



Te Ope Whakaora

TRUEHEROES

Everyday people helping every day



▲ Above: David, left, and Deirdre.

From floodwaters to new beginnings

When devastating floods ripped through her town, Deirdre lost everything. With just \$200 to her name and no insurance, her home was destroyed and her future suddenly uncertain. Alone with her young daughter, Deirdre found herself facing a situation she never imagined.

‘I was completely lost, emotionally, spiritually and physically. I had nothing left to fall back on except my faith. The only thing that kept me going was standing in the storm and praying,’ she recalls.

For years, Deirdre had been the one helping others in her community. Then, overnight, she became the person in need. After being unable to access emergency accommodation, Deirdre was left wondering where she and her daughter would sleep. ‘That was a dark moment. I was told to pay for a motel myself, but I didn’t know how we’d afford food or clothing. I had no idea what we were going to do next,’ she says.

‘I was completely lost, emotionally, spiritually and physically.’

Determined to find a way forward, Deirdre moved to another city to start again. Civil Defence provided three nights in a motel, but beyond that, she had no plan and nowhere to go.

‘I could only think a few centimetres in front of me. I didn’t know what Monday would look like.’

But then, Deirdre received a message from David, a Salvation Army social worker. A friend had contacted a local Salvation Army centre in the hope that someone could help her. ‘David was the light at the end of the tunnel,’ she says. ‘He said, “I’ve got a place for you.”’

What happened next felt nothing short of extraordinary. They moved directly into transitional housing. ‘The accommodation he organised became available on the exact day I had to leave the motel,’ Deirdre says. ‘There were no gaps. It all just fell into place.’

Thanks to generous True Heroes like you, Deirdre experienced what she describes as a ‘flood of blessings’. ‘Everything I needed came to me,’ she says. ‘Housing, clothing through Family Stores, budgeting support, counselling—it was all there.’



David played a key role in guiding her through the process. ‘He showed such warmth and compassion,’ she says. ‘That meant everything. It allowed me to share my story and to trust the support being offered.’

Thanks to your regular giving, Deirdre received financial mentoring advice helping her to regain control over her finances. ‘It gives me clarity,’ she explains. ‘Knowing what’s going where—it’s empowering. I know exactly what I have to

Above: Deirdre is so grateful for the support she has received thanks to generous donors like you.

spend on fuel for the car, how much for food and how much for the other things.’ Your kindness also helped to provide Deirdre with counselling, which has allowed her to begin processing the trauma of losing her home and everything in it.

Deirdre has also been navigating significant health challenges. ‘Having a safe, warm place to live—that’s 75 percent of my healing,’ she says. The impact of your generosity has extended beyond Deirdre to her entire whānau. Her older children and grandchildren have seen first-hand how quickly things have turned around. ‘It’s had a domino effect. What started as despair has become happiness, peace and joy,’ she says. Her youngest daughter has remained grounded through the upheaval, continuing her schooling and routine.

Now, Deirdre is preparing to move into long-term social housing. ‘I’ve got a new home waiting. I even woke up the other day thinking, “I don’t want to leave where I am now—I love it here,”’ she says. Reflecting on the past few weeks, she’s filled with gratitude. ‘The journey has been phenomenal. If The Salvation Army hadn’t been there, I don’t know where I’d be. But now I’m seeing brighter days,’ says Deirdre.

Thanks to caring True Heroes like you, Deirdre and her daughter found safety, stability and hope when they needed it most. Your generosity helped turn a time of overwhelming loss into the beginning of a brighter future.

Standing on solid ground

When Baba* speaks about his homeland, his eyes still light up. ‘It is a beautiful place,’ he says. But war changed everything. After years of hardship and uncertainty, Baba and his family were forced to flee their country and rebuild their lives as refugees. ‘The war... it finished us,’ he says.

When the opportunity came to begin life again in New Zealand, Baba felt hopeful for the first time in a long while. ‘That day felt like God opened a door,’ he recalls. ‘We were happy. Together. Safe.’ But life brought more challenges. For years, Baba cared for his father after a devastating stroke. ‘I looked after him for five years,’ he says. ‘Every day until he passed away. He was my father... my responsibility. I would do it again.’ Then his life took another heartbreaking turn.

