

FEATURE

A good start
to life

FAITH TALK

The power
of story

MY STORY

The start of hope

Youth homelessness

Looking for a place to call home



SALVOS

MAGAZINE

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

We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to.

**We break. We fall apart. We numb.
We ache. We hurt others. We get sick.”**

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

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No place to call home

This year, Youth Homelessness Matters Day falls on 21 April. At a time where one in six young people in Australia have experienced homelessness – a staggering statistic – it's vital to continue raising awareness of youth homelessness and working towards sustainable and creative solutions to this national scourge.

In this edition, a few of our Salvos Youth Services specialists talk about some commonly held myths around the issue, what can be done for the majority of young people facing homelessness due to circumstances beyond their control, and share some of their own reasons for working with these vulnerable youth.

Every person has a story. Bryce Davies talks about this in Faith Talk, and shares how the circumstances of our lives don't have to define who we are.

My Story this week features Brodie, a young man who has worked through struggles with mental health, alcohol, drugs and homelessness, found support and community and is now ready for a new life.

For all these stories and information on where to get help, go to salvosmagazine.org.au

Simone Worthing – **Assistant Editor**

Youth homelessness

Looking for a place to belong

WORDS SIMONE WORTHING

This year, Youth Homelessness Matters Day will take place on 21 April. The day aims to raise awareness and public discussion about youth homelessness so that together, we can develop sustainable and innovative solutions for not only assisting young people experiencing homelessness, but also supporting their life hopes and dreams.

The Salvation Army believes that having safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right. Our services are here to listen to and assist young people, and support them on their unique journey to independence and community.

One in six young people in Australia, aged between 12 and 24, have experienced homelessness (Mission Australia 2020).

These young people come from a range of cultural backgrounds, socio-economic groups, cities, regions and communities. They come overwhelmingly from homes that range from the uncomfortable to distressing and dangerous. Some have limited support and community connection. Others have nobody. And nothing. Many are struggling with the impacts of trauma, abuse, neglect and addiction. They are looking for safety, acceptance, connection and a place to belong.

SALVOS SERVICES

Burlendi, Adelaide, is an emergency accommodation service for eight young people aged 15-18. "We make sure young people are safe," says Manager at Burlendi, Stuart

Moerman. "We can then assist them with the needs they identify, such as health and medical issues, engaging with school, reconnecting with family, independent living skills, education or employment."

Stuart and his team work closely with Odir Galdamez, case manager at the nearby Salvos Youth Accommodation Service for singles, couples, family units and partners aged 15-25. "Our case management focuses on helping young people work on their goals, getting them settled in group living or returning to family as appropriate," says Odir.

“

Lack of affordable housing is the biggest problem we face in this sector.

”

Each week from **Leongatha Salvos**, 135km south-east of Melbourne, the three case managers in Specialist Youth Services receive referrals from a range of agencies, schools, young people and their own intake and assessment program, for youth aged 15-25.

The team then engages quickly with the young person. "We answer their questions and go through options and what specialist case management and longer-term support we can offer," says Case Manager, Siobhan Paxton.



There are also options for young people still at home, as well as those who leave.

"We support the young people around conflict resolution and building relationships with their parents so they can remain in the home," says Case Manager, Brenda Stewart. "For those who leave, we assist with emergency accommodation, developing life skills and, as appropriate, preparing them to transition into the private rental market."

MYTHS

"I can't focus on school when I'm always hungry."

"I stay out as late as I can with my friends because it's not safe at home."

"I just never know what I will find when I go home, or what will happen to me."

These are just a handful of comments from young people who have received help from Salvos Youth Services. Behind the overwhelming majority of these young people is a story – a story that is not their own, but those of their families or the significant adults in their lives.

"Rarely do we meet young people who are experiencing homelessness through their own fault or choice," says Siobhan. "They are impacted by the mental health issues of their families, or issues around family violence, alcohol, drugs and family breakdowns."

Brenda explains that, when the young person chooses to leave a toxic environment, they are often labelled as lazy or just not wanting to follow the rules of the family. "They are seen as having made their own choice to leave and are not given support," she says. "Parents and others may say that the door is always open, but it's far from an ideal environment, and always a struggle for the young person."

In the youth homelessness sector, the very few young people who do have a safe and appropriate home, are recognised quickly and assisted to return to their families.

