



Te Ope Whakaora

True HEROES

Everyday People Helping Every Day



▲ (L-R) BIANCA AND SUE

Embraced by Love

Bianca remembers exactly where she was the first time Sue from The Salvation Army's transitional housing programme called.

'I was driving. I pulled over and as she talked it felt like Sue had just reached through the phone and wrapped her arms around me,' recalls Bianca.

Raised by parents living with active addiction, Bianca thought that when her violent father left everything would improve. But she soon became a victim of childhood sexual abuse at the hands of a family friend.

At the age of 10 Bianca tried alcohol for the first time. By the time she was 13 Bianca had been introduced to methamphetamine. She left school and at just 15 was working as a prostitute to support her habit. In and out of dysfunctional and abusive relationships, Bianca moved onto needles. Now also involved in crime, she narrowly escaped a prison sentence because of her young age. But it was a near fatal overdose that caused Bianca to reach out for help. She was just 19 years old when she entered rehab for the first time.

'Rehab completely ruined my using because after that I had a conscience for the first time,' laughs Bianca. 'But still I was on and off drugs for years.' When Bianca met Les, her husband of 16 years, she spiralled into post-partum depression following the birth of their first child. Vodka and party pills helped her get through, but with the arrival of three more children over the ensuing years, the pull to use was strong, and long-term sobriety remained elusive.

When New Zealand's Covid-19 national lockdown hit, Bianca and the family had just moved to Papakura. 'I was pretty deep in my using during that lockdown period. I was a mess and our relationship was a mess,' she recalls. By the time level 4 was lifted, the landlord had unexpectedly sold the property.

'I was so shocked. I applied for lots of houses, but when you're using you can't follow through on the viewings because you keep putting it off until tomorrow—that's what addicts do. I was stunned when I realised I only had one week left to find somewhere. Me and the children ended up at the Quest Hotel.'

Bianca reached out to her AA sponsor, realising she just had to get clean—after all, she had to drive her children to school in Papakura from Auckland City everyday. ‘So I just pulled away from everyone—no one could get to me in the hotel. I was so far away and 9 floors up. All I did was eat, sleep and pick up the children from school. I detoxed myself.’

After four months in the hotel, Bianca was offered transitional housing which she says changed the whole trajectory of her life and recovery journey.

‘When I first came to the Sallies, and Sue was visiting me, I was lost and broken. I was clean but still an addict inside and I didn’t know how to fix myself. But now I feel so proud of myself—especially of the mother

‘I fell in love with the Sallies. Anyone giving to them should have no doubt that their money goes exactly where it’s needed—to helping people and re-homing addicts like me and giving us a chance to start over—it’s beautiful and I’m just so grateful.’

I’ve become. I was lost and broken, but now I’m strong and proud.’

Sue’s visits and practical support helped Bianca chip away at her goals. ‘Sue’s more than just a social worker. She’s like my counsellor and Mum rolled into one. She challenges me to keep learning and growing.’ Bianca reports.

Bianca made new friends and gained self awareness through attending The Salvation Army’s ‘PLP’ (positive lifestyle programme) course. ‘I had a lot to learn about love. It’s hard when you’ve been so broken. You have to come back to those core beliefs and challenge the stinking thinking and rebuild everything. It takes a lot of courage to do it. But the Sallies embraced me and loved me—they’re my family now. They’ll walk beside you and take you where you need to go. They’ve got me here and my gratitude is shown every day when I get up and be thankful and choose not to use,’ says a confident, hope-filled Bianca.



THE GROWTH OF THE FOODBANK PROJECT

In 2015 The Salvation Army was the only charity partner to take a call from an entrepreneur, Galen King, who had an innovative idea to create an online grocery store that enables food to be quickly, easily and securely donated online.

The Foodbank Project was launched on the 1st of September in 2015 and resulted in almost 3000 grocery items being donated to The Salvation Army’s Royal Oak Community Ministries in Auckland.

This success led to the project being rolled out nationally to benefit the many families and individuals seeking help from Salvation Army foodbanks in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

When Covid hit, the people of New Zealand knew there was a food shortage and desperately wanted to help those in need. Donations exploded and in 2020 New Zealanders, both here and overseas, donated more than \$3.5M worth of products.

When people need help, visiting The Salvation Army for a food parcel is often the first step on the path to breaking out of poverty. Food is the gateway to accessing further services such as counselling, budgeting sessions, housing support and addiction treatment.



The Foodbank Project also showcases how The Salvation Army can increase its impact with the support of its partners. Lucid built the sophisticated tech platform that enables the online donation store, while Countdown provides items at cost and delivers all The Foodbank Project donations to our 40 foodbank locations free of charge. Countdown also supports with matched cash donations and will be donating an additional \$200,000 as part of this year’s Winter Appeal.

Head online to **foodbank.org.nz** to find out more about how The Foodbank Project supports the community with the most-needed items which are regularly updated by each local foodbank hub.

