

# Together

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

Spring 2016



Te Ope Whakaora



## A Place to Call Home

**When Sarah\* and Joe\* first went to The Salvation Army Royal Oak Community Ministries, they were homeless and desperate.**

Joe needs dialysis daily and has breathing difficulties. The couple, along with their nine and 10-year-old boys, were living in motels, unable to find somewhere permanent to live.

Sarah and Joe moved to Auckland after having to leave where they were living with family members. Auckland had the hospital treatment Joe needed, but it was further away from Sarah's job.

At first the couple lived in their car, while their children stayed with an aunt who was already struggling with a full house. Living in the car was especially hard on Joe's health, so after a few weeks the family moved into a motel—but they soon had to move again. The constant shifting meant they couldn't get the children enrolled in school.

Finally, struggling to pay hospital and motel bills, they turned to The Salvation Army for budgeting support. Hearing about their situation their budget advisor spoke to a colleague about finding the family a place in the centre's transitional housing programme.

***My boys were happy again to have a roof over their head. They felt really relaxed.***

Royal Oak Centre Practice Manager Sue Bennett says they have seven units for the transitional housing programme. The programme is mainly offered to single mothers with young children who are facing homelessness, but in this case they decided to make an exception.

Getting a stable place to live was huge for her family, Sarah says. 'It was awesome when our budget advisor rang up and



said someone was going to come and talk to us, because they had emergency homes for families. My boys were happy again that they had a roof over their head. They felt really relaxed.

'It's made a huge difference for Joe's health. He's got the dialysis machine at home so he can use it at night and he has the whole day to be with me and the boys and help out. Whenever I see the social worker I tell her that I'm so thankful for her, and for letting us be here as a family.'

Like Sarah and Joe, most people who use the service haven't got anywhere else to go, Sue says. Some have been couch surfing, living in garages, or facing eviction. Some are escaping family violence.

Before they move in, clients make a plan with a social worker to ensure they are ready to transition into their own place.

As part of the conditions of staying in the transitional

homes, clients attend various Salvation Army courses, designed to help them in the long-term. They include parenting and life-skills courses, while clients are also offered budgeting, counselling, social work support, transport if necessary and food parcels when they first move in. For Sarah, the food was helpful and the courses she thought would be aimed at newer parents have turned out to be a positive surprise.

'When I first went I thought, "I don't really need that, I've already brought my kids up", but every time I go it's teaching me how to be a better parent, a better mum and a better wife. And cooking lessons are good because I hardly cook,' she laughs.

Most families stay between eight and 12 weeks in the unit while they complete their plan to find more permanent accommodation, Sue says. For Sarah and Joe, staff have helped them get on the waiting list for accommodation with Housing New Zealand and are advocating on their behalf.

***Whenever I see the social worker I tell her that I'm so thankful for her, and for letting us be here as a family.***

And after they leave, Sue says, The Salvation Army will continue supporting them for at least three months. 'It's making sure there's a good plan for them to move into the community and support is in place for them after they move. We help them source furniture, sheets, towels, clothing for the kids, beds, anything we can find that they need. We had one woman with little ones recently moved to Nelson, and The Salvation Army there met her at her place and furnished her house and they had wood for her and food, that was fantastic.'

\*Names have been changed

## You Can Help a Family

As you've read about in Sarah and Joe's story, many Kiwi families fall into poverty through no fault of their own —it's often a change in circumstances such as illness or redundancy that puts them in danger.

At The Salvation Army, we know that almost half of the clients we assist each year are families with children. This is about one in every five children living in poverty whose parents come to us for help. We're committed to

providing these families with a wide range of support—not just a 'hand out', but a longer-term 'hand up' as well. By giving them the tools needed to turn their lives around, these families can free themselves from the cycle of poverty.

**We can only provide this support with your continued help. Please donate today so we can give struggling Kiwi families the hand up they need.**





## Answering the Call for Help in Fiji

It has now been six months since Winston—the worst cyclone in Fiji's history—devastated this island nation and displaced tens of thousands of people.

In that time, The Salvation Army has been hard at work in Fiji, helping Fijians to get back on their feet. Since February we've been able to assist over 15,000 Fijians who have come to us for help, providing both urgent and long-term support to those in greatest need.

The Ra Province on the northern side of Viti Levu was hardest-hit by Winston, with 90 per cent of homes destroyed or made uninhabitable and many villages, schools and crops wiped out. As the only aid organisation based in this province before Winston hit, The Salvation Army was uniquely positioned to provide immediate help to this region.

Following consultation with the Fijian Government, we were given responsibility for 13 remote villages in the province. This has included the urgent provision of food, water and clothing, alongside the supply of materials to help rebuild the thousands of homes destroyed by Winston. We also focused on making sure that the children living in these devastated communities had the support they needed to recover—both mentally and physically—from this tragic event.

