

Together

Autumn 2017

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION



Te Ope Whakaora



▲ AMBER AT HOME WITH BABY JAMES (8 MONTHS)

A Voice of Reason and Hope

After a series of events threatened to tear Amber's life apart, The Salvation Army stepped in to provide the guidance and support she desperately needed.

In late 2015, Amber—then 34—had a good job and was in a new relationship. She had inherited debt from a previous partner, but was unable to pay back her debtors.

Then a bombshell. Amber found out she was pregnant. Almost overnight, her life changed due to this unexpected news. In the months following, Amber experienced intense morning sickness at her work, with her employer deciding not to extend her contract just as she was entering her second trimester.

Amber was devastated.

'I felt overwhelmed and didn't know what to do. It felt like the end of the world for us. I worried about the impact on my partner, who worked hard and was supportive.'

Due to circumstances around their living arrangements, Amber was not entitled to financial support from the Government, so became financially reliant on her partner. This placed a significant strain on their financial situation, forcing them into additional debt to stay afloat.

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Amber was suddenly facing a scary and uncertain future. To further complicate matters, her history of depression and anxiety made her increasingly vulnerable. A conversation with her mother, who lived elsewhere in the country, led Amber to make contact with The Salvation Army's Community Ministries centre in Glenfield.

Amber didn't know much about the Army, but they agreed to see her immediately, so she caught a bus to meet them.

Amber was introduced to Salvation Army social worker Tammy Birch, whose primary role was to provide Amber with the guidance, advocacy and advice she needed.

Tammy says her focus was on Amber making the key decisions herself on what she needed, based on the opportunities Tammy presented, and then supporting Amber in those decisions.

‘When I first met Amber, she was very emotional and I had concerns around her vulnerability. She worried about the stability of her relationship and what the pregnancy meant for her future.’

For the first couple of months, Tammy had regular meetings with Amber where they set up a multi-faceted support plan. These catch-ups allowed Amber to talk through and mitigate her concerns and worries, and to keep on top of upcoming medical appointments and financial obligations.

Both Amber and her partner had significant debt, so Tammy arranged for The Salvation Army to provide food parcels to alleviate pressure on the household budget, along with a much-needed reality check about their finances and advice to keep on track with their spending.

Amber says Tammy was a voice of reason and hope for her during a dark time.

‘Tammy was great, she provided me with support and a friendly ear, helping me determine goals and to have a bit of vision around what I wanted my future to be.’

‘I was just so grateful, because in our situation every food parcel we received made such a difference, enabling us to put money we would’ve spent on food towards catching up on bills.’

One of Amber’s goals was to get her driver’s licence, but her anxiety and an unregistered car prevented her from doing this. Seeing that having a licence would give Amber the independence she needed as a mum-to-be, Tammy arranged for the car registration to be paid—a huge and unexpected help she says.

Tammy also collaborated with other agency’s including midwives, specialist agencies and maternal mental health. She communicated regularly with this group, creating and managing plans alongside Amber to support her leading up to the birth and post-birth—to ensure consistency of care.

Closer to the birth, Tammy made the decision to have their meetings at Amber’s home to make things easier. They talked about prepping for the baby, and Amber says it was great to have another mum to talk to and offer advice.

She’s just been the light at the end of the tunnel, and The Salvation Army have made such a different in our lives.

Baby James was born in April 2016—a healthy, happy boy. The Salvation Army provided meals, practical items such as nappies, baby clothes and bedding to help ease the burden on the family. Tammy also continued working with Amber, focusing on her bonding with James and making sure that mother and son were not at risk of becoming isolated.

As the months went on, Amber’s confidence grew. Life still had its ups and downs, but Tammy helped her to understand that this is what many new mothers go through. She also lifted Amber’s focus, encouraging her to get out and connect with new people in the community.

A Better Life for James

James is now eight months old, and Amber and partner are actively addressing their debt. They live in West Auckland and are making plans for a better future.

‘I’ve been really blessed to have Tammy in my life to help me through all these hurdles I’ve encountered in becoming a new mum. She’s been the light at the end of the tunnel, and The Salvation Army has made such a different in our lives.’

‘Having someone to guide me has made me realise that even though you might have these issues and baggage, there’s people out there willing to help you get through.’

Amber is now considering her career options—influenced by the ‘difficult but rewarding’ role Tammy played in her life.

‘Before Tammy came along, I hadn’t known what my direction in life was, but I love helping people. I’d love to do what she does and be able to help other families, to provide that social support like The Salvation Army did for me.’

Amber still feels she has a tough road ahead, but she has hope and says the future is ‘much easier to imagine’.

‘I don’t want James to feel hopeless like I did before I got the help I needed. I want him to know that there’s kind people out there like the Sallies, willing to help others.’





From Our Public Relations Director

2017 is here and it's gearing up to be another busy year for The Salvation Army across New Zealand, as we focus on providing support to all those who come through our doors seeking help.

We're ready and willing to be the helping hand that those in crisis so desperately need. Our objective is simple - to give everyone an opportunity to succeed.