COUCH SURFING

Many people also believe that, if a young person has a roof over their head, they are not experiencing homelessness, even if they are sleeping on the couches of different friends or relatives for long periods of time.

“Couch surfing is still homelessness and it impacts on the lives of young people as they do not have a safe and permanent place they can call home,” says Brenda.

Having a secure home and family is paramount for young people.

“Even when a young person becomes homeless, they still want to be part of a community and belong somewhere,” explains Stuart. “Couch surfing, squats and emergency accommodation are communities of sorts themselves. There can be a perception that it’s a gang or bunch of delinquents, but really, it’s a group of young people who want to be in a community, belong, and not face more rejection.”



WHAT CAN WE DO?

Despite the complexity and growth of youth homelessness, those in the sector believe there is much that can be done to alleviate the struggles young people are experiencing.

“Lack of affordable housing is the biggest problem we face in this sector,” says Stuart. “Young people couch surf and sleep rough because there is simply a lack of youth specific housing and services for them. They can’t get their education if they’re not safe or

sleeping. Some of our amazing young people say the thing they like best about all that our services offer, is that they can lock their doors and feel safe.”

Young people also need improved financial assistance.

“We need to see an increase in the Youth Allowance, so young people don’t have to live in poverty and can afford the basics of life,” says Brenda. “We also need to go deeper, to interventions in the early and pre-teen years, when we see conflict in the home. If issues can be addressed with families then, before it gets to broken relationships, then less young people will end up experiencing homelessness with no family around them.”

Odir believes that upskilling teachers, other students and the broader community to help them understand what home looks like for many young people, and how it impacts them, is important, as well as changing the media narrative and its portrayal of young people.

Similarly, Stuart says we need to change the language we use and reframe homelessness. “Homelessness is not something that should define people,” he emphasises. “Everyone has a story and there is a reason why they are couch surfing. Home might be super unsafe so they can’t sleep, their step-dad is drinking or there is constant fighting. Let’s get educated on this and challenge the labels we use.”

Connecting the youth to community is also key. “I go to the youth group [the Salvos] run for our young people and just hang out with them,” says Odir. “It’s a genuine connection, not as just a worker. There are also camps and cool events, social pathways and connections to the church. Our youth need connection with the whole community, not just social services.”

If young people feel understood, it gives them hope and encouragement.

"So many of the barriers they face just wear them down to the level of 'What's the point?'," explains Siobhan. "So many people are making generalisations about them, housing is much less affordable and available than it was, there are less entry-level jobs, government payments keep them below the poverty line ... you can't concentrate if you're hungry or don't know where to sleep ... If we can understand this and not judge, the self-esteem of our young people will definitely improve!"

MOTIVATION

Despite the ongoing challenges of serving in youth homelessness, the joys of the work, and the motivations behind them, drive those involved to continue.

For Odir, it's all about connection. "It's about helping young people connect with a community that accepts them, to break the cycle – this is what drives me."

Brenda loves to see young people achieve something they didn't think was possible,

even if it's a seemingly simple task. "So many young people don't have anyone supporting them," she shares. "I want to be that person, that person who is on their side."

Seeing young people set and achieve their goals motivates Siobhan. "They are so disadvantaged and don't have a voice," she says. "I want to help them navigate the mazes that life throws at them and, in the end, be someone they don't need anymore!"

Stuart is focused on seeing young people given the opportunities that he experienced as a young person. "Breaking the cycle for these young people in their family lives, work lives, in community, seeing them accepted – this drives me."

For a full range of Salvos Youth Services, see back cover or visit salvationarmy.org.au/youthservices



Scan here for more on homelessness.

FAST FACTS*

- On Census night 2016, 27,680 12-24-year-olds were counted as homeless.
- Young people make up 24% of the homeless population.
- They stay in: severely overcrowded dwellings (59%), supported accommodation (18%), couch surfing (10%), boarding houses (9%) and rough sleeping (3%).
- Youth homelessness rose 26% from 2006-2016.
- The top reasons young people experiencing homelessness, aged between 15-24, need assistance are: housing crisis (37%), domestic and family violence (25%), inadequate/ inappropriate dwelling conditions (15%), relationship/ family breakdown (13%), financial difficulties (11%).

*Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016

A good start to life

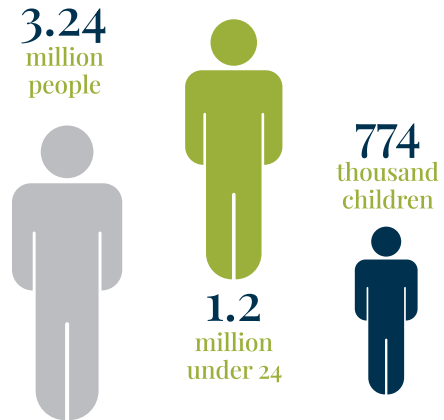
Ensuring young people can live with dignity and hope

The Salvation Army acknowledges that having a good start to life is often critical to success down the track. Unfortunately, many children and young people in Australia don't get a great start, usually because of circumstances that are beyond their control. These include:

- Conflict within the family or family breakdown
- Sexual, physical and emotional abuse in the home
- Rising housing costs and the unaffordability of the rental market
- Difficulties in accessing Youth Allowance and other support payments
- Lack of support when in, or moving from, state care
- Drug and alcohol issues
- Mental health issues
- Overcrowded living conditions
- The death of a parent.

Recent research (before the pandemic) found that of the 3.24 million people living in poverty in Australia, 774,000 were children and a total of 1.2 million were under the age of 24. Children were at higher risk of poverty, with one in six children, and 44.2 per cent of children in sole parent households, living in poverty.

Growing up in poverty can limit children's



Of the 3.24 million people living in poverty in Australia, 774,000 are children and a total of 1.2 million are under the age of 24.

chances of thriving at school, which in turn affects their potential and limits overall life outcomes, continuing the cycle of disadvantage.

Children who find themselves in out-of-home care (unable to live with their own families and so placed in alternative accommodation) experience additional barriers. Up to 40 per cent of clients attending The Salvation Army's youth homelessness services have previously been in out-of-home care and have 'aged out'. This means they had to leave that system when they turned 18. Care-experienced young people are at very high risk of homelessness and other forms of disadvantage.



Scan here for more on homelessness.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

AS A NATION we can make sure that income support levels are sufficient, so that a family reliant on JobSeeker and related payments can raise their children without falling into poverty. As a nation we can also ensure that the Youth Allowance is high enough to enable young people to live with dignity.

AS A NATION we can reconsider out-of-home care systems, particularly in relation to the age at which a young person is expected to be independent, to ensure

they are meeting the needs of children and young people and setting them up with fair opportunities.

AS INDIVIDUALS we can make sure that we do not discriminate against young people on the basis of either their age or their start in life.

The Salvation Army – A Pathway to Social Justice. To download this report, go to salvationarmy.org.au

Alex's story – life is back on track

Alex* presented to a Salvation Army Specialist Youth Service (SYS) as a 17-year-old experiencing homelessness due to a family violence incident, and with no income. Alex had been brought up with a sibling and their children, after their own parents relinquished care of them a few years previously. Alex had outlined completing year 12 as a goal to achieve but was struggling to achieve this.

Alex's mental health had been negatively impacted by life's circumstances, and they had already engaged with a counsellor. Alex continued with mental health supports, while also being supported by SYS during this time. Through the SYS, Alex was referred to Legal Aid for support with a family court case. The SYS supported Alex in making a Centrelink claim, liaising with the Centrelink Community Engagement Officer available through their service. Alex was granted an 'Unreasonable to live at home' youth allowance and was then able to transition from accommodation as a couch surfer to that of a boarder.

Alex was referred to, and engaged with, the



Let's Life program which resulted in a part-time job. The SYS advocated to the secondary school for Alex to re-enrol and complete year 12 – with a possibility for engagement in tertiary education. Alex recently identified that life was back on track and, after six months, there was no longer a need for SYS support.

Alex's goals for housing, legal support, income, mental health, education and employment had all been successfully met.

**Name has been changed and gender-neutral pronouns used.*

The power of story

We are more than the circumstances of our lives

WORDS BRYCE DAVIES

I wonder if we sometimes define ourselves by how we tell our story.

I often say things like, 'I'm just a plumber – not the sharpest tool in the shed.'

'I didn't do well at school and ended up in a trade that involves sewage.'

