



Bringing hope to a family on the edge

Chantelle quietly weeps while reliving the recent months of tenuous, overcrowded living and the ever-present threat of life on the streets for her and her children.

At the beginning of the year, she was living with her partner and balancing her work, managing a fast food restaurant, with raising three children.

Her husband left and Chantelle, struggling with a steep drop in her household income, fell behind with the rent. The family was evicted and went to board with friends. But the natural pressures of two families living under one roof meant she and her children were asked to move on.

Chantelle had been frantically searching for accommodation. Private rentals in her price range are rare and the boarding houses and caravan parks she considered were either unsafe for young children or would not accept children.

Compounding the situation was that she had been informed her earlier

application for a Housing New Zealand property had been closed and she was asked to restart the long process of reapplying. Her first appointment to reapply was scheduled two weeks after having to move out of her friend's house.

As her Salvation Army social worker points out, boarding houses or caravan parks in large cities, with their growing populations of displaced and itinerant residents, are unsuitable places for children, especially Chantelle's 12-year-old daughter. The safest caravan park in the area charges \$500 per week for a cabin with shared facilities.

Running out of options, Chantelle sought help from her local MP, who sent her to The Salvation Army. Social workers there arranged accommodation for the family at a safe caravan park and began a series of negotiations with Housing New Zealand and Work and Income. In little more than a week of intensive advocacy, they had secured a home for Chantelle and her children.

Chantelle remains traumatised

by the experience, feeling she let her children down by not providing a stable and safe home. Throughout this period, she struggled to present a semblance of normality to her children while her options and her hopes were dwindling rapidly.

'It was horrible. If it was just myself to worry about it wouldn't matter, but I had three kids to think about,' she says.

National head of Salvation Army Community Ministries Major Pam Waugh says, worryingly, Chantelle's experience is shared by a growing number of low-income clients evicted from their homes because their incomes cannot match the increase in rents and the costs of food and power.



Thanks to your ongoing generosity, The Salvation Army can help people like Chantelle and her children find safe and affordable housing. Please donate today to give hope to other families in great need.

Meeting the challenge of homelessness

A stark reality of being homeless is the need to find somewhere safe and warm to sleep every night.

Craig Hexter, Country Sales Director of Bosch Power Tool Division, finds it particularly distressing to see homeless women and children. 'The alarming price of housing in New Zealand and unaffordable rents are contributing to this,' he says.

To enable people to experience what it is like to be homeless by sleeping 'out' for one night and to raise funds to help homeless people, Craig coordinated a Bosch Community Sleepout in partnership with The Salvation Army in late June.

For safety reasons, DHL provided a secure location outside their Mangere warehouse for the sleepout, with a security guard. Participants brought their own sleeping bags and were given a piece of cardboard to sleep on. Bosch provided a cup of soup and some bread in the evening and a most welcome breakfast of bacon and eggs early next morning.

Epsom Lodge in Auckland—a Salvation Army hostel that provides accommodation, support and supervision to people who otherwise would be homeless—used the funds raised to



Craig Hexter from Bosch with Captain Doug Newman at the Bosch Community Sleepout purchase new mattresses for clients.

Salvation Army National Operations Manager of Supportive Accommodation Captain Doug Newman says that with a limited income, Epsom Lodge previously relied on obtaining second-hand mattresses. 'But we believe the people we support and care for deserve better than old and worn bedding,' he says.

Supportive Accommodation clients are required to commit to changing their lives and actively work towards their goals. To foster ready-to-work skills, the

Bosch Power Tool Division has donated power tools and accessories with a value of \$10,000 for the Epsom Lodge workshop.

'The model of care we use has a multi-disciplined approach to helping clients overcome their difficulties and prepare them for an independent life in the community,' Doug says. 'This much appreciated donation of power tools will encourage our clients to share their skills and talents.'



Families pitch in with food parcels

We are grateful for the great work of volunteers from the charitable trust Families for Families and Harcourts Gold, who pack over 2,000 food parcels a year for The Salvation Army to distribute in Christchurch.

Salvation Army Public Relations Coordinator John Gardner says with many families still dealing with the harsh realities of the earthquakes, the 500 food parcels made up in June were welcome at the coldest time of the year.

Celebrating 21 years of giving

The Wattie's Cans Film Festival supports The Salvation Army by providing cans of food to help those in need of food assistance. Toward the end of October, Kiwis around the country can visit their local participating movie theatres and swap a can of food for a ticket. With Wattie's matching the number of cans donated, last year's total of 41,882 cans helped to stock our food banks for the heavy pre-Christmas demand.

Now in its 21st year, this long-running festival is a night of classic entertainment for all the family, and a fun way for Kiwis to help others in need. Visit www.facebook.com/wattiescansfilmfestival for updates about the festival date, movies showing, and participating theatres. And keep an eye out for special activities to celebrate 21 years of giving by New Zealanders and Wattie's.



