

Vol. 139 | No. 11
21 March 2020
AUD \$1.00
warcry.org.au
Print Post Approved
PP100001474



WARCRY

CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY

Building community

The profound impact of human connection



**A deep sense of love and belonging
is an irreducible need of all people.**

Brené Brown
Research professor, author, speaker





The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

Vision Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice

WARCRY

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Printed and published for The Salvation Army by Commissioner Robert Donaldson at Focus Print Group, Mulgrave, Victoria

Press date 2 March 2020

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to connect

From the editor

In an age of technology that enables immediate and constant connection with friends, family, others who think like us and even total strangers, the world is also seeing an epidemic of loneliness and social isolation. Many people go days without speaking to another human being, mental health challenges are on the rise and more than 30 per cent of Australians don't feel a sense of belonging to any particular group.

We all need to know we are cared about, accepted and valued. We all need to feel supported, connected and that we are a part of a community — be it family, a network of friends, our neighbourhood, workplace or church.

In this issue we look at community — from what makes a healthy community, to Salvation Army work building connections in Tasmania, to the story of Fiona, who reconnected with Jesus and found a family through her local Salvos.

Being part of a caring community changes lives. For more information visit salvationarmy.org.au

Simone Worthing
Assistant Editor

Connection is key

Being part of a healthy community is essential to us all.

BY JESSICA MORRIS

'Community' is a buzzword at the moment, but what does it really mean? Another word for it is 'connection' — how we connect with other people, and how this connects us with the world. Brené Brown, research professor and author, says that "Connection is why we're here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives."

So while community, and in essence, connection, is on trend, it has always been an essential part of our wellbeing because it helps us to formulate our identity.

If you consider every group you have been a part of, be it a family, workplace, a group of friends or a sports club, you can trace the impact it's had on your identity. Positive or negative, community gives us meaning and helps us to find direction in life.

Below are five signs that show your community is a nurturing and healthy one:

1. IT IS AUTHENTIC

If community is a buzzword, then 'authentic' is its cousin. Healthy community doesn't take place without a group of people committed to being fearlessly authentic and vulnerable. That means

there are no hidden agendas, people don't feel they have to lie or make excuses, they feel free to talk about their ups and downs, and acceptance is shown for one another.

2. IT IS INCLUSIVE

While a community is formed on common interests or relationship, it is built on different personalities, ages, ethnicities, genders, sexual preferences and religions. Each community group will naturally skew towards a certain type of people, but its willingness to accept all others is what makes it healthy.

3. IT IS OUTWARD-FOCUSED

A healthy community will nurture its members. This often occurs through group outings, activities and celebrations. However, those that thrive take this a step further and empower their members to be outward focused. This means members are so energised by their belonging to the group, they actively invite and inform outsiders about it.

4. MEMBERS ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER

Acceptance is different to inclusion, because it involves actively doing life beside people who are different from



you. It goes further than inclusion, because through it others are given a home and members invest in each other.

A healthy community is willing to listen and learn from one another, even when members disagree on things. Instead of taking offence, they respond with empathy and love.

5. IT SUPPORTS MEMBERS AND KEEPS THEM ACCOUNTABLE

Seeing a family member on the holidays is well and good, but what happens when they come to you with no place to live? What do you say to your friend at the gym when their marriage has just broken down, and how do you respond when a friend wrongs another friend, seemingly against the principles your whole community is built on?

Healthy community isn't easy, and

we see this when its members make mistakes or are in crisis. When one person falls, a healthy community will do all they can to pick that member up, be it through a coffee, a frozen meal or a roof over their head.

This is complicated when a member has actively broken your trust — for instance, by cheating on their partner, using all their money to fund an addiction, or manipulating a friend. There is no one solution to this scenario.

A healthy community will do all it can to understand and empathise with the member who has 'failed' and help them to recover without compromising their values. However, they will also protect and support the people the member has directly affected.

Ideally, a healthy community will see the warning signs that a member is struggling or beginning to compromise their principles, and help that person be accountable to getting back on track before anything major happens.

We all want to be accepted, validated, cared for and understood — and do that for others in return. This is what community is all about, and we all need each other as we walk life's journey together.

Glenorchy Salvos encourages community connection

BY JESSICA MORRIS

The state of Tasmania is challenging locals to love their neighbour, and Glenorchy City Salvation Army is leading the way.

Late last month the Salvos hosted the launch of Neighbour Day, a month-long initiative being run by the State of Tasmania and Relationships Australia to create rapport in the community.

With responsibility for this year's festivities being handed to Glenorchy City Council, it wasn't long before they called in a favour from their friends at the Glenorchy Salvos, almost 7km from downtown Hobart.