As you'll read in this newsletter, our 10th State of the Nation report shows progress in some key areas of need. It's a good start, but there's still lots of work to be done. The Salvation Army is committed to facing these issues head on, and challenging others in a position of power to do the same.

We visit new mum Amber in Auckland, as she talks about how The Salvation Army was able to lift her out of a dangerous situation caused by debt and a change of circumstances. The combination of social care, advocacy and guidance we provided means that today, Amber and baby James are all in a safe and healthy place.

We also talk with Major Pam Waugh, who directs the Army's social services across our 68 Community Ministries centres, as she details the complex and varied needs of our clients. We look at the effect that poverty has on children, and how the Army is working hard to giving them a chance for a brighter future.

We look back on the Army's involvement in Kaikoura following the devastating earthquake in November last year. And we visit Ria, who alongside The Salvation Army is rolling her sleeves up to help the homeless in Southland.

Thank you so much for your continued support, and I wish you the best for a positive and uplifting year —as together we make a positive difference in our community.

Shane Chisholm
Public Relations Director
The Salvation Army

Off the Track

In its tenth annual State of the Nation report, titled 'Off the Track', The Salvation Army points to several failures in society needing to be urgently addressed. It is calling on politicians to focus on developing effective policy approaches and action to combat this social deficit and reverse the trend.

Lieut-Colonel Ian Hutson, Director of The Salvation Army's Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit, says that urgent progress needs to be made in the key areas of providing affordable housing, reducing child poverty and stopping re-offending.

This includes addressing an alarming lack of safe, affordable housing leading to a level of homelessness not seen in New Zealand for many years. Evidence shows that although Auckland has experienced a 12-year high in new housing consents, at the same time the housing shortage has worsened and become more unaffordable for many people.

The report highlights that although Government is spending big on prisons, rising incarceration numbers along with high recidivism rates signals the need to ensure that when people come out of prison they have work opportunities and a place to stay.

Report author Alan Johnson says entrenched child poverty has sadly become the new norm in New Zealand, despite various reports, warnings and commentary to Government by child protection experts over the past five years. 'Politicians must stop merely voicing sympathetic rhetoric and take real action to reduce child poverty numbers.'

The report is not all doom and gloom, though, as it acknowledges Government policy direction is having a positive impact in creating rising employment and wage growth, plus reductions in youth offending and teenage pregnancies.

Read the report at www.salvationarmy.org.nz/OffTheTrack



New Zealand is a generous country but we're really struggling with the child poverty issue. Please don't give up hope and don't stop helping.

▲ MAJOR PAM WAUGH, HEAD OF SALVATION ARMY SOCIAL SERVICES

A Driving Force for Positive Change

For Major Pam Waugh, The Salvation Army's drive to help those in need has been a part of her life for 30 years.

For the past six years, Major Waugh has headed Social Services for The Salvation Army in New Zealand. Hers is a pivotal role that spearheads the delivery of social services from the Army's 68 Community Ministries centres.

Pam and her husband Glenton have been Salvation Army Officers since 1986. For Pam, much of this time has been in social services, working on the frontline and at a strategic level. She says it's a role that she's passionate about.

'From a national point of view, it's about ensuring we have the right resources, that we're developing our team's response to community needs, and that we're looking at the big issues and how we can respond innovatively to them.'

Pam believes in a strong collaborative approach with other agencies, and regularly meets with Government departments and other NGOs, with a focus on working together and helping each other by sharing insights and learnings. 'It's vital we're aware of what's going on around the country and with the people we serve, ensuring that we can be an advocate for those people and our teams doing the work.'

Pam says over the past six years, the poverty landscape in New Zealand has changed dramatically.

'The needs of clients have become much more complex—you don't just give someone a food parcel and everything's going to be fine. People's needs have become really entrenched in a cycle of poverty, homelessness, debt and unemployment/low wages. For some families, these demands, combined with the higher costs of living, have created a cycle that's very difficult to break from.'

Pam is proud of The Salvation Army's positive impact. 'We're known for working at a level that no one else will.'

Pam is especially interested in child and family development, and ensuring the Army's services have appropriate resources to help families get ahead in life. Figures released this year show that over 155,000 Kiwi children (14% of all children) live in households forced to go without many basics, such as adequate food, shelter and heating. This can have a profound impact on their health, education and mental wellbeing.

Pam says children are New Zealand's future, but they're also part of who we are now.

Children are part of our community and deserve the right to security, food, shelter, education and good health. That's a child's right.

Food security is one of the biggest issues facing families in poverty. 'When choices are limited to paying rent or feeding the family, parents are forced to choose one over the other. It's a serious issue for children, some of whom go to school without lunch, let alone a school bag or shoes—oppression becomes part of their living.'

Pam says the solutions to child poverty are not linear, with staff often exploring the wider family situation to understand the factors are contributing to their struggles.

Her message to Kiwis is simple: 'We're a generous country, but as a nation we're struggling with the child poverty issue. Please don't give up hope and don't stop helping.'