'I haven't got a degree and will not be discovering any complex new strategies to change the world, but hey, if the toilet is overflowing or you need someone to pick up heavy things – I'm your man.'

The problem with this story is that it sometimes boxes me as deficient, and can prevent me from reaching my true potential.

I work with people who also have stories that have defined their lives. Stories that often involve trauma, abandonment, poor choices and failure – even prison. Many of my friends can sometimes be trapped in dreadful stories that define their lives.

But these stories are not the whole truth. My friends are also resilient, creative and generous. We know this is true and it's wonderful when people start to believe more positive stories about themselves. We just need to see past the exterior and get to the deeper truths.

My lovely wife Sue has a tattoo on her arm which reads, 'Beautifully made'. It refers to a verse in the Bible – Psalm 139, verse 14. Sue was born without a left thigh bone and has

wrestled with the story that she is unacceptable or not as attractive as others. Sue's tattoo reminds her that she is a child of God and that the physical does not define what makes a wonderful human being. She is actually beautiful, determined and successful.

“

**We just need to see
past the exterior ...**

”

We are all inadequate or lacking in some way, and it can be easy to focus on the story of how this lack plays out in our lives. This can become our defining story.

There is beauty and goodness all around us. We are loved and valued and part of a bigger story that includes God's grace and mysterious power to help us rise to wholeness and purpose, no matter what our circumstances.

Major Bryce Davies is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in Queensland.



Scan here for more
on finding meaning.



The start of hope

Support, connection and creative housing turn Brodie's life around

WORDS BRODIE

While I was in primary school I was diagnosed with depression, and later ADD and ADHD. This affected me a lot. I felt sad all the time when I was young and I didn't know how to explain it. The diagnoses helped me to make sense of these feelings. However, I started rebelling when I was a teenager, doing things I shouldn't, like using drugs and alcohol and causing trouble. This strained my relationships with my family. My love for skating and music was important and created a space for me to express myself.



Brodie (left) with Megan Casey, Manager - Youth Outreach SA, at Ingle Farm Salvos.

I stopped attending school and this led me down a dark path. Drugs significantly affected my depression and, after things hit a head one night at home, I left. My mental health became so bad that I spent some time in hospital and when I got out, I had no place to go.

A friend's family took me in for a few weeks. They encouraged me to enter a youth housing program and through this I got into Burlendi

(Salvos youth emergency accommodation) in 2015. Burlendi was the start of hope for me as it provided me somewhere safe to stay, with workers who were supporting me to look for other housing options.

“

I love the sense of family and belonging.

”

While I was at Burlendi, I was invited to be part of Rev (Revolution Church). Rev is a community youth church service held each week. It made a huge impact on me. I formed some great relationships with other young people and the leaders, had fun and wanted to know more about Jesus. I continued to go to Rev over the next few years and then started attending the 5pm church community as well.

The Rev community was there for me when workers couldn't be – sitting with me at hospital after hours, helping me find a sense of belonging and community, investing in my life, caring about what I cared about, attending my music gigs and walking alongside me on my journey.

Shortly after my stay in Burlendi, I moved into the Supported Housing program. I was really



After receiving help and support from the Salvos in different programs, Brodie is aiming for complete independence, while staying connected to community.

excited to get stable housing but I didn't have all the practical skills to manage, and really struggled being on my own.

In 2017, the Salvos started up a program called Lead Tenant. I was the first person to be part of this new program where two young people, like myself, move into housing with a lead tenant. My lead tenant was Lisa, who supported me to learn to cook, clean and manage a house. She's also someone I can chat to if I ever need help or guidance. It's really good having somebody there to help me with adult life; it's like having a little family living together. I love the sense of family and belonging. That there are people there that care about me and care if I come home at night or not.

I'm now 20 years old and work at a skate shop, which I love. My passion for making music is stronger than ever. I'm making my own money and saving up to do bigger and better things. I recently got my learner's permit through the Salvos driving program, which will also help me get my P plates.

I've been living in the Lead Tennant house for four years now. My goal is to be able to run a house by myself, move out and be completely independent.



Scan here for more on homelessness.

Orange and poppy seed cake



Ingredients

1 cup butter, 1 cup caster sugar, 3 egg yolks, 1 cup sour cream, grated rind of 1 orange, 1 tsp baking powder, 1¾ cups plain flour, 1 tsp bicarb soda, 1 cup poppy seeds, 3 egg whites.