Baba’s marriage broke down. His ex-wife kept the house in her name and the children. The doors he once opened with a key were suddenly locked to

him. And just like that, the man who had survived so much was sleeping in his car on the streets. ‘For five months,’ he says quietly, ‘I slept outside shop entrances. In my car. Sometimes no food. Sometimes no shower. Believe me... sometimes I cried. I said, “Why this life again?”’

Then he walked through the doors of a Salvation Army centre. And thanks to the support of kind True Heroes like you, his life changed. ‘They welcomed me like family,’ he says. The Salvation Army helped Baba secure a safe, warm apartment. ‘Now I am dry,’ he says. ‘I am warm. I am safe. It is wonderful.’ And now that he is standing on solid ground, Baba is looking outward—not inward. ‘Because I know what it feels like not to eat. To be cold. To have no one. The Salvation Army helped me so much. Now I want to help others,’ he says.

Baba has survived war, displacement, loss and homelessness. Yet when he



talks about what matters most today, he doesn’t speak about survival. He speaks about gratitude. And that gratitude belongs to True Heroes like you. ‘I want people to know this,’ Baba says. ‘You saved me. And now I will save others.’

Thank you for helping people like Baba find safety, dignity and hope when they need it most.

* Name changed to protect identity.



From our Territorial Leader

Over the past six months, I have been reminded time and again that hope is something we create together. As I travel around our territory, I continue to meet individuals and families facing significant challenges. Many are struggling to make ends meet and are being forced to make difficult choices about housing, food, transport and other essentials. Yet even during hardship, I see remarkable resilience, generosity and determination. These encounters remind me why our mission remains so important.

Every day, The Salvation Army is committed to helping people move from uncertainty to stability. One of my hopes for the future is that more people will experience the security of a safe home and the support they need to thrive. That is why we continue to invest in social housing and partnerships that help provide not only a place to live, but a place to call home and a foundation for the future.

At the same time, our dedicated financial mentors are walking alongside people as they navigate the ongoing pressures of household budgets, debt and the rising cost of living. Through practical support, encouragement and guidance, they are helping individuals and families build confidence and resilience for the future.

We are also investing in the communities we serve. The opening of our new Kaitia centre will provide a welcoming place for worship, connection, support and community life in the Far North. Through initiatives such as Community Reuse Aotearoa and the work of our Family Stores, we are also taking meaningful steps towards a more sustainable future and seeking to be faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

None of this would be possible without you. Thank you for your generosity and for the support you provide through donations and appeals. Your partnership enables us to stand alongside those who are doing it tough and to bring hope where it is needed most. Together, we are strengthening communities, creating opportunities for people to flourish and sharing hope for the future.

Ngā mihi nui,

Commissioner Janine Donaldson

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



Thank you for being a True Hero

Throughout this issue of *True Heroes*, you have read the stories of people like Deirdre, Charlene, Baba and Roshni. While each story is different, they all share one thing in common: when we first met them, they were living in darkness and despair.

For some, that despair was due to homelessness. For others, it was because of poverty, isolation, family hardship or circumstances that had become too overwhelming to face alone. Day after day, they battled challenges that left them feeling exhausted, afraid and unable to see a way forward.

‘I was completely lost, emotionally, spiritually and physically,’ said Deirdre. Thanks to your support, Deirdre moved from a motel into transitional housing, taking the first step towards safety, stability and a brighter future.

But thanks to your regular giving, our team members can walk alongside people like Deirdre when they are at their lowest point, helping them to navigate challenges that are seemingly impossible to overcome. Deirdre described David as ‘the light at the end of the tunnel’, while Charlene described Whaea Sue as ‘a guiding light for her whole whānau’.

When someone feels lost and alone, knowing there is a person who cares—who believes in them and will walk beside them—can change everything. Because of your generosity as a True Hero, we can provide practical support, advocacy, food assistance, financial mentoring, housing services and caring relationships, helping people move from darkness towards hope.