Women's Service Manager Jo Ralston (right) with some of Epsom Lodge's clients

Epsom Lodge opens its doors to women

Insufficient affordable housing and the changing face of homelessness in Auckland are making The Salvation Army rethink its approach to emergency accommodation.

The Army's supportive accommodation service in Auckland, Epsom Lodge, opened its doors to women in 2012 and is now also providing a service specifically developed for males aged 17 to 24. Epsom Lodge was established in 1897, catering exclusively for men.

The women's service started with a four-bed unit, prompted by the Corrections Department's need to find safe and managed accommodation for women released from prison with nowhere to live. Demand has prompted Epsom Lodge to expand to 12 beds, with space currently being reconfigured to expand capacity to 18. All up, Epsom can accommodate 90 people.

Cherie and her teenage daughter were abandoned by her husband last year. In financial straits, Cherie sent her

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Clients find a safe, secure and accepting home at The Salvation Army's Epsom Lodge

daughter to stay with a friend, and then began several months enduring the bleak and desperate world of the homeless.

She says her life was one of acute and constant worry, the main reason she lost almost 13 kg during her ordeal. 'On a daily basis you're living and breathing where you are going to stay that night—the worry is a huge drain.'

She says arriving at Epsom Lodge was a 'huge relief' just to know she was safe.

Epsom Lodge directors Captains Doug and Janet Newman say while there was some trepidation over how introducing often traumatised women to a predominantly male environment would work, they were pleasantly surprised, and the women's service has proven to be an invaluable addition.

For the women, the service is a godsend. Clients spoken to tell of some nervousness before coming to Epsom, but were relieved at finding a safe, secure and accepting home until they could build the confidence and skills to live independently.

Epsom Lodge's Women's Services Manager Jo Ralston says clients come from a variety of backgrounds. Like the great majority of Epsom's residents, they face an array of complex interrelated problems to overcome before they are ready to return to wider society.

Some have been recently released from prison, some have been working the streets, a number are waiting on or have recently completed addiction treatment, and some are escaping the

traumas of domestic abuse and violence. Almost all arrive at Epsom emotionally battered, with their self-esteem and confidence at rock bottom, and more often than not, with their physical health in tatters. Most arrive with only the clothes on their backs.

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The women's service has proven to be an invaluable addition

All of the Lodge's residents take part in a structured and case-managed programme tailored to help clients overcome their difficulties and prepare them for an independent and constructive life out in the community.

Jo previously worked at a Los Angeles social service NGO in one of the city's most deprived areas. She says her Epsom clients are amongst the most fractured she has worked with. 'I've got some of the most vulnerable [clients] here that I've seen with very, very complex lives and needs.'



*Giving regularly through automatic payments is an effective and easy way to support vulnerable people throughout the year. Please call us on **0800 53 00 00** to set up regular payments or email supporter@nzf.salvationarmy.org*



Housing insecurity puts children at risk

An increasing number of Salvation Army clients are living precariously, the most acute cases living in vehicles, unlined garages or in overcrowded, substandard houses.

Since her first daughter was born four years ago, Monique and her small family have bounced between dilapidated flats and staying with relatives or friends. The price of rents meant Monique could afford only the cheapest and often decaying properties.

Her last house was infested with cockroaches and slated for demolition. Unable to find a private rental she could afford, Monique and her four and two-year-old daughters moved into a caravan park.

The three slept together on the floor of a small caravan for several months before moving into a cabin. Monique says she was bullied by men at the camp and lived in fear for the safety of her daughters, never letting them out of her sight.

On hearing of their plight, The Salvation Army moved the family into

emergency accommodation. While their new home is safe, they share it with two other families, and Monique and her girls share the same small bedroom.

Although she has done her best to shield her daughters from the realities of what is effectively their homelessness, Monique is deeply worried the girls will be seriously disadvantaged if they don't find a stable home soon, particularly once her eldest daughter starts school.

The Director of The Salvation Army Community Ministries assisting Monique says housing insecurity is a growing and the most worrying problem facing her clients.

Pam Hughes says the shortage of affordable housing is contributing to a growing number of evictions of low-income families, leading to poor credit ratings, which in turn make it nearly impossible to rent another property. The alternative is boarding houses, caravans or life on the streets, with the accompanying danger of losing their children to state care.

'The problem is that low-income

families, already living a subsistence existence, face rising rents and the increasing costs of power and food, so unexpected costs can eventually be catastrophic for a family,' she says.

Two or more families on one property, making use of unlined garages or caravans is not uncommon placing children at risk of preventable diseases such as skin infections and respiratory disease.

'A home is a fundamental need and essential for children's mental and physical wellbeing, as well as absolutely necessary if they are going to gain the education required to move beyond poverty,' Pam says.

Your donation will help transform the lives of families like Monique's. We appreciate your support of Kiwis in need.

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Te Ope Whakaora