From Our Territorial Commander

This issue of your newsletter finds us in a season of new growth that inevitably follows the dark nights of winter, as we observe the awakening of nature.

The Salvation Army believes that in life, as in nature, light follows darkness.

Our mission of caring for people, transforming lives and reforming society through God in Christ by the Holy Spirit's power is designed to bring new life to all. From our counselling and addiction services; food parcels; housing people in warm, safe accommodation; to positive lifestyle programmes and financial mentoring, we approach those in need with the hope of achieving wholeness physically, emotionally and spiritually.

In this issue, we have some inspiring stories of transformation—from addiction to wellness, from homelessness to having a home, and from alcohol and drug dependency to being free of addiction. We also feature the success, thanks to people like you, of The Foodbank Project, which has expanded from supplying 23 foodbanks to 40 foodbanks.

This is one example of the powerful impact your donations make. The work we do with one person can impact on generations to come, as you'll read in the story from one of our donors whose great-grandfather started his life in London.

Much of our work could not happen without the generosity of people just like you, who share our values and our belief that hope is alive in this season of spring.

We thank God for your support.



Mark Campbell (Commissioner)

Territorial Commander, The Salvation Army
New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa Territory

Making Change Through Regular Giving

Guy Wilson wants to make his money count by contributing toward positive change in people's lives.

A merchant banker with three children under five makes for a busy life, so Guy is extra careful and intentional with his money. Thirty three-year-old Guy is especially supportive of The Salvation Army's budgeting work.

'I have a good understanding of finance because of my work, and I see money as one of the main reasons people get into a pickle. Budgeting help and financial education is really important in the lives of people struggling to get ahead, and contributes really positively to long term meaningful change.'

Guy and his wife Katherine first began donating to The Salvation Army in 2016. A few years later he stepped up and joined the True Heroes regular giving programme which funds vital wraparound services, as well as enabling The Salvation Army to ensure resources are available to all who need them.

'Regular giving is probably more important than just a one-off donation because it forces you to think about your money and how you are going to use it to make a difference. Regular giving also benefits you as well as the people you are supporting because it forces you to be sensible and plan,' Guy explains.

Growing up Guy was influenced by the work he saw his grandparents do through their involvement with The Salvation Army. That impression left a lasting impact.

'The Salvation Army is a charity that I implicitly trust, and I have confidence that my money is going to the



▲ GUY WILSON

right places. I believe it is always good to give to others from what you have—even if you are young and not making lots of money, because you never know when life might change suddenly, and you are the one needing assistance. If I ever find myself in that position, I know The Salvation Army is the kind of charity that could help me make real change amidst challenge,' says Guy.

Supporter Relations Coordinator for The Salvation Army's True Hero regular giving programme Gabrielle Martell-Turner is so thankful for True Heroes like Guy. 'Our regular givers fund the vital wraparound services that bring fresh hope to Kiwi's of all ages, it's wonderful to be able to let everyone know just how appreciated they are!'

If you would like to increase your regular donation, please contact Gabrielle on 021 352 742, or email gabrielle.martell-turner@salvationarmy.org.nz



Your Support Rebuilds Lives

‘Some people worry that we care too much about offenders and not enough about their victims,’ says Glen Buckner, National Operations Manager for The Salvation Army’s Reintegration Services. ‘But helping to limit the number of victims by working with people to rebuild their lives and prevent re-offending is why we do what we do.’

Throughout New Zealand there are over 50 staff and volunteers working with around 600 new clients each year. ‘Our reintegration team does not judge or discriminate—everyone has a sincere and compassionate attitude towards those we serve. People who use our services need to feel safe and supported before they can even begin to believe they really can change,’ stresses Glen.

And change they do. Imprisoned for a decade for selling methamphetamine, Simon* had once been living the high life on the profits of drug sales. Police confiscated everything at the time of Simon’s arrest under the proceeds of crime act. But Simon’s losses went well beyond material things—he also left behind a wife and daughter when he was convicted and sent to prison.

While incarcerated Simon’s young daughter wrote to him explaining that he could not be part of her life if he continued offending. Simon was devastated by her strong words, but they became a powerful motivator towards change. However, Simon knew he could not do it alone—he would need help.

Glen emphasises that ‘we are not a jigsaw puzzle service that clients have to fit into to be able to receive our help. We provide a robust, case-by-case individualised approach. We partner with various other community groups and services because reintegration is about helping someone navigate their way back into

what can be a vastly different society than what they left years ago.’

Upon his release from prison The Salvation Army’s Reintegration Services team began supporting Simon to rebuild his life and achieve his goal of seeing his daughter again. Over the next two years, a myriad of wraparound services contributed to Simon’s gradual progress including The Salvation Army’s Bridge Programme (Drug and Alcohol Services), Supportive Accommodation and Budgeting Services.