Some are so grateful they then want to help others. One of those is Baba. ‘I want people to know this. You saved me. And now I will save others,’ he said. Thank you for being a True Hero and being the light at the end of the tunnel for someone in need.

Thank you so much for being part of our True Heroes programme. Your regular support is helping to fund wraparound services, providing a lifeline for Kiwis in need. To discuss your recurring giving, please email Ledean at trueheroes@salvationarmy.org.nz or phone **022 013 3081**.

A healthy home changed everything

Thanks to compassionate True Heroes like you, Charlene* and her family found hope after years of living in a house where black mould was severely affecting their health. When every other avenue had been exhausted, your support helped provide the advocacy and care that changed their future.

‘For more than seven years, I lived in a home covered in black mould. No matter how often I cleaned or treated it, it always came back. I had a severe lung condition and an immune deficiency, requiring monthly hospital treatments. That home was not just unhealthy; it was making me sicker.

‘I was in and out of hospital. I submitted countless medical reports, specialist letters and doctors’ recommendations to both MSD and the housing team, all explaining why I urgently needed to move. I even had advocacy support from local MPs. But despite my urgent need, I remained stuck there.

‘During this time, I fell pregnant with my fourth son. Just one month after he was born, we learned that he also had a severe lung condition. At only 15 months old, he required surgery. That was when doctors confirmed his lungs were permanently damaged. Even though I had ongoing support letters all advocating for safe, healthy housing, we remained trapped in that mould-ridden home.

‘After paying rent and essential bills, I was struggling to afford basic kai. Even simple things like bread and milk became difficult to buy. Rising gas prices meant I was having to make impossible choices, choosing between getting to medical appointments or putting food on the table. It was tough.’

When Charlene connected with The Salvation Army’s Sustaining Tenancies service, your generosity helped ensure she received the support she needed.

‘For a long time, I didn’t get the right help. Then I met Whaea Sue**, and things finally started moving.’ Thanks to True Heroes like you, Charlene received advocacy, guidance and practical support. Today, Charlene and her whānau are living in a healthy Kāinga Ora home.

‘Our current home is so much healthier. Since moving here, my family and I are no longer constantly in and out of hospital. Our health is finally manageable. The stress that once consumed our everyday lives has eased.’ For Charlene, the support went far beyond housing. During a mental health crisis involving her older son, your kindness reached her family through the compassionate presence of Whaea Sue.

‘The first time Whaea Sue came to my house, my son was having a mental health crisis. My mum and I were overwhelmed, crying and unsure how to help him. Whaea Sue helped to calm the situation down and create a safety plan. She didn’t leave until my son had been seen by a mental health professional.

‘From that time on, Whaea Sue became a guiding light for my whole whānau. If something goes wrong now, she is my first point of call, not just for help, but for guidance. What I respect most about her is that she never makes decisions for me. She walks alongside me, not in front of me. That has restored my belief in myself.’

Because of your generosity, families like Charlene’s don’t have to face overwhelming challenges alone. Your regular giving helps provide advocacy, practical assistance and compassionate care, giving people the stability, dignity and hope they need to build a better future.

• Name changed to protect privacy.

•• Whaea is a Māori term of respect, like ‘mother’ or ‘aunt’.



You helped Roshni discover a new future

When Roshni walked into The Salvation Army's barista and hospitality training programme, she wasn't just hoping to learn how to make coffee. She was looking for a way forwards for her family.

For 10 years, Roshni and her husband had run a small family business while raising their two children. But when business slowed dramatically, the family faced an uncertain future. 'This is the first year our business has been really quiet,' Roshni says. 'For the first time, we had to go on a benefit. We have two children and a big mortgage, so it was a hard time for us.'

Thanks to True Heroes like you, Roshni was able to access The Salvation Army's six-week barista and hospitality training programme, designed to help people build skills, confidence and hope for the future. Learning to use a commercial coffee machine was a completely new experience.

'I had never used a coffee machine in my life before', she says. 'Learning those skills has opened so many more doors for me.' But your support provided much more than practical job training. Through the programme's Positive Lifestyle component, Roshni gained valuable tools for problem-solving, communication and building healthy relationships.

