



Te Ope Whakaora

TRUE HEROES

Everyday people helping every day

Autumn | 2025



▲ Rāwinea (right) with Robyn, lead programmes facilitator.

You helped Rāwinea find a sense of self

Lasting change takes time and effort. Our Positive Lifestyle Programme (PLP) offers a framework, and for some, like Rāwinea, an opportunity to find and hone the person they truly are.

I wasn't able to look at myself in the mirror. I couldn't do that for 30 years of my life. It wasn't until I got help through The Salvation Army's addiction rehabilitation programme that I started to find a sense of self. And once I was on that healing journey, what really changed things for me, was PLP.

One of the seeds planted by the course is the power of positive affirmations. I started putting notes all over my mirror with kind statements about myself. And as I memorised and repeated them, which took practise every day, I started to see the truth in these things. Eventually, those notes were gone, and I could look at myself and believe in who I was looking at.

This programme has been instrumental in helping me find ways to care about myself, to know how to carry myself, how to communicate my needs and how to deal with feelings. I reached a point when I was aged 45, and realised I didn't

have a lot of people skills or life skills to deal with everyday feelings and situations. Finding that there are tools available and learning how to use them has helped me so much. And oh my gosh, pennies started to drop!

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I think the grief session of the programme was one of the most challenging. I realised all the stuff I'd been holding on to was either grief or anger, and a lot of it wasn't mine to hold. Being able to sit in those feelings was the beginning of being able to let them go. ▶



I am strengthening my bonds with my adult children. I needed to be more present in conversations and I think my children appreciate it a lot. The more I stop trying to control things, the more they come to me about what's going on in their lives. It's been a goal of mine to be closer to them and to my grandchildren and it's such a joy.

Day by day, I am becoming my authentic self, and it feels good.



In the last 6 months **1151 PLP sessions** were facilitated by The Salvation Army.

Figure based from July to December 2024

'I'm super proud of Rāwinea. She has made the choice to practise and take on new ways of doing things to form new healthy habits. It's incredible when that whole dislike of oneself starts to change; it is so empowering. When you have someone who really puts in the effort to change ... it's why I do what I do. I'm so delighted that she's been able to use some of the many tools we share during this powerful eight-week course. I love the journey that she's on. It's a blessing, not just to her but also her children and her grandchildren. When we put the mahi into improving ourselves, the results ripple out and benefit those around us.' **Robyn, lead programmes facilitator**

'It feels good to give'

For mum-to-be Rose, being able to be flexible in her donation amount has enabled her to maintain her role as a recurring giver, one of our valued True Heroes.

The cost-of-living crisis affects everyone, including young professionals. Add to that the decision to start a family or buy a house—budgets need to be tweaked. This was true for Rose, one of our recurring givers, who is expecting her first child in April.

'I don't have time to volunteer but I can spare some money, and that way I feel part of something.'

'I know some parents stop their charity donations while their children are young,' she says. 'But I was worried if I did that I would forget to start again. The Salvation Army makes it easy to adjust the level of your payments, so I

decided to reduce my monthly amount instead of stopping it.'

Recurring giving is important to charities as it is a dependable amount, allowing the forecasting of services and budgets. Rose cites this, and her satisfaction, as motivations to continue payments.

'It feels good to give,' says Rose. 'I get a lot of enjoyment out of it. I don't have time to volunteer but I can spare some money, and that way I feel part of something and I'm supporting all the good work the Sallies do.'

Rose has been a True Hero for several years, having followed in the footsteps of her parents who have been long-time supporters.

'I'm a Christian, so my values align,' she says. 'And I'm a regular at the Sallies op shop! Plus, my brother-in-law used to manage a Salvation Army op shop in Australia, so that made it a no-brainer for me too.'

Already a fan of the organisation, Rose says that reading about all the work the



Army does in this newsletter, especially the inspiring real-life stories, really brings home how much need there is, the breadth of services offered and how much can be done.

'It's important,' she says. 'I'm happy that even when I need to be a more financially strict than at other times, I can still make a difference.'

Thank you so much for being part of our story through our True Heroes programme.



To discuss your recurring giving, please email Gabrielle at trueheroes@salvationarmy.org.nz or call her on **021 352 742**.



From our Territorial Leader

Kia ora and welcome to your *True Heroes* newsletter.

I've recently returned to New Zealand after several years in places including Zimbabwe, South Africa, Australia and the UK. It's wonderful to be back and serving with The Salvation Army as the territorial leader, helping to transform lives and lead people to Jesus.

Thank you for your ongoing generosity and helping us to help others in the many communities we serve. The need for help is greater than ever.

People remember good gifts. But we particularly remember when people have been kind to us—especially in times of need. Jesus calls us to help the poor and follow his example of kindness. We're thankful for your recurring support, which enables us to do just that. But just like everyone else, The Salvation Army is doing it tough.

We are seeing decreases in funding and donations to charities such as ours at a time when the need is growing. This means we're having to do more with less.

But what you give, in regular amounts, is transforming lives and making a difference.

An African proverb says, 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together'. Put simply, we cannot transform lives and grow God's kingdom here in New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa without you.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NLT) says: 'A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.'