You can help today—go to salvationarmy.org.nz/together

Bringing Hope to Kaikoura

Following the magnitude 7.8 earthquake early on the morning of Monday 14 November, The Salvation Army responded with urgency.

Since then, the Army has been hard at work alongside Civil Defence and local authorities to provide support for those affected. The Army has a Memorandum of Understanding with Civil Defence where in the case of a disaster they respond as requested, typically through the provision of food, psychosocial support and practical aid.

In the days following the quake, The Salvation Army provided support in the townships of Seddon and Ward, where some of the aftershocks were centred and where there had been considerable damage to houses. They were also called in to support people being flown from Kaikoura to the Civil Defence emergency centre in Woodend, serving hundreds of meals to those displaced during this period.

We're here to serve—that's really what we're about: serving people.

In addition, four Christchurch Salvation Army staff based themselves in Waiiau, near the epicentre of the earthquake, where they worked from a Recovery Assistance Centre (RAC) to provide support to the community.

In the worst-hit area of Kaikoura, contingents of Salvation Army staff were there from the first week and through Christmas and New Year, helping people adjust to life.

Supplies were distributed from the Army's Divisional Support Centre in Christchurch, where items are usually stored for South Island Community Ministries. A trailer



of supplies was sent to Hanmer Springs and the military transported six pallets of essentials—including 150 food parcels, along with water and hygiene products—directly into Kaikoura. Once there, some supplies were loaded onto wheelbarrows, and wheeled through a train tunnel to the isolated community of Rakautara, with the Defence Force's assistance.

Captain Lindsay Andrews, who coordinated the Army's relief efforts, says it was a hard time for many people, with Christmas being vastly different to what families would have planned. 'It was a really tough time for families, with uncertainty around jobs and housing, and extra costs as a result of the earthquake. The hardest part is what comes afterwards—what is 2017 going to look like for many of these families?

'For us, it's about supporting people to think about what their future might look like, what their home might look like, or even how they can survive without a home.'

Lindsay says The Salvation Army is committed to continuing its support of people in the earthquake-affected areas for as long as they need it.

Become a True Hero for Kiwis in Need

For those Kiwis who feel they have nowhere else to turn, The Salvation Army brings hope. We provide a hand up to people living in poverty—those who are treading water, working hard and getting nowhere—to stop them from falling between the cracks.

That's why we need you. Become a Salvation Army True Hero, and join an exclusive group of Kiwis who are reaching out to people living on the edge. Over the course of a year, your regular donation will give real, life-changing help to people in crisis.

Sign up at www.salvationarmy.org.nz/trueheroes—and be a True Hero for someone who needs you.

Alternatively, please phone us on (04) 382 0744 and we'll send you a True Heroes pack in the post.





▲ HARD AT WORK: NZ FIRST LIST MP RIA BOND (CREDIT: THE SOUTHLAND TIMES)

Tackling Homelessness in the South

Invercargill politician Ria Bond is teaming up with The Salvation Army, by literally taking a hammer to the issue of homelessness in Southland.

In late January, The NZ First list MP starting work on renovating a room at the Salvation Army's Invercargill emergency accommodation. The room is one of 11 bedrooms at the hostel that require renovation, along with a kitchen and bathroom.

Salvation Army hostel manager Dave Hope said while there were several people inquiring about accommodation, the organisation was short on both time and money to spend on renovations.

For Ria, the problem of homelessness in New Zealand is a topic close to her heart. As a 13-year-old, she spent four months at the same hostel when she first moved to Invercargill with her family.

Fleeing from a domestic violence situation in Christchurch with her mother, nephew and younger brother, Bond said the support The Salvation Army provided was invaluable.

'We moved with just the clothes on our backs—mum didn't have a coin to her name. It was huge because we don't know what would have happened otherwise; we would have been out on the street.'

'This organisation helped my family out when we really needed it, now it's really important to me that I give back.'

Ria said the problem of homelessness wasn't confined to just the big cities like Auckland, Wellington and

Christchurch, but was a reality in regions such as Southland. She says that The Salvation Army is providing a crucial service for people with nowhere else to go.

'Some people think there's no homelessness down here, but we need to take our blinkers off. It's an issue down here and it affects people from all walks of life, from students living on couches to families living in garages.'

This organisation helped my family out when we really needed it, now it's really important to me that I give back.

Actions speak louder than words and Ria picked up a sledgehammer and began the job, knocking out walls. She started renovation work on the first room by stripping out the gib board before working on re-insulating the walls, and estimates that the renovations will take about 40 hours to complete.

'If I put my name behind something, I get in overalls and all. I don't stand back in my high-heels.'

While other agencies are working together on a longer-term plan around tackling homelessness in Invercargill, there is still a desperate need for short-term accommodation.

'Homelessness is a nationwide problem, affecting not just individuals but families as well. This is an urgent and immediate issue which needs to be addressed.'

Story courtesy Tim Newman and The Southland Times.