



Celebrating 150 YEARS Internationally

# Reporter

your support in action

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Photo: Fairfax NZ

## Family grateful for second chance

**A marriage breakdown is often enough to plunge a woman and her children into a cycle of poverty from which it is difficult to escape.**

The end of Melissa's marriage meant the end of a comfortable lifestyle and the beginning of a long struggle to provide the basics for her two children.

The separation left her with little money. Melissa was overwhelmed by depression and unable to work. She had few budgeting skills and found it hard to balance a dramatically reduced income on a benefit with the needs and expectations of her children. The debt began to mount up.

The local Salvation Army helped the family with presents and a hamper during her first Christmas as a single parent. 'There was no money for Christmas,' she says. 'The thought of (the cost of) the kids going back to school on top of that—it was a very dark place for me at that time. That help eased my burden, helped me to breathe, and I was able to take the next step.'

Head of Community Ministries

Major Pam Waugh says a good deal of work is done with clients during the year to ensure the expensive Christmas and back-to-school period is managed well enough to avoid debt and excessive stress. This preparation includes time with budgeters and in life skills education programmes. Companies such as Warehouse Stationery generously help out during the post-Christmas period.

The first quarter of each year is the busiest time for The Salvation Army's Community Ministries centres, as parents struggle with the combined costs of Christmas, having children home for the holidays followed by back-to-school purchases.

'The main aims are to help families avoid debt, which locks people into poverty, and to ensure children are not disadvantaged when they go back to school—that they are not sitting on the side during swimming because they have no togs, or so they aren't taking their things to school in a plastic bag.'

After receiving help at Christmas and food parcels to take the strain off the family budget, Melissa felt the need

to reciprocate and began volunteering at her local Salvation Army Family Store.

A year ago, the family had to leave the house they were renting. Left with virtually nothing, Melissa was able to secure a new rental but had no furniture or other household items. The Salvation Army provided furniture, furnishings, bedding and kitchen and dinnerware.

But more importantly, Melissa says, The Salvation Army provided her with a community and moral support at a time when she was heavily medicated to counter her depression. She says she was barely able to hold a conversation at the time. 'Without The Salvation Army, I wouldn't have survived.'

Melissa left school at 15 with few qualifications. She is now studying at university with plans to become a registered nurse.



*It's thanks to supporters like you that The Salvation Army can help Kiwis in need like Melissa and her children. Please donate today to give more families a second chance.*

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## Farewell to unemployment



Josiah, 21, sought help from The Salvation Army's Education and Employment service after being unemployed for two years.

Education and Employment is the Army's job training agency and has assisted and trained more than 60,000 people since its inception in 1978.

Josiah had previously been fired from a couple of jobs because of poor attendance. He started getting into the same patterns at Education and Employment, but one-on-one

support from his tutor turned Josiah around. 'She was firm and wise, but a real motherly figure, and that's what I needed,' he says.

As well as teaching him life skills, work readiness disciplines, and improving his English and maths, The Salvation Army was able to help with food parcels when times got tough.

An opening came up at the local Mitre 10, and despite his nerves, Josiah practised interview skills with his class and prepared for the big day.

He landed the job and has become a valued employee, achieving several promotions. 'When I didn't want to go, I thought about how much everyone had done for me,' he says.



This job has been the number one achievement of my life.



'But the thing that means the most to me is that I've been given a lot of responsibility and that people trust me. This job has been the number one achievement of my life.'

Last year, Education and Employment provided training and mentoring to 1493 unemployed people, including some of New Zealand's most materially disadvantaged. A significant proportion of trainees come from acutely deprived backgrounds and lack the life skills critical to being work ready, making their successes all the more life changing.

## Giving hope at Christmas

We are very grateful for the generosity of donors and supporters who helped our work in a myriad of ways at Christmas—giving Kiwi families in need hope for a happier, healthier life.

The many 'gifts of hope' donated to The Salvation Army Christmas Appeal enabled us to help hundreds of children and their families with practical support such as budgeting advice and parenting skills sessions, essential food parcels, Christmas hampers and back-to-school starter packs.

On 12 November, Kiwis swapped a can of food for a movie ticket at the 21st Wattie's Cans Film Festival. With Wattie's matching the number of cans donated, a total of 52,400 cans (the most ever) helped stock food banks for the heavy pre-Christmas demand. Countdown stores donated \$86,000 of food in December with customers adding further food and cash donations. Postie, Bunnings, Smiths City and Jetts Fitness customers and TSB Bank staff also donated food, gifts or cash.



To bring joy to children who otherwise may have missed out, New Zealanders donated 42,273 gifts to the 20th Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal—a record number of gifts. Customers at Warehouse Stationery added one dollar to their purchases at the checkout, raising funds for stationery vouchers for families struggling to pay

for school supplies.

