



Te Ope Whakaora

Reporter

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Winds of change help Christchurch kids recover

Just six months after the first child picked up their instrument, a group of 45 Christchurch primary school children took to the stage to perform a Christmas brass band concert.

The children at the late November concert were from the Christchurch Just Brass programme, run by The Salvation Army Christchurch City Corps (church) through funds donated to help kids affected by the Canterbury earthquakes.

Just Brass works with children from Mairehau and Shirley Primary Schools, providing up to 25 children each from the decile three and four schools with free instruments, sheet music and lessons along with a music stand and t-shirt.

Tutors give the children weekly one-on-one lessons and on Tuesdays they meet for a joint band practice.

Christchurch City Corps Family Worker Lynley Robertson, who oversees the programme, says the schools were delighted to take part. The programme took off more quickly than expected and the schools are already looking forward

to next year's programme, she says.

The Salvation Army already helps children in the area through a children's worker who works in both schools and every Friday night the church picks up three van loads of children heading to its popular 7UP Youth Group.

They decided to start the Just Brass programme after hearing from Australian founder John Collinson. Evidence suggests learning music helps children learn better at school and increases self-discipline and confidence.

'We have one child who has a condition that makes it difficult for him to talk,' Lynley says. 'He came for three or four months before he uttered his first word, but his parents say he's talking more than he's ever talked before.'

The programme was especially welcome in a poorer neighbourhood, hard-hit by the Canterbury earthquakes, where parents are still struggling with the constant stress of living in damaged homes, around damaged and closed roads and dealing with insurers.

'Some of the children come from

interesting backgrounds. Even the fact that they're getting undivided attention, praise and encouragement; for some, that's a pretty foreign concept.'

The children picked up the music quickly and seemed to be having a great time, but the impact goes far beyond having fun and getting a new skill, Lynley says. 'We've had parents very emotional about how good it's been for their children and how great it is to have the opportunity to do something they couldn't afford otherwise.'

Their first Just Brass concert drew a crowd of 170 people, with families of every child attending. The Christmas concert, which included a meal and music from the Christchurch City Corp's senior and junior brass bands, was expected to draw a similar crowd.



Thanks to your ongoing generosity, The Salvation Army can bring hope to children who need support. Please donate today to help families across the country have a happier, healthier Christmas.

Inside:

At-risk Kiwi teens
aspire

Homeless youth
take positive steps

Spirit of giving

Bringing hope at
Christmas

At-risk Kiwi teens aspire



A new Salvation Army programme is aiming to help hundreds of at-risk Kiwi teens in a year-long project starting next year.

The Aspire Kiwi Youth Development Programme will also work with the young people's families and see the teens taking part in an outdoor adventure experience. They will have a chance to give back, identifying a problem in their community and coming up with solutions.

Starting in March Aspire will run for 32 weeks, helping 11 to 16-year-olds in centres around New Zealand who may

be at risk of poverty and social exclusion, with strained school involvement, or a lack of engagement in positive social groups.

Programme coordinator Jono Bell says the course is based on the Circle of Courage model, which identifies four key development areas to help teens achieve to their potential—the need for connectedness, the need to achieve, the need for responsibility and independence, and the need for purpose and generosity.

Aspire will work in four stages starting with weekly meetings in

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groups of 10 to share food and work through development activities. They will also go on a three-day adventure experience with The Salvation Army's Blue Mountain Adventure Centre, tackle the community project and finish with reviewing their progress and setting goals before a graduation ceremony.

Families will be invited to at least two family events as well as the graduation and will be offered support with social services they might need.

Research suggests the biggest change in young people comes when families are involved, Jono says.

The Salvation Army is very grateful to The Warehouse Group and its suppliers for funding this programme next year.

Homeless youth take positive steps

The only supported accommodation service for young homeless males in Auckland is making solid progress since launching a year ago.

The service at The Salvation Army's Epsom Lodge provides structured, case-managed support and accommodation for 17 to 24-year-old males. It was established following Salvation Army research into the growing problem of youth homelessness in the city.

Youth Services Coordinator Stewart Irwin says while many of the young men have had deeply traumatic backgrounds, the service is proving a valuable social investment.

An average of eight people are on the programme at any one time. Stewart says the alternatives for his clients are most likely homelessness or prison.

