



Te Ope Whakaora

# your support in action Reporter

2013 ISSUE 2



## Retirement postponed

At an age when most people are taking life a little easier, Pamela is single-handedly raising six children aged from two to 16 years.

She has had custody of her three grandchildren, now in their mid-teens, since their mother became ill 11 years ago and was unable to care for them. Their mother has since passed away. Last year the mother of her great-grandchildren became seriously ill and Pamela took the children into her care.

For several months after taking charge of her great-grandchildren, Pamela had no additional income to clothe, feed or cover school costs, as custody of the children had not been legally settled. The constant worry led to her losing a third of her body weight. To add to the strain, her seven-year-old great-grandson has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, which is progressive, incurable and will lead to his reliance on a wheelchair for mobility.

Although the support group, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren,

urged Pamela to seek assistance from The Salvation Army, she was very reluctant.

'As a grandparent, our generation doesn't ask for help,' she says. 'We were brought up to be independent so you have to be very desperate to ask.'

Pamela eventually accepted assistance from The Salvation Army. Food parcels and vouchers for children's clothes and school stationery were provided and Army social workers helped Pamela secure financial support for the children's upkeep.

At this time, the rental property they lived in was sold and Pamela was given six weeks to move out. The Salvation Army arranged for Pamela's situation to be the focus of Strengthening Families, a coordinated approach to supporting families in crisis, involving Government agencies and NGOs.

Within two weeks, a suitable home was found, close enough so the children wouldn't have to move schools, and handy to the hospital where her great-grandson receives treatment.

The cost to Pamela over the years

has been dear. Her marriage was an early casualty, and the energy and money required to raise another generation of children is great, she says.

'But we got there in the end and now I'm so proud of what we've got as a family.'

Virginia Peebles, a coordinator for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren says Pamela's situation is not uncommon.

Grandparents usually do not receive State assistance for the first five or six months while custody is settled, she says. The children are often traumatised, adding to families' stresses.

Thanks to the generous support of donors, The Salvation Army is able to provide assistance to people like Pamela and her family.

Thanks to your help, The Salvation Army's community support for the year to 31 March 2013 included:

**56,184** Food parcels distributed

**13,846** Budgeting sessions provided

**17,944** Community meals served

### Inside:

Reduced funding hits services

Doing good in the hood

Red Shield Appeal brings hope

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## Where rising demand meets reduced funding

The 15 people in the waiting area at The Salvation Army Palmerston North Community Ministries look weary and despondent. Nearly all have reached a crisis that threatens their ability to provide for the most basic needs of their families.

The centre manages services that range from the city's largest food bank, counselling, budgeting and social work services through to community meals and a men's hostel—services that can be employed to help clients move from the crises they are currently in and on to developing healthy and sustainable futures.

Demand on these services soared following the financial crisis in 2008 and now sit at record levels, with 2,000 clients and their dependents receiving assistance at the centre.

But Community Ministries manager Kevin Richards says declining funding threatens some services and hampers his staff's abilities to help families to become healthy and financially sustainable.

In recent years, clients have brought with them an increasingly complex array of problems that, in many cases, threaten the existence of their families, he says. Debt, poor mental and physical health, serious family dysfunction, domestic violence, alcohol addiction and drug abuse are often inter-related and difficult and time-consuming to address.

Community Ministries' services run



While funding is declining, Community Ministries manager Kevin Richards is seeing demand for social services soar

on the 'smell of an oily rag' and thanks largely to volunteers and donations from the local community. This includes organisations like Lions and Rotary, Kevin says.

The centre receives funding through Child, Youth and Family for assisting families where children are at risk—about five per cent of all clients. A Government fund—the Community Response Fund—provided money to social service NGOs to help them cope with the jump in demand during and after the financial crisis. This funding has now ceased. While the amount was

modest, its loss has meant the end of a key social worker position and threatens at least two social services if long-term funding cannot be secured.

The Salvation Army is currently closing a women's hostel in the city as it was operating at an unsustainable loss.

'While we're largely managing to keep services running at present, my real concern is that we could one day be only able to provide a band aid—where we give a person a food parcel and they return home without being given the tools to improve their and their family's existence for the long term,' Kevin says.

## Doing good in the hood



The Salvation Army's Public Relations Coordinator Raewyn Butler with Tony and Carolyn Burnet, who donated \$2,483 from their Z stations at Beach Road, Mt Albert and Quay Street

Based on voting of their customers during March, every Z service station has given a share of \$4,000 to neighbourhood groups that help people in need. That's over \$1 million across the country to do 'good in the hood'.

The Salvation Army was one of the four groups that Good in the Hood supported at 11 service stations: Z Beach Road, Z Mt Albert, Z Quay St, Z Royal Oak (Auckland), Z Pukekohe, Z Tokoroa, Z Taradale (Hawke's Bay), Z Courtenay St (New Plymouth), Z Fairway (Palmerston North), Z Hornby (Christchurch), and Z Tinwald (Ashburton).