This support would not be possible without the generosity shown by Kiwis to our Fiji Emergency Appeal in February. Over \$325,000 in donations was received for this appeal, which allowed The Salvation Army to provide life-changing help to Fijians in greatest need. Thank you to everyone who supported us.

You can read more about our rebuilding efforts in Fiji at [salvationarmy.org.nz/RebuildingFiji](http://salvationarmy.org.nz/RebuildingFiji)



## From Our Public Relations Director

It's been a busy first half of the year for The Salvation Army, as we focus on helping our clients through all the curve balls that life throws at them. From the stresses of keeping warm and healthy at winter, to navigating the housing crisis and escaping the debt trap, there's no shortage of people needing our help. And thanks to your support, we're there to lend a hand to society's most vulnerable and desperate when they need it.

This edition of *Together* focuses on two key themes: diversity and second chances.

Our diversity lies in the people we help and the dedicated individuals who support them. We visit with Bevan and Will at Wellington Youth Services, with one helping the other get back on track with his education and his future. On the other end of the scale we visit Cairine in Hamilton, who runs a Senior Services programme to combat the isolation and loneliness many elderly face.

The second theme, second chances, is one that resonates through all our stories. It's an ingrained part of The Salvation Army, that of being there to help when people make mistakes and have nowhere else to turn, and of helping others regardless of their circumstances. Alan's story in this newsletter is proof of that—and of how people can turn their lives around for the better with a little help.

Likewise, The Salvation Army's transitional housing programme at Royal Oak is an example of how we're able to deliver a wide range of client services under one roof—in this case providing a safe place for a family in crisis. As you'll read in Sarah and Joe's story, we offer a positive environment for parents and child alike as we work with them to build a plan for the future. We want to make sure that this family, and others, have every chance to lead a happy and healthy life together.

Thank you for your generous support. Without you we wouldn't be able to provide the life-changing services that you will read about in this newsletter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shane Chisholm".

**Shane Chisholm**  
Public Relations Director  
The Salvation Army



## Finding the Perfect Match

**Senior Services is a Salvation Army-led programme that works with volunteers to visit elderly in need of friendship or someone to talk to.**

The visitor is often matched to the client through interests, hobbies and family, engaging with the client as often as needed – often a weekly visit or a phone call to check in. The visit can include a friendly chat over a cup of tea, letter writing, reading to the client and help with transport.

The goal of this programme is to help alleviate some of the loneliness and isolation that is common for the elderly, with families being increasingly scattered and more elderly staying in their own homes. Other issues such as housing, health, neglect and abuse, and age-related illnesses such as dementia often arise during these visits, with visitors often assisting a client and their family to access wider support services.

Cairine Barton, Community Ministries Manager for Salvation Army Hamilton, tells a story that sums up the programme's immense value.

'Earlier this year I had a request from a man with Parkinson's disease. When I visited him at home, I realised his wife also needed urgent help. She was an 86-year-old lady looking after her seriously ill husband in their home.'

The husband requested to be able to talk to someone with a farming background, and he particularly liked vintage tractors. Cairine says this was a match that she needed to think particularly hard about.

'I found someone who would be a perfect match for the wife, but I also needed their husband, who had a background in farming. So I asked his wife to talk to him

about helping together and they agreed to visit as a couple.' Cairine took them both to meet the elderly couple, and says she knew as soon as they walked through the door that it was the right match.

'Off the husbands went to talk about farming things and the wives went off together to have a cup of coffee at the local café. There was an instant connection.'

The subsequent bond between the husbands became very strong. The two men enjoyed trading stories about farming and went to the local vintage tractor show together.

Sadly, the retired farmer passed away a few months later. Cairine attended the funeral, where it was mentioned about this lovely couple who had been visiting, and how much the visitor had helped him in his last days.

Cairine says that while she regrets the two men didn't meet earlier, she is happy to see that the wives still meet weekly. 'It has been a real blessing for the widow, as she now has someone to support her as a true friend.'

The Senior Services programme operates in seven cities throughout New Zealand, each managed by a senior worker and supported by a group of 349 volunteers. In the past 12 months, the programme has visited over 500 clients aged 70 to 99 years. It's a growing need as the New Zealand population continues to age, with over 600,000 Kiwis over 65 years according to the latest census.

Major Pam Waugh, Salvation Army's head of Social Services, says that additional Senior Support programmes can only be started as the funds become available. 'We would like to be operating in more areas, but this is determined by funding.'

# A Hand Up For Wellington Youth

For Bevan Sanders, a desire to help people make the most out of their lives led him to working with at-risk Wellington young people.

Bevan has been part of The Salvation Army Wellington Youth Programme for the past two years, where he works with teens from the local high school and does leadership training for students at Capital Training—a training institute in Wellington and the Hutt for young people who have left school early. He also supports mentors working in Education and Employment classes around the country as part of The Army's new Kiwi Next Generation programme.