"The council needed a venue to launch Neighbour Day and often launch events and initiatives are held out of our new site," said Captain Jeff Milkins, Glenorchy City corps officer (minister). "So when they called about two weeks out it was just logical. It aligns perfectly with what we are trying to do here at the site.

"Neighbour Day agrees with what we are about in terms of building community, making friends and being cared for. Loneliness is a big issue here.

"Any good friendship often starts around a meal, so when the Glenorchy City Council brought in the food for our regular community lunch, the event had a flying start."



PHOTO: RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA TASMANIA.

Relationships Australia Tasmania CEO Mat Rowell and Glenorchy City Mayor Kristie Johnston presenting a Little Street Library to The Salvation Army.

Glenorchy Salvos has continued to build a partnership with the local council since relocating last year — next door to the Glenorchy City Council offices.

Jeff said this put them right in the heart of the Glenorchy community and in prime position for Neighbour Day activities, including use of the new Little Street Library that was donated to the corps by the council in conjunction with Neighbour Day.

"People are encouraged to take a book and leave a book and connect with others in the community," said Jeff.

The challenge has now been thrown out to the rest of Australia. Tasmanian or not, how can we love our neighbour today?

Recovery grants bringing relief to bushfire victims

BY LAUREN MARTIN



Jo Popplestone (left) and Dee Kelleher volunteered for The Salvation Army at a bushfire recovery centre on the NSW South Coast in January.

The Salvation Army has released details of its latest bushfire recovery grants as it continues to stand alongside those impacted by the devastating 2019-20 bushfires.

As at 28 February, The Salvation Army had distributed over \$19 million of the \$32.9 million in funds that have been received and banked. More than \$7.8 million has gone towards immediate emergency and relief efforts since Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) teams were activated in September 2019.

Almost \$12 million has been distributed directly to more than 7900 individuals and families in the form of hardship payments, including petrol, essential supplies, food or emergency accommodation.

A variety of recovery grants are now being offered to people impacted by the fires.

The **Hardship Recovery Grant** provides assistance to individuals and families experiencing ongoing extreme hardship as a result of the bushfire disaster.

The **Significant Loss Grant** provides assistance to individuals and families in bushfire-impacted areas who have suffered extended evacuation from their place of residence, extended loss of essential services (water/power), other significant property damage, or income loss due to their place of work being damaged or destroyed.

And the **Total Loss of Residence Grant** provides assistance to individuals and families in bushfire-impacted areas whose primary place of residence has been destroyed or rendered permanently uninhabitable.

“It’s going to take many years for their community to recover, to heal from the trauma, to rebuild lives, homes and businesses,” said Jo Popplestone, a Salvation Army Doorways casework practice manager, who spent a week at a recovery centre on the NSW South Coast in January.

More than a romance

New film *I Still Believe* asks some of life's deepest questions as its characters struggle to reconcile faith and tragedy.

BY JESSICA MORRIS

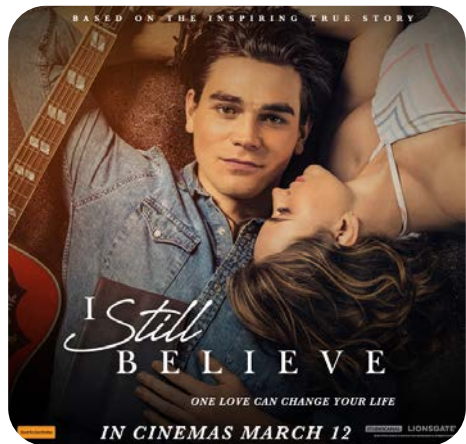
Based on the life of Christian music mega-star Jeremy Camp, *I Still Believe* is a raw and honest take on some of life's biggest questions.

Can God heal people? Why do people die? And is God good? These are all questions that come up in the new release that stars *Riverdale*'s KJ Apa as a then 20-year-old Camp.

Joined by Britt Robertson (*A Dog's Purpose*) who plays his wife Melissa, the pair is a formidable duo that navigates a 2000s college romance that takes a turn when Melissa is diagnosed with cancer.

Music envelops this faith-filled story and Apa performs some of Camp's breakout hits as the story progresses, showing how the extraordinary circumstances shaped his career over the following two decades.

The supporting cast of Shania Twain and Gary Sinise are a grounding force for Apa through the story, but the true star of the film is Robertson. Just as Camp becomes enraptured with her faith and playful spirit, the audience falls in love with her too. And when she visibly and viscerally expresses the anger and pain of a terminal cancer diagnosis, you believe her.



The start of this film feels like a typical romantic drama that pulls out feel-good quotes about God and finding a purpose in life. But when tragedy strikes, it evolves into a deeper and much more profound story. We see the characters struggle to live out their faith in the face of death, and this is where their stories shine.

