

Together

SPRING 2023

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION



Te Ope Whakaora



▲ DAYNA AND CHARLOTTE

Keeping the Family Together

Solo mum-of-three Dayna was out of hope when she joined The Salvation Army's Positive Lifestyle Programme (PLP) and found a way forward.

'It was my sister who recommended PLP. She said it had changed her life, and I can only say the same. But back then, I didn't see that possibility and I was very honest with Matalena, The Salvation Army social worker. I told her, "I'm basically here to look good on paper." I was going through court proceedings over the custody of my youngest daughter, Charlotte. I had been struggling, using meth and numbing my feelings with alcohol when my mother-in-law suggested she take Charlotte while I take a break and visit family. I was blindsided when I returned home and Charlotte was legally in her care.

I got clean quickly, but it didn't bring Charlotte home. The court case was breaking me. I felt like it was the end of my life. I had lost a lot of self-belief and my sense of self-worth was very low. I didn't feel very open to being a mum anymore. I was at the end of my tether.

I've also learned to forgive myself, which was probably my biggest struggle of all.

I thought, if PLP is going to help me look good, then so be it. And then after the first two sessions, I became very interested in it; I was committed to the process and wanted to do it for myself. It has changed my whole outlook on everything.

When we began, I had no hope and no drive. I was down and I just didn't care. I didn't know the difference between happy and sad. Within the first month of

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Caring for people, transforming lives and reforming society by God's power



▲ DAYNA WITH MATALENA

starting PLP is when we started Project Hope too, where you work with a social worker to set goals and, between the two, I started to finally see a way forward and that motivated me. My goals were to get my driver licence, get a car and get a job. And then ultimately, get Charlotte home.

I achieved it all within a year. When I think back to my worst days when I was video calling my sister in

I had lost a lot of self-belief and my self-worth was quite low.

tears, my perspective has changed completely. I've learned how to deal with my anger, how to simmer and find other outlets. I've worked a lot my anger off in the garden. I've had to learn to let go. I've forgiven Charlotte's grandmother. And I've also learnt to love and forgive myself, which was probably my biggest struggle of all.

My job is as a sales assistant, and I've been offered a promotion twice but have turned it down. Family comes first. Charlotte was away for two years so there's a lot of bonding still to do.

It hit home just how far I'd come when my dad visited recently. He commented that we all seemed very happy and told me you can see it, the improved headspace, it's visible. He told me he was proud of me. I'm proud too of my personal growth and how far I've come.'

The Positive Lifestyle Programme is only available thanks to donations from people like you who make the running of this life-changing service possible.

A HAPPY END TO TOO MANY MOVES

Having a roof over your head is one of the fundamental needs and rights of a human being. For mum-of-four Abby*, finding housing had been a constant struggle. Until now.

When you've moved to another country out of necessity to forge a new life for your family, housing becomes even more central to finding a sense of stability and safety.

For Abby and her family, it hasn't been an easy journey. Since arriving in New Zealand, the family had been in short-term housing of one kind or another, with repeated moves.

'Every time we had to move, I cried,' said Abby at the daunting task of uprooting the family again.

First living in Dunedin, they moved to Wellington for their first private rental and the hope of long-term housing. Unfortunately, they quickly found they were unable to pay the high rent at the private rental and it wasn't sustainable for them. Again, the family found themselves in temporary housing, but it was only short-term and as their leaving date approached, a new fear loomed—not having a roof over her family's head.

With the threat of homelessness causing Abby distress, she came to The Salvation Army asking for help, and to her relief was able to access Salvation Army transitional housing.

It was in our transitional housing that a sense of stability grew for Abby and her family. As her relationship with social worker Janine grew, Abby became more relaxed and settled in the knowledge that, this time, they weren't going to be asked to move on.

'Even with language as a barrier I've enjoyed my relationship with Abby,' says Janine.

Every time we had to move, I cried.

Now that she had someone to advocate for her, and a financial mentor who could help her get clear about how she was spending her money and what she could afford, Abby could focus on her goal of securing long-term housing. This dream came true after five months, with the family moving into a Kāinga Ora house in the same neighbourhood.