We cannot do what we do alone, but together we can make a difference.

God bless you and thank you for your continued support.

Ngā mihi nui,

Commissioner Janine Donaldson

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



Volunteer collectors needed

Can you spare an hour or two in the week beginning May 5 to collect during Street Week for our Red Shield Appeal?

Each year, we head out to the streets of our local communities with our collection buckets and the money raised goes a long way to funding the vital assistance we provide for people facing hardship.

Street week takes place in around 80 towns and cities nationwide with almost 500 collection sites. We're looking for volunteers to help us, so that no hour booked at a site goes unfilled. Together we are an army—a force for good—and we invite you to join our efforts.

The experience of volunteering is uplifting and rewarding and some of the interactions you will have will be truly special. Last year, Tala was approached by an elderly gentleman with a bag of coins. He explained that each year he puts the change from his shopping in the bag and donates it to a charity. When counted it was \$480! That can do a lot of good, and so can all the gold coins and notes dropped into our buckets—it all adds up to a world of difference.

The Red Shield is among the best-known logos in the world and represents The Salvation Army's reputation for being there in times of need. Seeing our representatives on the street brings a smile to so many people, giving them the opportunity to donate and meet those who support our work.

This year is our 61st year on the streets, yet the need in our communities is bigger than ever. Our response includes food parcels, social work, advocacy, budgeting and parenting advice, all funded by donations from the public.



Sign up to collect at salvationarmy.org.nz/collect or at your local Salvation Army Centre (ask for the corps officer as they will be managing volunteers).

Please mark **5–11 May** in your calendar and plan to be part of raising funds for our vital services.

You were there for Liz through it all

Solo parents have it tough. Add starting over after escaping domestic violence and living with a disability and you have a glimpse into Liz's life.

Mum to two teens, Liz* is a resilient person who always tries to make the best of things, and she is grateful for the help she's had from The Salvation Army over the span of many challenging years. Help which began even before she managed to leave her marriage.

'My ex was a gambler. He'd spend all our money and still expect me to put dinner on the table. I got some help from The Salvation Army with food, but I had to keep it secret, or he'd go into a rage.'

Liz felt trapped and dependent on someone who was the opposite of dependable.

'He was controlling and abusive and it's very hard to escape that situation. You lose all sense of who you are. Eventually, I saw a window of opportunity and we left while he was on a work trip.'

The years that followed were not easy. The immediate fear dissipated but it took time to regain her self-esteem and build a life for her and her two daughters from scratch.

'I just had to take things one step at a time,' says Liz.

Regular food parcels helped the family find their feet and keep some semblance of normalcy. Next came advocacy around applying for a supported living payment and financial mentoring to work out a budget that she felt comfortable with. Liz already had budgeting skills but had been living in financial fear and needed support to regain control over her finances and gain confidence.



'Sometimes I've been okay and sometimes I just haven't,' she says. 'At times, like when I had breast cancer, for example, knowing there's a place to turn to for help just makes you feel that bit stronger.'

'This is what I love about The Salvation Army. We're there for the long haul. Liz has been through so much and I'm proud we've been a constant in her life.'

Liz's case worker agrees. 'This is what I love about The Salvation Army,' she says. 'We're there for the long haul. Liz has been through so much and I'm proud we've been a constant in her life.'

When it came to her daughters starting high school, the amount of money needed to get them ready was completely prohibitive, and Liz was relieved when The Salvation Army stepped in to buy uniform items, stationery and, for one of the girls, a Chromebook.

'If I hadn't had the help, I'd have found a way, but it would have taken food off the table, or I wouldn't have been able to meet one of my other outings,' she says.

The family was supported at Christmas time too, with food and gifts for the girls.

'Christmas puts an extra strain on our budget. It was immensely helpful to receive help at this time. It allowed us to celebrate like other families.'

While she still has her struggles, Liz's life is on an even keel these days and her daughters are doing well at school.

'It's been a long road,' says Liz. 'The Salvation Army has been right there with me. They've helped me through hell and back.'



Foodbanks are under increasing strain with the resources available for food not keeping pace with demand. **In just six months, The Salvation Army provided food support to 65,000 Kiwis.**

*Name changed to protect her privacy

Figure based from July to December 2024

Legacy of care comes to fruition

One of the biggest honours staff at The Salvation Army carry out is putting money or assets gifted in people's wills to good use.

Hamilton man Charles Hoy had been a long-term supporter of The Salvation Army when he decided to leave a substantial gift in his will to help those less fortunate. A highly successful farmer, Charles had an affinity with those in hardship because he had grown up in poverty. His multi-million-dollar gift was used to help fund a Salvation Army social housing complex in Hamilton, which opened in October. The project has provided families with warm, safe, affordable places to live amid a deepening housing crisis.

'Many New Zealanders enjoy housing security,' says Gifts in Wills Team Leader Jonathan Manning. 'But for our social housing clients, this might be the first time they can put down roots and not have to worry about where they will sleep next. Or it may offer an escape from the stress of yet another tenancy agreement coming to an end. A stable, comfortable home makes a huge difference to someone's outlook on life and can provide a springboard for other positive changes.'