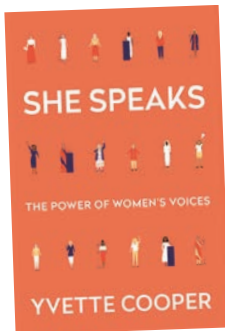
By the time you finish this film, your tears will be tinged with hope. This is a remarkable and inspiring film that everyone can relate to.

I Still Believe opens in select theatres on 12 March.

She Speaks: The Power of Women's Voices

Compelling and effective oratory does not have to be male.

REVIEWED BY AMANDA HART



In an ideal world, *She Speaks: The Power of Women's Voices* would not need to be written.

However, while the first result of a Google search presents a list of 'The 30 Greatest Speeches in History', all of which were given by men, the sad reality is that such books are a necessity. They are necessary because they open our eyes to the fact that powerful words do not just come from one gender; they create awareness of the threats of violence received by women who speak out to make a difference in this world; and they encourage us, as German Chancellor Angela Merkel said to Harvard graduates in 2019, to "tear down the walls of ignorance and narrow-mindedness, for nothing has to stay as it is".

British politician Yvette Cooper has put together an anthology of powerful speeches from women who have sought to make a difference, sharing the story of each speechmaker as an introduction to their words. Speeches given by Joan of Arc, Margaret Thatcher, Michelle Obama and Emma Watson show the power of females throughout history to inspire



change, transform lives and radically alter history. While readers may not agree with every word written, there can be no doubt that there is power in the voices of these and many other women throughout history. And that compelling and effective oratory does definitely not have to be male.

She Speaks: The Power of Women's Voices is available at major bookstores.

Conversations that connect

The power of listening to others, and to God.

BY JAMES BURNS

Ever given someone a good talking-to and afterwards realised you should have given them a good listening-to instead? To find out what has caused their actions: possibly fear, worry or stress. The old cliché still stands that we have two ears and one mouth for a reason.

In the United Kingdom, Avon and Somerset police set up a scheme to create 'chat benches', marked with a sign reading "The 'Happy to Chat' bench. Sit here if you don't mind someone stopping to say hello." The benches are there to help break down invisible social barriers. Chat benches have since popped up across the globe.

In Australia, they are called 'talking park benches'.

It's possible that the idea originated in Zimbabwe in 2006 when psychiatrist Dixon Chibanda was looking for a way to help those with depression who couldn't afford to travel to a hospital, due to distance and cost. In brainstorming how to tackle this problem, he arrived at an unlikely solution: grandmothers.

Since 2006, Chibanda and his team have trained over 400 grandmothers in evidence-based talk therapy, delivered for free in more than 70 communities in Zimbabwe. In 2017 alone, the Friendship Bench, as the program is called, helped over 30,000 people, for who would mind talking to an interested grandmother?

Whether you are the one doing the talking or the person listening, there would seem to be benefits for both, particularly in this busy world where we all seem to move at high speed with little time for others. It's a strange thing that some people who are strangers just make us feel comfortable, such that we share things with them that we would hesitate to say to our friends or family.

A popular Christian hymn says, "What a friend we have in Jesus... What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer." Prayer is simply talking to and listening to God, and yes, sometimes he will talk to us through the words of others.

Can you give someone a good listening-to today?



From conflict to community

Fiona shares how resolving her issues with God has led her to a supportive family in the Salvos, and beyond.

BY FIONA DOWDY

My journey with the Salvos started when I was dedicated as a baby at The Salvation Army. I went to Sunday school there as well. During my teenage years in Mildura I was part of Sagala (a program for children and youth similar to Scouts and Guides) until I lost faith in God. I had a fight with God for a while, stopped believing and did my own thing.

When my daughter was five, my Sagala leader suggested I take her to Sagala, too. Before long, my daughter was telling me that we had to go to church so she could get her badges. We started to go, even though it was a chore for me at the start and I didn't really want to go. Now it's what we do every Sunday. We're all Salvos and my partner loves it too, even though he grew up with no Christian background.

It was my daughter who took us back there; she mended us, and I have resolved my fight with God! We're like a family there at the Salvos and they are all so supportive of me and my daughter. I am now a volunteer with Sagala and sometimes at the Salvos thrift shop as well.



Fiona finished her 50th parkrun with balloons to celebrate.

I am also a regular at the Mildura Weir parkrun where the Salvos have been active, both as volunteers and participants, since it began last February. Our minister, Belinda, really encouraged me to do it and I couldn't say no!