'It's very rare to find a four-bedroom house, they are like gold,' says Janine. 'It was a great result.'

The family is now flourishing and Abby's eldest daughter, who lives in Auckland, has been to visit for the first time in two years and loved seeing the family so settled.

'I was so happy to see her and I'm glad the children have seen her,' says Abby. 'The children are settled now, they each have their own space and they can put their things where they like.'

*Name changed for privacy

From Our Territorial Leaders

Kia ora and welcome to our spring *Together* newsletter for 2023.

As people up and down the country struggle to get by, The Salvation Army works hard to be there to help where it is needed most. Our mission is to care for people, transform lives and reform society by God's power.

In July, we launched our Winter Appeal, which aims to provide essential support to families in need during the challenging winter months amid recession, high inflation and rising housing costs.

For families hit hard by the weather events earlier in the year the situation is even more difficult. Our network of community-based centres and corps (churches) continues to provide practical help and pastoral care.

We would like to thank you for your support to the life-giving work that The Salvation Army does around Aotearoa New Zealand. Much of what we do is made possible by the generosity of our supporters.

In this issue, Wendy explains that her life was 'a big mess' when she came to The Salvation Army for a food parcel. Apart from immediate relief, Wendy found a safety net of support and acceptance, helping to turn her life around.

Another story introduces Abby, a mother of four who feared becoming homeless. The Salvation Army found the family a place in Transitional Housing, providing wraparound support and a sense of stability which developed into finding a more permanent home.

Read the account of a father's words to his daughter about the help he received in France during WWI: the Sallies were always ready with 'a hot cup of tea, a piece of fruitcake, and a dry pair of socks'.

Thank you for your support.

God bless you.



Julie and Mark Campbell
(Commissioners)
Territorial Leaders,
The Salvation Army
New Zealand, Fiji,
Tonga and Samoa
Territory



▲ HEATHER FORSS

A Lasting Testament

Hearing from her father about how The Salvation Army helped soldiers in the First World War sparked a lifelong connection for Heather Forss, which has led her to leave a gift in her will.

At age 19, Heather's father enlisted to fight for king and country in the First World War. Because of his ability with horses, he joined the cavalry's first battalion. But the cavalry ran into problems in Gibraltar, and he was moved on to France where he became a signaller, getting messages from the frontline to pass to head office.

During this period, he found himself stuck in a shell hole for several days with no food or water. Eventually he was able to make his way back to his position. Once there, he was demoted for having abandoned his post. However, after someone realised the truth of the matter, he was awarded a Victorian military medal.

Back in Australia, he married and became a father, always making things for his two daughters. He didn't talk about the war much, but Heather very clearly remembers these words of his: 'If you ever have anything to give, give it to the Salvos. They were always just behind the lines with

a hot cup of tea, a piece of fruitcake and a dry pair of socks.' Even though the socks didn't stay dry for long, he never forgot the support the soldiers received from The Salvation Army. Her father's memory and gratitude formed Heather's desire to get involved and to support The Salvation Army.

Heather's volunteering began with one of our early programmes which helped young mothers. Her empathy was with young girls who became pregnant while in high school. That interest in young mothers and their babies is still very strong for Heather today. The original project has now been replaced with the SPACE programme, a parent and child education programme for first-time caregivers and their babies. Heather is also a member of the Salvation Army Church in Dunedin, which she describes as 'marvellously friendly, welcoming and uplifting'.

'I've found my happy place at the age of 93,' Heather says. 'I have cancer, and who knows how long I'll last, but I have The Salvation Army listed in my will.'

By leaving a bequest to The Salvation Army, Heather's desire to make positive differences in people's lives will go on beyond her own lifetime.

A bequest is a visionary gift to the future which upholds the values and ideals of the bequestor and is a living memorial to his or her life. For more information call 0800 53 00 00, or visit salvationarmy.org.nz/wills



▲ SHEREE

Finding a Way out of Debt

Despite being in full-time work, mum-of-three Sheree was deep in debt and at breaking point when she reached out for help.

