



Te Ope Whakaora

your support in action Reporter

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It's all about family

Fifteen years ago, Murray was a personal fitness trainer, taking out the masters categories in the Mr Fitness Olympia title in Greece and the Mr Fitness Universe in the United States.

But when his daughter's mental health began deteriorating, Murray gave up competition and took on the care of his grandchildren. He is now the sole caregiver to five grandchildren and more recently a great-grandson.

'Yeah, I left the world stage,' he laughs. 'But when I look back, I wouldn't change a thing.'

Proudly independent, Murray has raised his grandchildren, now in their teens, with little support. He works 20 hours a week around the children's school hours and prides himself on keeping a tight household budget.

Murray knows the importance of maintaining a stable family

environment. He was a ward of the state from age three to 15, living in a series of foster homes and boys' homes.

'There's times when we have to go without and I feel sorry that I'm not able to provide certain things ... but they keep on reminding me that they've been grateful for the fact I've hung in there for them,' he says. 'At the end of the day, all they want is love.'

But in the lead-up to the new school year, Murray knew that for the first time in 19 years his budget would not cope with the back-to-school costs after the added expenses of Christmas and having teenagers at home during the school holidays.

'I decided to push all pride aside and seek some other assistance,' Murray says.

The Salvation Army provided a few food parcels to take some of the strain off the household budget and helped with some back-to-school costs, including supplying donated Warehouse Stationery vouchers. Around 5000 families receive similar practical

assistance from the Army each year.

Salvation Army Secretary for Social Services Major Pam Waugh says the post-Christmas period is a particularly hard time for clients with school-age children. With the payment of school fees, uniforms and books required soon after Christmas, parents on a subsistence income are under immense pressure to meet these costs.

It is critical for client families to keep the pressure off their budgets before the expensive back-to-school period, and this is the aim of The Salvation Army's pre-Christmas programmes, Pam says.

'When you're on a limited income, this is easier said than done, but getting help with budgeting early and preparing for the Christmas and back-to-school periods can reduce some of the strain.'

It's thanks to supporters like you that each year The Salvation Army is able to help more than 120,000 Kiwis overcome substantial challenges and make lasting changes to their lives.

Inside:

Helping one family at a time

Spirit of generosity

Stan Walker gets behind the Army

Not easy staying afloat

Tackling poverty one family at a time

From The Salvation Army's 2013 Annual Report

Salvation Army Community Ministries is a national network of 58 centres providing welfare services, support and education to more than 30,000 materially deprived families and individuals each year.

Despite much talk about the nation emerging from the recession, the past 12 months provided little respite for the low-income and beneficiary families who make up the majority of our clients. One notable trend is the greater complexity of clients' problems—especially high levels of debt stemming from insufficient incomes, and often compounded by a lack of basic life or parenting skills, overcrowded housing, family violence or a family member's gambling or drug or alcohol addiction.

Demand on Salvation Army food banks stabilised to a 4.5 per cent rise in food parcels distributed during the 2012/13 year, compared to the sharp increases in the years following the 2008 financial crisis. Even so, the year saw 327 families and individuals a week receive food assistance from The Salvation Army for the first time. Food parcel distribution continues to sit at record levels, placing enormous pressures on many centres.

Relatively stable food parcel demand is largely a result of new strategies put in place by the Army following the financial crisis. These include using budget advisors, social workers and



counsellors, employing a range of life skills, personal development, parenting and emergency housing programmes. They work collaboratively, and often intensively, with clients on the deeper reasons for their inability to cope. Staff can also call on other Salvation Army services such as addiction treatment, supportive accommodation or employment training if required.

Our centres place a special emphasis on education—the development of household management, budgeting, parenting and problem-solving skills. The work can be painstaking and time-consuming as many clients, often living meal to meal, have little capacity for planning for the future, are

usually despondent and often suffering depression or anxiety by the time they seek assistance.

The result of this multi-disciplinary and more intensive approach is that client families are increasingly less dependent on welfare assistance, are better prepared to solve problems that arise, and family dynamics are healthier.

Without the generous support from individual donors—in particular the many who donate regularly—the public, local companies and funding organisations, the current depth and breadth of our services to some of the most materially deprived families in New Zealand would be greatly diminished.

Spirit of generosity

Families in need across the country were helped out at Christmas through the generous response of fellow New Zealanders to a range of appeals run by Salvation Army corporate supporters. On 13 November, Kiwis swapped a can of food for a movie ticket at the 20th Wattie's Cans Film Festival. With Wattie's matching the number of cans donated, a total of 41,882 cans helped stock our food banks for the pre-Christmas demand.

For the third year running, Countdown stores donated \$83,000 of food to our food banks. Supermarket shoppers also donated food in specially marked trolleys in store as part of the Countdown Food Rescue programme, along with \$18,550 in cash.

To help fill stockings on Christmas Day, New Zealanders donated 40,618 gifts

to the 19th Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal. Over 12,000 more gifts were collected than in 2012—a 42 per cent increase.