Your gifts of hope have made a difference to the lives of many Salvation Army clients. One grateful mum says 'Thank you so much for putting a smile on my kids' faces this Christmas and for giving us hope. God bless.'



## Moving beyond poverty

Last year brought home the depth and breadth of material deprivation and emotional strain endured by a large number of Kiwi families.

The Salvation Army's national network of 58 Community Ministries centres provides welfare assistance, professional support and education to some of New Zealand's most distressed and impoverished families and individuals.

Demand in recent years for Salvation Army social services, driven mainly by the 2008 recession, finally peaked in 2013, and now seems to have flattened out. But it has plateaued at record levels, with the number of families receiving food assistance during the year more than 46 per cent higher than at the start of the downturn.

During the past financial year, Community Ministries assisted 35,324 clients and their 41,888 dependent children. As people tend to seek assistance reluctantly and as a last resort to avoid catastrophe, these clients are usually distraught and often living precarious

meal-by-meal existences.

To cope with the recession's human toll of redundant workers and low-income working families unable to cope with rising rents and overheads, The Salvation Army has increasingly employed a multi-disciplinary approach to help clients solve increasingly complex problems and enable them to move beyond poverty and government support.

These obstacles usually always include acute and chronic debt, often compounded by family violence, homelessness or substandard housing, poor physical or mental health, addictions, or a lack of essential life skills. Wider Salvation Army services such as Addiction Services, Supportive Accommodation, and Education and Employment are regularly called on to support these clients.

Budget counselling, social work and advocacy services are now serving client numbers 122 and 83 per cent higher respectively than pre-recession levels. As the Government's welfare reforms continue to evolve and economic recovery shows little sign of benefitting those on

“ The Salvation Army is helping clients to move beyond poverty and government support. ”

the lowest incomes, demand for these services is expected to remain high during this year.

2014 was punctuated by a worrying increase in evictions of low-income families whose incomes were outstripped by rising rents. In some areas, the lack of safe and affordable housing is at crisis point.

In one week at the Community Ministries centre in South Auckland, 20 homeless families sought assistance and none were able to be immediately housed because of a lack of suitable emergency accommodation.

### Pack the bus

Thank you to all the generous Kiwis who donated food for The Salvation Army to distribute to families in need before Christmas. Organised by The Breeze and sponsored by Greenline Coaches and Speedy Signs, the 'Pack the Bus' appeal roved around the Waikato in December. Te Awamutu Primary School was one of many schools where students collected food to help their fellow New Zealanders.



Photo: The Breeze Waikato



## High cost of housing leads to desperation

**A family fleeing earthquake-stricken Christchurch found poverty and slum housing in Auckland.**

Christopher had been a retail manager for a telecommunications firm at the time of the 2010 quake. His rented home was in the Red Zone and he was made redundant until his workplace could be rebuilt. Christopher decided to move his two young traumatised sons to Auckland for a new start.

But the new start turned out to be a trial. The family includes his elderly mother who suffers chronic ill health and is not eligible for New Zealand superannuation. With Christopher out of work, after rent, the family had \$50 per person to pay for food, power, clothing and medical and school costs.

As their primary emphasis is on giving the boys a stable life, Christopher and his mother regularly went without food to ensure his children were fed adequately.

With the high cost of housing in

Auckland and limited funds, the house they rented was riddled with mould and had holes in the walls. Christopher and his sons are asthmatic, and the damp and mouldy living conditions were severe enough to require regular doctor visits for his sons and eight hospitalisations over a one-year period.

'It was a pretty desperate and dire situation,' Christopher says.

The Salvation Army budgeting service helped Christopher fine-tune his budget, but he was already carefully squeezing maximum value out of his meagre income. Regular food parcels, he says, were a 'godsend', taking the strain off the family's budget.

A Salvation Army social worker also successfully advocated to get full benefit entitlements for the family, as well as attempting to secure a Housing New Zealand house.

The following Christmas, The Salvation Army helped with a hamper and presents for the boys. As a single

father not wanting to go into debt, Christopher had struggled to provide Christmas for his family.

'I'm embarrassed to say they probably received more than any other Christmas that I had been able to give them,' says Christopher. 'They were blown away.'

Christopher's sons are impeccably well-mannered. One of the lessons he is teaching them is the careful management of money and the importance of giving a portion of it to others.

The family has since moved to Hamilton where they now have a cheaper, fully insulated home with a heat pump.



*Your donation will help change the lives of families like Christopher's. Thank you for supporting Kiwis in need.*

### Three ways to give ...

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



## Who cares? We do.

This year, The Salvation Army celebrates 150 years since our founding. Today, we stand side by side with Kiwis in need—providing much-needed services such as life skills programmes and budgeting advice, as well as emergency assistance with food and clothing.

For a snapshot of our work in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga, download our Annual Report at **www.salvationarmy.org.nz/annualreport**

With your support, we can continue to care for New Zealanders in need.



Celebrating **150 YEARS**  
Internationally