'I was at a very low point in my life the day I walked into The Salvation Army. I had heard they did financial mentoring, and I was in dire need. I was probably a week away from declaring bankruptcy. It had been brewing for years. Just before Covid-19 hit, I'd managed to get out of an abusive relationship with my children's father. But then I was made redundant, and we were in emergency housing for six months. It threw years of good work straight out and I had marital debt too. I worked hard and eventually found a good job, and a rental, but the debts had mounted up.

I was making sure my children were fed but I was barely eating myself, maybe once or twice a week. There was never enough money to go around, and I had to make difficult choices. If I pay the rent, the power doesn't get paid. And then I'd think, 'what if the power gets cut off?' We'll still have a roof over our head. So, we'll pay the rent this week and not the power bill.

It's hard when you have a full-time job and you're on a good income to be in that situation, because it's not right. I don't know how people do it. Because I struggle. Every single day is a struggle.

Still, it was terrifying to ask for help. I'm a strong, independent person. But when you've reached out to other agencies and been refused help and made to feel you are nothing, it's hard to be vulnerable again. You're trusting in a stranger to be kind, caring and sensitive. To be supportive and non-judgmental. It's a huge thing.

Stephenie, the financial mentor from The Salvation Army in Greymouth has been great. There's zero judgment,

I can see the light at the end of the tunnel now whereas when I started this journey, there was no light.

just helpful comments and lots of different suggestions. We worked together on a budget and a plan to reduce debts and it's an ongoing, fluid thing. You're not having someone do it for you, you're involved with every step of the process, and that makes a huge difference.

At the beginning I was supported by the foodbank, and it might not seem much, but it is huge. Even just one bag of something can be the difference between me eating or not for a day or two, or having toilet paper. Or being able to wash my clothes and go to work smelling good.

It's still a struggle. I'm strict with my food shop. I look online to see which supermarket has the best deals. My last shop was \$150 for one and a half bags of groceries. I had to hold back tears at the checkout; I could have filled my trolley once upon a time.

There's no money for contingencies, like if the car needs work or my son needs glasses, but at these times I've got Stephenie to help me work out a plan and I can get some help from the foodbank.

I think in the next 12 months, I will be the majority out of debt. I can see the light at the end of the tunnel now, whereas when I started this journey, there was no light.'

Financial mentoring is one of the wraparound services made possible by donations from people like you. With today's cost of living crisis, the need for these services is growing. Please donate today.

THE DRIVE TO CHANGE

Operating in Christchurch, Rangiora, Ashburton, Greymouth and Westport, the Driver Mentor Programme is empowering people one licence at a time.

New Zealand has a three-step driver licencing system with people moving from learners, through to restricted, which they must hold for six months before they sit their full licence.

Most people coming into the driver mentor programme hold their learner licence, and the programme aims to have them ready to pass their restricted licence in 12 weeks, although many are supported for longer and some return to practise for their full licence. Each learner receives expert tuition from our driving instructors and are also matched with a volunteer driver mentor who takes the learner out twice a week to hone their skills and build their confidence. It's this combination which leads to such a high success rate.

'Most of our learners are from low socio-economic backgrounds,' says operations advisor William Hope. 'They're people who face significant barriers to getting their licence.'

Brydee came to the team in Christchurch needing to break down those barriers to getting a driver licence. Brydee was unemployed and feeling 'poor and in the lower class', while experiencing mental health issues and high anxiety. In addition, Brydee was desperate to get her licence so she could help support her mother in caring for her brother with a disability.

'My life has completely changed since doing the programme. I got a job three days after passing my licence and I wouldn't have got the job if it wasn't for my licence. Having the independence to be a normal 22-year-old, I can't describe how amazing it's been.' she says.

Over on the West Coast in Greymouth, with no public transport, having a driver licence is even more of a necessity. Referrals to the programme come from MSD, the police, agencies that help people into work and word of mouth.

Programmes coordinator Luke Wilson delights in seeing the change in people's lives through the programme. 'It's seeing the growth in people and helping them build confidence and be safer on the roads. I've had people that have come through the programme that have been on a benefit. They get their restricted licence and I see them out and about; they've got a job now and they walk past and they're smiling.'

SERVING TOGETHER ALWAYS REMEMBERED

For 79-year-old Hamish Wilson, deciding to give to The Salvation Army was an easy decision, because the 'Sallies' had journeyed with him, and his fellow servicemen, during his 29-year army career.