For me, doing the parkrun each week was quite an achievement as it really wasn't what I would naturally do — I hate exercise,

I'm not fit and I complain all the way through the run — but I come nearly every weekend and have only missed three since I started one year ago. I wear my Salvos shirt because I want people to see that we are out in the community. People ask me about The Salvation Army, what it is and what we do, so it's a chance to talk to people and tell them about the community services we offer, and our church.

The parkrun is also a chance to catch up with friends. Everyone is welcoming, supportive and really encouraging. It gets me up and going and is making me healthier, too. It's a real community event. People say the run — which I actually walk — will get easier, but I am still waiting for that! Sometimes I feel like

I won't make it, but I haven't died yet and God helps me get to the end every time.

Last month I became the Mildura Weir parkrun's first '50 Club' member when I completed my 50th parkrun. I did this one wearing a cape and carrying the balloons that Belinda bought me as part of the celebration. A few people told me they come back every week because of me and the encouragement I give them. Even people I didn't know congratulated and encouraged me, too.

I have God in my life, my Salvos family and my parkrun community where I can share with others. I am getting fitter too, and am very thankful to everyone who encourages and supports me and my family.



Fiona (right) with partner Brad (left) and fellow participant, Joshua, stride their way through the Mildura Weir parkrun.

Pink lemonade



Ingredients

1½ cups lemon juice, 1 cup caster sugar, 3 cups water, 50g fresh or frozen raspberries, 1 tbsp extra caster sugar, lemon slices to garnish (optional)

Method

Stir lemon juice, caster sugar and water in a saucepan over low heat for five minutes or until sugar dissolves. Let cool, then chill for one hour.

Combine raspberries and extra caster sugar in a small saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring to lightly crush the raspberries, for two minutes or until sugar dissolves and raspberries break down and release their juices. Strain through a fine sieve into a bowl.

Pour lemonade into a jug. Add raspberry puree and stir to combine.

Serve in glasses with lots of ice and lemon slices.

Tip for the race of life

“Love others in the same way you love yourself.”

Mark chapter 12, verse 31
(*The Voice Bible translation*)

Benji the therapy dog

Benji is a three-year-old black Labrador who failed Guide Dog school because he liked interacting with other dogs too much! He is now a therapy dog for The Salvation Army in Glenorchy (Tas.), working with community members who come in for emergency relief and case management through the Doorways program.



His ‘human’, Shelley, is a Doorways facilitator at the

Salvos. Each day she brings Benji in, wearing a special harness which lets him, and others, know that he is officially ‘at work’.

“Often people who come in to see us are traumatised and their emotions are heightened, so Benji picks up on that and can help ground people,” says Jacqui Milkins, leader of the Glenorchy Salvos. “He is a gentle and loving presence and can just calm people, or be there for them before they’re ready to talk, or as they are talking as well.”

Any therapist needs a break, and Benji has his own little bed set up as an office, ready for whenever he needs it.

“He also gets time to play,” says Jacqui. “He’s a real ‘goofball’ when we take his harness off!”

Wordsearch

C O M M U N I T Y N T N S V E
 S E I L I M A F O S O S P S V
 L E L P O E P I U I B H I I I
 A L M E X R T R T N T L H N T
 I Z B D B C T A K E R O S V A
 C O N V E R S A T I O N N O I
 O T E N E I A N A G P E O L T
 S N N A N N T T M H P L I V I
 L O C A L F C F I B U I T E N
 C W G E Z H J O Q O S N A M I
 A R E S P E C T U N E L E J
 O P I H S D N E I R F S E N C
 A C C E P T A N C E A S R T D
 W X E V I S U L C N I G N X P
 Z T R A N S F O R M O D E A Q

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| ACCEPTANCE | LOCAL |
| CELEBRATION | LONELINESS |
| COMMUNITY | NEIGHBOUR |
| CONNECTION | ORGANISATION |
| CONVERSATION | PEOPLE |
| ENCOURAGE | RELATIONSHIPS |
| FAMILIES | RESPECT |
| FRIENDSHIP | SOCIAL |
| INCLUSIVE | SUPPORT |
| INITIATIVE | TRANSFORM |
| INVOLVEMENT | TRUST |

Quick quiz



1. When is Neighbour Day 2020?
2. What is the theme for Neighbour Day 2020?
3. What is the principal aim of Neighbour Day?
4. What does social connection help prevent?
5. Who does the Bible say is our neighbour?

Tum-Tum



On which page of this week's *Warcry* is Tum-Tum hiding?

Answers: 1. Sunday 29 March. 2. Social connection. 3. Building better relationships. 4. Loneliness, isolation and depression. 5. Everyone.

Tum-Tum: is hiding under a bench on page 11

Want to know more?

Visit warcry.org.au/want-to-know-more or return the coupon to Warcry, PO Box 479, Blackburn VIC 3130.

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- information about The Salvation Army
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