'The problem-solving tools were really helpful,' she says. 'You learn that if you have a problem, you can work through it step by step. It's okay if you can't solve everything at once.' Those lessons have made a difference not only for Roshni, but for her family as well. 'The relationship lessons helped me understand how to work through issues with my children. It's made a difference for our whole family.' Perhaps most importantly, your generosity helped restore her confidence. 'Everyone was so supportive. They believed in me, and that helped me believe in myself.'

Today, Roshni is turning that renewed confidence into action. She is working towards launching her own mobile café business from her property, converting a vehicle into a coffee and food caravan for travellers passing through.

'I've got my goals planned,' she says. 'Before the course, I didn't have the skills or confidence to do that.' The Salvation Army's wraparound support continues long after graduation. The team walks alongside participants for up to six months,



providing support. 'The Salvation Army has given me real hope,' she says. 'It has shown me that there is a way forwards for my family.'

'The Salvation Army has given me real hope.'

Because of your kindness as a regular giver, Roshni is building a more secure future for her family and dreaming bigger than she ever thought possible. 'If I achieve everything, I want to come back and help others the way I've been helped.' Thank you for investing in people like Roshni. Your support is helping create lasting change, one family at a time.

Above: Roshni putting her barista skills to work.

How your support helps



8320 people received budgeting advice and debt management help.



1682 individuals received one-on-one support from social workers and navigators.



920 people attended development programmes.

Statistics are for the period: 1 July 2025–30 June 2026.

Faith, service and giving

For Trish Rankin, The Salvation Army has been part of her life for as long as she can remember. 'My father was a Salvation Army officer, so moving was simply part of life,' Trish recalls. 'Wherever we went, the Army was at the centre of our family life.'

Growing up, Trish witnessed firsthand what a life of ministry looked like. 'People were always coming to Mum and Dad for help,' she says. 'Dad would support people who were struggling, and Mum spent a lot of time helping women through difficult circumstances. As children, we saw that service wasn't just something you talked about—it was something you did.' Those experiences left a lasting impression.

After leaving school, Trish worked in a government department where she met her future husband. They moved around because of his career, before retiring to a coastal community. But their happy retirement plans changed when her husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer. 'Only five years after we retired, he passed away at the age of 65,' she says. 'Losing him was incredibly difficult.'

Through all the changes in her life, Trish's affection for The Salvation Army has remained as strong as ever. 'I think one of the most remarkable things about The Salvation Army is that it helps people regardless of who they are,' she says. 'The Army sees a need and responds. That's what it has always done.'

As she reflects on the challenges facing many New Zealanders, she believes this mission is more important than ever. 'People are struggling with the cost of living, housing, health issues, loneliness and many other challenges. The Salvation Army is there helping people through those difficult circumstances.'

This trust in the organisation's work led Trish to leave a gift in her Will to The Salvation Army. A long-time donor, she has chosen not to direct her gift to a specific programme, preferring it to be used wherever the need is greatest.

'I've been donating to The Salvation Army for many years, and that's why I've also chosen to leave a gift in my Will,' she says. 'I don't have children, so it feels meaningful to leave something that can continue making a difference in people's lives.'

Trish encourages others to consider the needs that exist in New Zealand, while acknowledging that not everyone is able to give financially. Looking back on a life shaped by faith and service, she believes generosity comes in many forms.



▲ Trish Rankin.

'...I'm pleased to know my support will continue into the future.'

'Sometimes the greatest gift isn't money at all. Sometimes it's your time, your friendship, a conversation or simply showing kindness to someone who needs it. I believe it's important to spread hope and joy wherever we can,' she says.

'That's what I've seen The Salvation Army doing throughout my life. They've been helping people and giving hope for generations.' She pauses before adding one final thought. 'I honestly don't know what we would do without The Salvation Army. That's why I'm proud to support its work today—and why I'm pleased to know my support will continue into the future.'



A bequest is a visionary gift which upholds the values of the bequestor and is a living memorial to their life. To leave a gift in your Will, call 0800 53 00 00 or visit salvationarmy.org.nz/wills