCain Foods, Sanitarium, Sealord and Energizer NZ.



Easing the pressure at Christmas

Major Ruth Froggatt collects donated gifts at the Kmart Wishing Tree in Albany.

Christmas is a time for celebration and renewing relationships, but it also brings home the harsh truth to many living in poverty that they are excluded.

Last Christmas, The Salvation Army helped 17,000 low-income client families celebrate Christmas without missing bill payments or going into debt.

The reasons why this is important are two-fold, says Salvation Army Social Services Director Major Pam Waugh.

'Firstly, the family can experience Christmas and not incur extra costs that would tempt them into going into debt or risk having the power cut off next month or not having enough to eat for the following week,' Pam says.

It is critical for client families to keep

the pressure off their budgets before the expensive back-to-school period, she says.

'And most importantly, it's so the children feel included, they are not left out of the experience of Christmas—that when they go back to school and are asked what they got for Christmas, they are not embarrassed or humiliated.'

To do this requires great organisation and, critically, a large helping of community and corporate support.

Last year, around 8500 Christmas hampers were given to Salvation Army clients in need of support at Christmas. More than 30,000 Christmas presents were provided to families. This was possible largely thanks to the support of companies like Kmart, Countdown and Wattie's.

Another 1300 families were provided with presents and enough food to

prepare Christmas dinner under the Adopt-A-Family programme. This involves families and companies sponsoring a family nominated by The Salvation Army. The first names of family members and the ages of the children are provided to the sponsors who buy Christmas gifts for the family and food for the Christmas meal. These are then passed on to the families by Salvation Army staff.

Months before Christmas, Salvation Army clients are encouraged to plan and prepare budgets. Some centres run craft programmes so parents can develop skills and make their own Christmas presents.

Pam says strong public support for these programmes, and a range of other local Salvation Army initiatives, means more families can be helped during the holiday period.



Putting food on the table

As part of its year-round Food Rescue programme, Countdown stores throughout the country will again donate \$80,000 of food to Salvation Army food banks in December, helping to meet the high demand at Christmas.

Countdown also has specially marked Food Rescue trolleys in stores until Christmas so customers can donate non-perishable food for Salvation Army food parcels. Items most needed include pasta, rice, cereal, spaghetti and baked beans, canned fruit, vegetables, fish and meat, flour, and tea, coffee and milo.

Helping your neighbours

With living costs rising, thousands of Kiwi families will struggle to give Christmas presents this year. The Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal runs until Christmas Eve, collecting gifts for The Salvation Army to include in Christmas hampers for clients. To give a little joy to a child who otherwise may miss out, place a gift under the Christmas Wishing Tree in any Kmart store. You do not need to purchase the gift from Kmart. Or make a donation at any Kmart store or purchase an e-card at wishingtree.kmart.co.nz



A life transformed

Jo's life has been slowly but surely transformed since she teamed up with The Salvation Army.

Four miscarriages left Jo broken-hearted, depressed and with no support. She lost her job and her finances gradually unravelled to the point where she had sold most of her possessions, lost her house and found herself before the courts. Jo was sent to The Salvation Army to work off her sentence.

The Salvation Army provided food parcels to relieve some of the strain on the household budget. She lives with her husband and they share custody of his young son from a previous marriage.

When The Salvation Army helped Jo and her family move house, they saw there wasn't much to move. They provided the family with a washing machine and a dining table and chairs.

'It may be only a dining table but it's actually so much more,' she says. 'Matthew can sit and do his homework

and we can sit and eat dinner as a family.'

That Christmas, The Salvation Army provided a hamper and presents. 'We hadn't had Christmas for a few years and it'd been really bleak—those days were lonely,' Jo says. 'We had an amazing day, so I know what kind of effect it has on other clients who get help at Christmas.'

Some of her most dramatic changes came from a Salvation Army Positive Lifestyle Programme. The 10-week course helps clients deal with emotional issues that have negatively impacted on their lives, and develops confidence, assertiveness and goal-setting skills.

Being shy and knowing little about The Salvation Army, Jo was tentative during her first days with the Sallies, but interacting with staff and clients began to feed her interest in what was going on.

'It opened my eyes to the work they were doing. I felt I'd like to stay if they would have me—I felt part of something that was doing some good,' she says.

'For the first time I felt here was somewhere where I fit, where I belong

and it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from.'

Today, Jo plays an important role in her local Salvation Army Community Ministries centre. Because of her willingness to help and her deep compassion, she has been trained to conduct initial client interviews, facilitate Positive Lifestyle Programmes and train welfare interviewers, as well as working for The Salvation Army's employment and training programme, Employment Plus. The family's financial situation is gradually improving.

'Life is completely different, she says. 'I wasn't confident then, and I don't have that sense of despair that was there before.'

Your donation can help distressed families have a happy, healthy Christmas.

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Please give a little *Joy* this Christmas

Give at salvationarmy.org.nz



Te Ope Whakaora
CHRISTMAS APPEAL