These stations donated a total of \$8,759 to The Salvation Army. We very much appreciate the support of Z Energy and its customers for our work in communities around New Zealand.



## A difficult time ahead for many families

This year is a critical period for The Salvation Army's social services as funding for our programmes becomes increasingly scarce and the material deprivation of many of our poorer communities appears to be intensifying.

Since the start of the recession, demand for Salvation Army social services has risen dramatically. For instance, the number of food parcels distributed has increased 76 per cent and the provision of budgeting services is up 187 per cent since the start of the recession in 2008. This demand for services has largely remained constant for the last couple years but our latest figures show demand in the most economically deprived areas is again starting to rise.

The aftermath of the recession has, for the first time in our history, brought a significant and growing number of low-paid working people to our door.

At the same time, Government funding of social service NGOs to meet the rapid increase of families seeking assistance following the financial crisis is ending. While modest short-term funds have been announced, the shortfall this year will mean significant cuts in the number of our budget advisors and some losses in our social work services. Other traditional sources of funding are also becoming more difficult to secure.

This means that, more than ever, our programmes and services will rely on public donations and grassroots community support if we are to assist as many families as we can to break the cycles that keep them in dire poverty. This gives parents the best chance of ensuring their children don't fall into the poverty trap as adults.

Some of our clients need only minor support and encouragement to get them through an isolated crisis. But many clients have endured chaotic, even

traumatic lives since childhood and require more intensive work to help them become independent and better prepared to deal with the day-to-day tensions of living on a low income.

Salvation Army Community Ministries staff can call on a range of services and programmes to improve the lives of their clients. For instance, emergency housing can be arranged for families experiencing homelessness or domestic violence and specialist counselling and legal services called in.

The Salvation Army can help arrange long-term housing and help with furniture, furnishings and clothing. It can provide budget counselling and if a family's debts are in arrears, negotiate with the family's creditors. The Army also offers programmes that teach clients the skills needed to run a household on a limited budget and the personal skills required to build confidence and self-esteem, as well as parenting programmes.

### Thank you for bringing hope

The Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal is a major source of funding for the social services work provided by our 58 Community Ministries centres throughout New Zealand. Thank you to everybody who made the choice to help our appeal this year.

Salvation Army officers and staff were out collecting during Red Shield Appeal week along with a host of much appreciated volunteers, including young

Te Rangi (right) who helped to collect with his mum, Keri. As usual, passers-by were generous with their donations that we will use to bring hope to children and their families in need.

Our Red Shield Appeal text number is open for donations until 6 July 2013. Please text CHOICE to 4419 to make a \$3 donation. Thank you again for your generous support.





## Out of the darkness

Renee is the energetic, determined and proud single mother of three blossoming children.

But it wasn't always that way. Renee was born into an abusive and violent household soaked in alcohol. As she grew up, she found herself drawn to violent men and abusive domestic situations.

Her most recent partner put her in hospital more than 20 times, including surgery for facial reconstruction. She handed custody of her children to their father, for their own safety, and spent eight months trying desperately to extricate herself from the brutal relationship. Eventually, her evidence helped put her former partner in prison.

Suffering from physical pain and from what would be later be diagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as the grief from missing her children, Renee found herself living in a friend's lounge, starting and ending the day with a bourbon RTD. Drugs and alcohol dulled

the pain, soothed her anxiety and helped her sleep, but they rapidly took over her life.

'I realised I had a choice of two roads to follow,' she says. 'One of them was going to put me in the ground and I wasn't ready for that.'

After failing in her solitary struggle with alcoholism, Renee entered The Salvation Army's Bridge Programme for addiction treatment, successfully completing the programme.

She began counselling for depression and post-traumatic stress and commenced a long relationship with her local Salvation Army Community Ministries. The Sallies provided ongoing moral support and helped Renee with the long legal process of getting custody of her children. They encouraged her to establish a modest gardening business and provided tools to get her started.

The Salvation Army also helped with food parcels and, when Renee and her children were united, provided furniture, beds and bedding for their home.

Renee became more involved in the community, taking on cleaning work, volunteering at a Women's Centre and started a career as a support worker for physically and mentally disabled people.

Throughout her ordeal, Renee has been single-minded about what she wanted to achieve.

'It's taken three years to go from a really dark place where I thought that my only options would be ending up dead or in jail,' she says.

'I set myself goals to heal, to get my children back and to teach them to make far better choices than I had made—to give them more than what I'd had and I feel I've definitely started that and I intend to continue.'

Your donation can help bring hope to families in desperate need.

### Three ways to give ...

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Remember us in **your Will**

Online at [salvationarmy.org.nz](http://salvationarmy.org.nz)

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- Email [pr@nzf.salvationarmy.org](mailto:pr@nzf.salvationarmy.org)
- Call **0800 53 00 00**



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