Over December and January, customers at Warehouse Stationery added one dollar to their purchases at the checkout, raising over \$43,000 for stationery vouchers that Salvation Army centres will distribute to families struggling to pay for school supplies.

Other Salvation Army supporters included customers of Smiths City, Jetts Fitness and Bunnings who donated gifts, food and cash. Flaming Rhino donated a percentage from online and in-store Christmas card sales.

Thank you to those who joined in the spirit of giving—you helped us provide essential practical support to families.





The Salvation Army brings hope

New Zealander Stan Walker, 2009 winner of national singing competition *Australian Idol*, has shown how much a fan he is of The Salvation Army's work by becoming an ambassador to the Army's annual Red Shield and Christmas appeals.

Stan says he has always been a huge supporter of The Salvation Army, or 'the Salvos' as they are affectionately referred to in Australia. 'They're about bringing hope to people,' he says. 'That's what I love about the Salvos—they do everything for people in need of help.'

Salvation Army Public Relations Director Shane Chisholm says it's great

to see a young Kiwi backing up the Army's fundraising campaigns. 'A major benefit of having Stan's support is that he appeals to a different audience than our usual donors,' Shane says. 'This means word about our work is spreading among potential future supporters.'

Stan first decided to put his face behind what the Army is doing in Australia where his song 'Take it Easy' became the theme tune for last year's Red Shield Appeal. And now he's doing the same thing back in New Zealand.

'Everyone knows who the Salvos are but not really how much they actually do for the community,' explains Stan. 'I started to get to know them and had so much fun. I think the best thing for me was learning more about The Salvation Army, what they stand for, what they're

Above: Stan Walker gets behind the 2013 Christmas Appeal with the team at Countdown Grey Lynn, Countdown National Communications & Public Affairs Manager Kate Porter and Salvation Army Public Relations Director Shane Chisholm.

about, and how they began.

'I love it. They're awesome as. They're ruthless. They deal with some trippy stuff, eh. They're strong people and selfless as.

'They're helping people detox, they're helping them recover, they're helping people heal, they're finding people at the lowest and helping them back up again.'

Stan is now a strong supporter of The Salvation Army's appeals, urging donors, their friends and the wider public to jump on board with fundraising campaigns. 'Not because this is something that gets done every year, but because it actually makes a whole lot of difference in people's lives. It just brings hope.'



Morrinsville Primary School students help Northern Knights cricketer James Baker collect donated food for the 'Pack the Bus' appeal that roved around the Waikato in December. Organised by The Breeze and sponsored by Greenline Coaches and Speedy Signs, this appeal was just one of many throughout the country that collected food for The Salvation Army to distribute before Christmas.

We are very grateful for the generosity of everyday Kiwis who gave so much for those in need.

Photography: Rachel Thomas/Fairfax Media



The Salvation Army provides life-changing assistance to those who ask for help.

Our Annual Report 2013 provides a

snapshot of our work with Kiwis in need throughout the country.

Go to www.salvationarmy.org.nz/annualreport to download a copy



Not easy staying afloat

Debt became a means of survival for Felicity.

The Salvation Army's South Auckland budget advisors say the main contributor to debt is housing costs, with some clients paying 70 per cent or more of their net incomes on rent.

One mother says that after she has paid her rent and utilities she has \$60 left for food, clothes, transport, medical and dental costs. Going into debt made it possible to keep the family afloat, but only for the mid-term.

Compounding the financial pressures are attempts to meet family expectations at Christmas followed by the expense of sending children back to school, creating a surge in demand for budget advisors. South Auckland Community Ministries had more than 110 clients waiting at its door when the centre reopened after Christmas.

Felicity managed to balance her household budget for years. She says she fell into the debt trap after feeling guilty for not providing her children with the

kind of the things many of their friends took for granted—especially when her kids were succeeding at school and on the sports field.

'My kids went for years and years with just the absolute minimum and I could see it was getting to them,' Felicity says. 'I felt, well, I felt I owed them.'

The hire purchase agreements began to mount up with Felicity becoming increasingly alarmed about how the family would manage. She looked for part-time work to fit in with her children's school hours but the only suitable job was a paper run paying \$2.50 a day—she took it anyway.

Felicity decided to approach The Salvation Army. A few food parcels helped take some of the immediate pressure off the family's finances. Felicity's budget advisor worked with her to devise a workable budget and helped negotiate more realistic repayment schedules with her creditors.

In August this year—about 18 months after her first meeting with her budget adviser—Felicity will have all of her debt paid off. This is despite some debt

“ **4,500** people received budgeting services in the year to 30 September 2013

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repayment terms being up to five years. Maureen, a Community Ministries budget advisor, says Felicity was motivated from the start, with her first priority being her children's wellbeing. Felicity says the tensions within her family caused by the financial strain diminished after her first budgeting session. She now has greater confidence in her ability to manage problems as they arise and is involved in community work.

Your donation can help struggling families and their children make positive changes to their lives.

Three ways to give ...

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- Email pr@nzf.salvationarmy.org
- Call **0800 53 00 00**



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