Bevan says that he always had a heart for wanting to help people. 'Since my late teens and early 20s, when I saw negative things happening with young people and families my heart kind of broke for them.'

After Bevan left school, he studied and did different jobs before finding employment at the Army's Blue Mountain Adventure Centre (BMAC) for seven years. While there he was introduced to youth work, which led to him eventually moving to Wellington Youth Services.

Bevan says that a main part of his role is working alongside of the Wellington Youth Services transitional housing team. 'We do a weekly youth meal with games and a short Bible message with teens from our guys and girls transitional houses and the wider community.'

He also does supervising shifts at the boy's home, where he cooks dinner and hangs out with youth in a relaxed setting. 'We might watch a movie or play board games, and in that time you get to have really good chats with them about where they are in life. My work is in trying to find out where



***It's really exciting to see these young people grow in themselves.***

they're at, what they want to do with their life and offer help, rather than telling them they have to do this and that.'

Bevan sees a lot of diverse issues that affect young people today. 'It can be drugs, alcohol, mental health, domestic violence, so many things that can completely mess them up. For some, you're the only stable person in their life.'

Youth work can be frustrating, but Bevan says that it's about whether the youth are truly ready to change. Most of all, he wants to help people make the most out of their lives.

'With these young people, 99 per cent of them have never had the chance. What I do is a small part of helping them get that chance. It's really exciting to see these young people grow in themselves.'

## Willing and Able

Will, 18, left Wellington High School last year during his Year 12. For Will, the traditional school structure wasn't a good fit for him, as he had different learning needs.

Earlier this year he was referred to The Salvation Army's Youth Development Programme, a 10-week course focusing on youth leadership. The programme structure appealed to Will, as he liked being able to learn at his own pace—with the

course allowing him to complete units over the course of the year.

He worked with Bevan to develop his teamwork, problem-solving and leadership skills. Will says he enjoyed the learning activities the course provided, including one where he had to work together with other students to build a 'machine' to solve a specific problem.

The course introduced

him to the concept of teamwork, and gave him skills to become a better leader—all of which he wants to apply towards finding a job. Will has an interest in sound engineering, and is keen to learn more about this as a possible future career.

He has already put his new skills to use with his local soccer team, Jets United, where he has taken the initiative in leading his team training before the

coach arrives. This has helped give him extra confidence and a sense of belonging in the team.

Will says that Bevan is a really nice guy who treats the students with respect.

'He gets us doing activities where we have to work together, thinking for ourselves and learning to solve problems. I like that he's not telling us what to do, but giving us the chance to figure it out for ourselves.'



## A Second Chance to Help Others

Alan Murray is drawing on his own life experiences to help give back to clients at The Salvation Army's Wellington Hope Centre.

Alan works today as the intake coordinator at the Hope Centre, a social service centre in Newtown, Wellington. Often he is the first person new clients meet when they come into the centre, and it's a role he takes seriously.

'I interview clients, and provide food parcels or furniture, or refer them for other help. Often you have people in tears when you say, "Yes, we can help you."

'I had a big fellow, ex-gang member with a full face moko, sitting here crying because I got him furniture to move into a flat.'

Alan's role is diverse. He works with the Wellington Street Outreach, alongside social services and the council who go out in pairs and talk to people living rough on the streets. He says it's a real privilege because he gets to hear stories they wouldn't trust anyone else with.

He is also a Bridge addiction services consultant, who talks with clients about how the programme is working for them. For Alan, it helps to draw from his own personal experiences for this.

He remembers the moment that helped him come clean after 25 years as an alcoholic and drug addict. It came when he walked past a record store and a CD cover caught his interest—an album from The Blind Boys of Alabama, singing gospel and contemporary songs about faith.

Alan bought the album and did some research on the band. 'I thought, these guys are blind, but they've had this amazing

life. So what's to stop me living a great life?'

He checked into The Salvation Army Bridge and focused on making positive changes to his life. He says that since he left the Bridge in 2004 he's been on a "life buzz".

'I think I've lived more life in the past 12 years than I did in the 44 prior. In early recovery, it's a tricky question, "What are you going to do to replace drugs or alcohol?"'

*I had a big fellow, ex-gang member with a full face moko, sitting here crying because I got him furniture to move into a flat.*

Alan's caseworker suggested that he 'spend a year getting to really know himself'. He took this advice and remembers that he used to walk around a lot.

'I'd walk and just be looking at life, watching people, learning how to be a person again.'

He later came to work at Wellington Community Ministries, which he says has been fulfilling.

'One of the bonuses of the job is when you have helped people, and you see them later and they're smiling. To see someone who for a year didn't know how to smile and you see them smile, it's a great feeling.'

Alan has also taken the opportunity to live his life to the fullest. Over the years he has scuba dived, sky dived from 14,000 feet, and even fed sharks in Fiji. He says these experiences have helped teach him a lot about faith and trust.