In 1979, Hamish was the commandant of Trentham Military Camp and deputy regional commander for the Wellington, East Cape and Taranaki region.

'We dealt with personnel business particularly with higher levels of military discipline. At Upper Hutt at that time, there was a very lively drug scene that seemed to be targeting soldiers.

However, the Defence Force had a policy whereby any servicemen with habits or addictions which affected their work in any way could be summarily discharged.

'And that wasn't fooled around with,' says Hamish. 'Unless people accepted treatment and responded satisfactorily, they were disposed of.'

With careers, and even lives at stake, it was Hamish's job to find that treatment, and that's where The Salvation Army came to the rescue of him and his men. Any detox programmes he could find were oversubscribed so, having heard of the Bridge programme he approached The Salvation Army.

So started a relationship that has made a deep and meaningful impact on Hamish's life.

'It solved a very big problem for us,' says Hamish. 'After the first week, I asked the men how they were finding it and they felt they were being treated with aroha. I estimate I personally put about 12 men through the programme. The Salvation Army accepted everyone I put forward and no one felt demeaned.

'It was a very high success rate, whereas we'd had no success at all with the odd person we managed to get into any of the other detox programmes.'

Hamish and his wife Alison are members of our True Heroes recurring giving programme that funds the wraparound services which provide a holistic solution to those who find themselves in desperate situations.

'It seems logical that, when you've dealt with your own needs, you give what you can to others,' says Hamish. 'The Salvation Army is going to use the money where it is needed, of that, I am sure.'



▲ ALISON AND HAMISH WILSON

To become a True Hero like Hamish and Alison, contact **Gabrielle** on **021 352 742**, or email gabrielle.martell-turner@salvationarmy.org.nz



▲ WENDY (CENTRE) WITH CHRISTINE AND KARL

Supported on her Healing Journey

Three years ago, approaching 60 with her adult children off living their lives, Wendy found herself broken and alone. Thankfully, she turned to The Salvation Army and discovered support and a place to belong.

'My life was a mess, a big mess. Just a lot of wrong choices, including addiction. My heart was broken in pieces by quite a few people that I loved and trusted. And I'd come out of a very toxic relationship of nine-and-a-half years, on and off. And it took a lot to get out of that.

I've had quite a few relationship breakdowns during my life. I got into a pattern of people-pleasing. I didn't really care about myself. I was on self-destruct, making bad choices that were hurting me. And letting people walk all over me, use me and not care about me.

So, when I got to The Salvation Army, I was really broken. At first, I didn't even want to be here. I wasn't feeling worthy, but my sister encouraged me and came with me. I turned up that day for a food parcel. But one of the ladies said it was a community meal day and invited us to join.

I was emotionally depleted. I didn't want to be seen and I was leaning on my sister a bit much. At the same time, I felt so encompassed by love. I remember sitting there with guilt, feeling bad about myself, and all the things I'd chosen to do to end up here. It was a bit overwhelming. So, there I was trying to eat, and all I could do was cry.

That's when one of the ladies came over and asked if I wanted to talk and introduced me to officers Karl and Christine. And even though I felt a great lot of shame for my behaviors and actions, they just accepted me

for who I was and where I was at. I felt supported and cared for in that conversation and not judged. And that's hard to find.

I was back the next week for a food parcel and from there I was supported with food for about a month. I joined the monthly community meals and the weekly women's group where I felt supported and heard. Quite early on, I signed a volunteer form and now I'm the kitchen coordinator. I just felt at home at the Centre. I felt called to be here. The healing journey has been long and it's ongoing, but my life has completely turned around.

I felt supported and cared for ... and that's hard to find.

I've come such a long way because I've moved three really big things away from my life that will distract me from my purpose—bad relationships, seeking validation and addiction to drugs and alcohol. Now I'm more autonomous, I know myself better, I know who I am and what my needs are rather than my wants. So that's what I've been focusing on, what my needs are going forward. And loving myself in a real and purposeful way.'

For Wendy, The Salvation Army was a safety net of support and acceptance when she most needed it, and your donations helped her get to a place where she is the one helping others take that brave step of asking for help.

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