Most clients have had some sort of previous criminal involvement, most have a history of substance abuse, nearly



Stewart Irwin (far right) with Epsom Lodge youth at the Blue Mountain Adventure Centre

all come from broken homes and some have mental health conditions.

'In the past they have been labelled, told they can't achieve anything, but

put them in a positive environment where they can be themselves and feel valued, then they start to move forward,' Stewart says.



Spirit of giving

Christmas for thousands of Salvation Army clients and their families is made less stressful and more joyful thanks largely to the generosity of other New Zealanders.

The Salvation Army helps around 17,000 disadvantaged or socially isolated families and individuals at Christmas. With more than 16,000 new clients seeking food assistance in the past 12 months, demand this Christmas is expected to be higher than last year.

This Christmas, The Salvation Army will host Christmas meals across the country, especially for those who are socially isolated.

Food hampers, presents and vouchers are provided to families who The Salvation Army works with and who are identified as requiring particular

assistance over Christmas.

Head of Community Ministries Major Pam Waugh says there are two main reasons why this support is important.

'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 crucial 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—that 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 generosity.

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.

Companies and the support of their customers now play a central role in the provision of food and gifts at Christmas. Last year, Kmart's Wishing Tree Appeal collected more than 40,000 gifts for families and the Wattie's Cans Film Festival provided close to 42,000 items of food. Countdown's Food Rescue programme donates food throughout the year.

This year, Kellogg New Zealand, Warehouse Stationery, Postie, Bunnings and NZCU Baywide are contributing to Salvation Army Christmas programmes.

A joyful Christmas

As part of their year-round Food Rescue programme, Countdown stores throughout the country will donate \$86,000 of food to Salvation Army food banks in December, helping to meet the high demand at Christmas.

Countdown has specially marked Food Rescue trolleys in stores 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. Bunnings and Postie stores are also collecting food donations.

Now in its 20th year, the Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal runs until Christmas Eve, collecting gifts for the Sallies to include in Christmas hampers for families unable to afford something special. 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 you can make a cash donation at any Kmart store.



Your donation will help change the lives of Kiwis in need at Christmas.

Three ways to give ...

- Call **0800 53 00 00**
- Remember us in **your Will**
- Online at **salvationarmy.org.nz**



Hope at Christmas

Christmas at The Salvation Army Hope Centre Community Ministries in Wellington is a family affair.

The centre's extended family includes a dozen intellectually disabled residents at two homes it operates, homeless families who are part of its emergency accommodation programme, elderly clients of the centre's friendship and advocacy programme, homeless people it works with through its street outreach work, as well as clients receiving food assistance and social work support and the families of its early childhood education centre.

A central part of this family is the people—the lonely, mental health patients, homeless—who visit the Hope Centre's drop-in centre for company, a hot drink, to use the shower or simply for a warm place to sit and reflect.

The centre holds a pre-Christmas party for clients, putting on a barbecue, cake and ice cream. It also hosts a Christmas lunch and entertainment for

up to 150 mainly isolated or marginalised people. Those who are unable to attend, or don't wish for company, have their meals delivered by volunteers from the Wellington Jewish Community Centre.

Hope Centre Service Manager Ollie Seumanufagai says the few hours of fellowship is an uplifting experience for those who may have otherwise faced a grim and solitary day.

For struggling client families, preparations for Christmas start early, Ollie says. The aim is to reduce stress caused by financial pressures during the expensive period between Christmas and sending children back to school, as well as ensuring families are able to come together and celebrate Christmas.

The period between Christmas and March is the busiest for all Community Ministries across the country, as many families face up to the costs of Christmas and having children home for the holidays, and prepare for the outlay of sending children back to school.

Centre staff educate clients on the need to budget as much as they can for Christmas. They are urged and supported not to go into debt to provide Christmas for their families, and advised to use supermarket Christmas clubs rather than comparatively expensive Christmas hamper schemes.

Donations of food and gifts from the public and companies are provided to families identified as being in particular need. As the community where the Hope Centre is located is one of the most ethnically diverse in the country, vouchers are provided so families can purchase food more suitable to their tastes or religion.

The Adopt-a-Family programme that involves organisations or companies sponsoring a family also provides food and gifts for Christmas.

To give hope this Christmas, please donate today.



Jamie needs your help this Christmas

Your donation will help change the lives of Kiwi kids living in poverty.

Please donate at
salvationarmy.org.nz



Te Ope Whakaora
**CHRISTMAS
APPEAL**