Building strong relationships made the real difference for Simon. Weekly visits enabled the reintegration team to challenge Simon’s behaviour and attitudes over time, resulting in a more positive outlook and proactive approach to his life choices. With the team’s support Simon completed two years of probation without re-offending and achieved his goal of seeing his daughter again. 15 years later Simon is not only gainfully employed but a company manager.

Simon’s success story wouldn’t be possible without the support of our donors. While Reintegration Services receive funding from the Department of Corrections, those who support The Salvation Army financially are contributing to the wraparound services that enable us to assist people like Simon successfully reintegrate into society without falling into re-offending. With a success rate of reducing re-offending for 12 months and more of up to 79% (figure provided by the Department of Corrections), investing in rebuilding lives is money well spent.

Your regular donations are already helping support The Salvation Army’s Reintegration Services provision of wraparound services and additional support. You are rebuilding lives.

*Name and image changed for privacy.



Everything We Need

‘I thought that when The Salvation Army got us the house that would be it—they’d be finished with us. But no, that wasn’t the end because they are still with us,’ says 76-year-old Nick.

Of Ngapuhi descent, Yvonne and Nick lived on a farm in the mid north for over 40 years. Nick farmed the land and together they raised a large family. ‘I milked the house cow,’ laughs Yvonne. ‘We always had milk which was good. To go shopping I would catch the school bus into town. But when the kids were on holidays we were stuck and had to hitch a ride. Or take a horse,’ she explains.

But as the years passed and the kids all left home, Nick and Yvonne’s deteriorating home contributed to their declining health, and they became increasingly isolated.

‘We had to live in motels for a while which was terrible, but Trevor worked very hard to get us this house.’

‘When people ask us how we are doing now, I say, “Oh good, so much better. We would have been dead if we stayed back up home”.’ That’s the truth. I always come right out and say what I think. Yvonne was very sick, and we were miles away from the hospital,’ Nick says.

After they arrived in Whangārei the couple were referred to The Salvation Army’s Emergency Housing team and met social worker Trevor. ‘We had to live in motels for a while which was terrible, but Trevor worked very hard to get us this house. There’s no one else around here like him—he’s a real gentleman and he’s Māori,’ says Nick with a big smile. When the couple moved into their new whāre Trevor had arranged for it to be fully furnished with help from the Family Store team, and the cupboards and fridge stocked. Yvonne affirms that, ‘We have everything here we could ever need.’

Yvonne and Nick belong to several groups at the local Salvation Army, including waiata group, and they both had their eyes tested through the One Sight programme. ‘I had to be very careful when I went out about how I took my steps, until I came here and got my eyes tested again and got my new glasses. Now I can go shopping,’ says Yvonne.

Nick has already recommended The Salvation Army to others. ‘When they ask me what to do I tell them it won’t be easy, and I know there are other groups who can help—but I don’t know much about them, it’s The Salvation Army people I know,’ he says.



The Gesture that Changed Generations

Sometimes an act of kindness and love can change history.

This was the case for Pamela Gervai's family. Pamela's great-grandfather was found homeless aged two years old living on the streets, in London. She has no idea where he was born or who his biological parents were. 'He was running around the back streets, he didn't know his own name, didn't know where he came from, he was with a gang of boys making their living on the streets.'

Luckily for Pamela's great-grandfather, he was found by William Booth, the founder of The Salvation Army, who looked after him until he found him a kind, loving and wealthy man to adopt him. 'His name was Francis Walkie Smith and my great-gandfather also took on the name Smith because they had no reference to his original name.'

Pamela's great-grandfather went on to have a wonderful, privileged and fulfilling life. She says this kind and loving act changed the course of not only her great-grandfather's life, but many generations on.

Pamela feels a lifelong gratitude to The Salvation Army. Her father donated financially his entire adult life and left a gift in his Will to The Salvation Army when he died. Pamela says, 'My father was always very grateful, and my grandfather had impressed upon him the fact that he would never have existed without help from The Salvation Army.'

The Salvation Army Will's and Bequests Manager Chrissy Muller was blown away when she heard Pamela's story. 'If they hadn't found him, a whole family wouldn't have happened. You realise just how fragile life is. Something like that could stop a whole family line.'

Chrissy says leaving a gift in your Will to The Salvation Army is incredibly important. 'It makes a huge difference to the future of what we can do. We cannot continue to help people like Pamela's great-grandfather without donations, so it's just crucial to have this support.'

Pamela says she will always donate and loves the work The Salvation Army continues to do. 'I'm very impressed that the people who wouldn't or couldn't get help elsewhere have found it with them and that it's a very caring group, who really do a lot for the people that are struggling.' She says giving money is helping give many people a safety net. 'For all the good that they hand on it's almost worth more than you can give. Whatever you give translates to a huge amount of kindness and helpfulness to people in need. It's a double gift; you give something monetary, and The Salvation Army gives something that's worth even more.'

If you would like to join people like Pamela's father and make a donation or leave a gift in your Will to The Salvation Army, or would like more information about this, phone 0800 53 00 00 or visit our website salvationarmy.org.nz/wills