Orange syrup

Juice and grated rind of 2 oranges, juice of 1 lemon, ¾ cup sugar.

Method

Cream butter and caster sugar until fluffy. Gradually beat in egg yolks, sour cream and grated orange rind. Sift dry ingredients together and fold into mixture. Add poppy seeds.

Whisk egg whites until soft peaks form and fold into mixture.

Pour into a greased 23cm cake tin and bake at 160°C for around 1 hour. Allow to cool slightly.

Remove from tin and slowly pour orange syrup over the cake until it's all absorbed.

Serve warm.

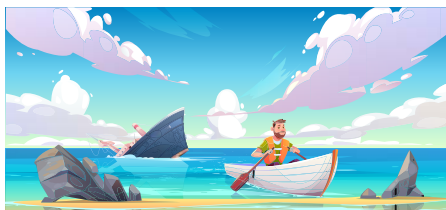
Orange Syrup

Place all ingredients into a saucepan and stir over a low heat until sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil and boil for 4 minutes.

Have a laugh



What washes up on really small beaches?
Micro-waves.



What happened when the blue ship and the red ship collided at sea?

Their crews were marooned.



What did the duck say after she bought the lipstick?

Put it on my bill.

Bible byte

"I will offer You my grateful heart,
for I am Your unique creation,
filled with wonder and awe."

Psalm 139, verse 14
The Voice translation

6				5			
	5			1	8		
			8			2	1
		9		6			
5					7	9	4
2							3
4							
3			2	6		4	5
			4				

Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tum-Tum

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



Answers: 1. Tiny droplets of water or ice crystals. 2. They are reflecting light from the sun. 3. They are filled with water and don't reflect light. 4. A layer of stratus clouds on or near the ground. 5. Cumulus clouds.

page 12.
Tum-Tum: is hiding behind Brodie on

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	8	7	2	1	6	4
4	9	6	5	7	3	1
2	7	4	1	5	9	8
8	3	9	7	6	4	1
5	6	1	8	3	2	7
9	4	3	6	8	7	5
7	5	2	4	9	1	6
6	1	8	3	2	5	4
7	9	4	3	6	8	1
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Quick quiz

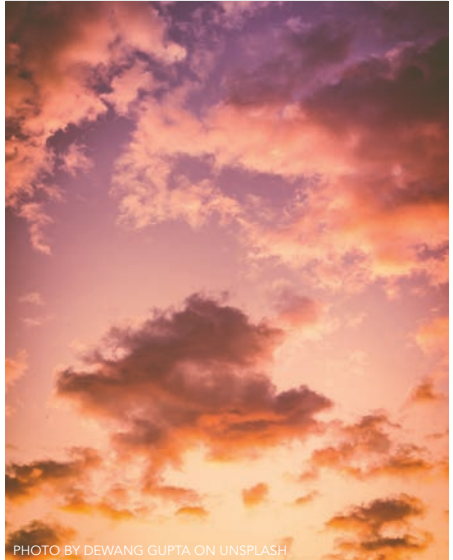


PHOTO BY DEWANG GUPTA ON UNSPLASH

1. What are clouds?
2. What is happening when clouds are white?
3. Why are some clouds gray?
4. What is fog?
5. Which clouds look like heaps of cotton?

Did you know?

- A chef's hat has exactly 100 pleats.
- Stop signs used to be yellow.
- Rice is the most consumed food in the world.

Salvation Army Youth Services

Supporting young people on their journey to independence.

The Salvation Army Youth Services offer targeted programs that support young people across Australia on their journey to independence. These programs work together to create intentional avenues for young people to explore opportunities, build support networks, and access, participate in and contribute to their communities.

Youth Services provide a range of programs across the following areas:

- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Driver training
- Education
- Employment and training

- Housing and homelessness
- Specialist therapeutic responses
- Youth justice.

**Please be aware that not all services may be provided at every centre.*

We welcome all people, regardless of race, gender, status or sexual orientation. We understand that a safe space for growth is created when people feel believed in, valued, listened to and respected. Our centres are safe and supportive environments where you're free to be you.

For more information, visit salvationarmy.org.au/youthservices