The 31 units have been built alongside 40 units completed in the 1980s, meaning that new tenants will be joining an existing community. The complex is staffed by tenancy staff and chaplains, who will work with tenants to cement this

community feel. A new community centre, named after Mr Hoy, playground and basketball court have also been built.

Not many people can leave gifts of this size, but the difference made by a collective of smaller bequests can be just as lifechanging. As well as helping to fund social housing projects, the money from Gifts in Wills goes to help fund wraparound services, including financial mentoring, foodbanks, social work, advocacy and development courses.

'It's a common misconception that you need to be very wealthy to leave a gift to a charity in your will,' says Jonathan. 'Even a small percentage, such as 2 percent of your estate, can make a big difference to Kiwis in need.'



A gift in a will upholds your values to help those less fortunate and is a living memorial to your life—a legacy of care that will live on in others. To leave a gift in your will, call **0800 530 000** or visit salvationarmy.org.nz/wills

Focus on Fiji: Developing programmes

In Fiji, The Salvation Army is actively fundraising for the rollout of the Positive Lifestyle Programme (PLP) and increased provision of Joy Hours.

The Salvation Army in Fiji works with people of varying ethnicities. There are 18 corps (churches and social centres), court and corrections workers and Family Care Centres. Ongoing work is needed due to high levels of poverty, homelessness, domestic abuse, crime and drug use.

'Having recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of The Salvation Army in Fiji, we are reenergised and focused on how we can help those most in need,' says former Divisional Community Ministries Secretary, Major Beth Campkin. 'With future plans and finances to expand and develop our services, we can do so much more.' Two areas currently in development are a self-awareness programme for adults and a children's outreach project.

The eight-week Positive Lifestyle Programme (PLP) has been widely adopted in New Zealand and translates well to Fijian culture. Anger, low self-esteem, loneliness and grief affect everybody. PLP provides a safe space where people are guided to heal and develop new skills. Working on assertiveness, resilience, stress management and goal setting can yield astounding changes.

Thirteen facilitators were trained in 2024. In 2025, there are plans to expand the trainings across the Pacific territories.

Joy Hours are children's activity programmes with a biblical theme. Corps connect with social housing villages and orphanages in their area and provide activities for children.



Connections are made with families who can then be supported with clothing, social support, school supplies and food as needed. Joy Hours have been well received and there are plans to increase their frequency and introduce them to more areas around Fiji.

To support our projects in Fiji, please contact Jade Zeina on **021 718 8232** or email jade.zeina@salvationarmy.co.nz



From going under to giving back

With help from The Salvation Army, Jason went from a messy, self-destructive life to using his experience for good as a volunteer in the foodbank.

If you'd have told me just two years ago, I'd be a key volunteer at a foodbank, a church member, a marriage celebrant and be working in sales on a farm, having finally had the courage to leave my career in hospitality, I would not have believed you!

That's what good choices can do. It's what five years clean and sober can do. You can turn your life around with a hand up and that's what we try to do for people at The Salvation Army. We give a hand up not a handout and journey with them. I am grateful to walk into the centre every Wednesday and be there for people the way people were there for me.

'You can turn your life around with a hand up and that's what we try to do for people at The Salvation Army.'

When I emigrated from America 20 years ago, the first thing I did was to volunteer at The Salvation Army Family Store. I'd long admired the Army, and it helped me integrate into a new community. But then, life became messy. One of the reasons I came to New Zealand was to leave my struggles with drug addiction behind, but those challenges came with me and morphed into alcoholism

I've always thrown myself into my work, but when you manage bars and restaurants with the late nights, parties and events, it can be a recipe for disaster for someone trying to stay clean and sober.

'It takes a lot for someone to ask for help, and food is the entry point; it's here we can build trust and relationship to a point where other issues can be tackled.'

When I got a drink-driving charge and ended up doing community service at the Sallies, the very place I had volunteered, it was humiliating but also humbling and ultimately my saving grace. When my addiction challenges continued and escalated, I was referred to the Sallie's Bridge programme. Like many addicts, my journey to recovery was long, and I returned to the programme a few years later having relapsed.



▲ Jason (right) with Hine, PLP facilitator.

The thing that got me back to rehab was the support of The Sallies and the positive lifestyle programme (PLP). I was stubborn, but PLP forces you to see things you might not want to see. It is not for the faint of heart, but if you throw yourself into it, really acknowledge what you learn about yourself and make steps to change, you can turn your life around.

Completely saved by all these interventions, I studied to become a mental health and addiction support worker. Part of that was a placement at The Salvation Army and I've never left! Now, I volunteer at the foodbank and put what I've learned into action. It takes a lot for someone to ask for help and food is the entry point; it's here we can build trust and relationship to a point where other issues can be tackled.

That was me once. Steeling myself to accept help because I was so unwell and not seeing a way out. Now, I am on the same team as the people who once helped me. That's where the miracle happened. I've gone from being trapped in a cycle of self-destruction to a place of positivity and calm.

'Now, I am on the same team as the people who once helped me. That's where the miracle happened.'