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MY STORY

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Connecting with the lonely on the frontline of life



SALVOS

MAGAZINE

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“Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate.”

Albert Schweitzer

**German theologian, musician, philosopher
and Nobel Peace Prize-winning physician**





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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Founders William and Catherine Booth

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Secretary for Communications and Editor-In-Chief

Lieut-Colonel Neil Venables

Publications Manager Cheryl Tinker

Assistant Editor Simone Worthing

Designer Ryan Harrison

Cover Photo Peter Secan on Unsplash

Editorial ph. (03) 8541 4562

Enquiry email salvosmagazine@salvationarmy.org.au

All other Salvation Army enquiries 13 72 58

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Loneliness Epidemic

In 2016, a survey by Lifeline Australia found that 60 per cent of Australians often feel lonely, and lonelier than they've ever felt before. And that was four years before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, with its lockdowns, border closures and social distancing.

In this edition, we take a look at loneliness – an issue affecting people in 'epidemic' proportions globally. Belinda shares from her time as a Salvos frontline chaplain, and an encounter with a man struggling with all kinds of hardships but impacted the most by loneliness. She asks what we are all doing to reach out to those around us to make sure they really are okay.

In Faith Talk, Bryce talks about his neighbourhood community and the joy that comes from checking in on and supporting each other, in both daily and exceptional circumstances. And, with Valentine's Day approaching – one of the loneliest days of the year for many – Colleen encourages us to give the gift of kindness to everyone.

Nobody should ever feel like they have no one.

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

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**

A different pandemic

Connecting with the lonely on the frontline of life

WORDS BELINDA CASSIE

Not all that long ago, my role as a chaplain found me sitting, quite literally, in a street-front office. It really doesn't get much more frontline than that. Much of 2020 saw the world come to a screeching halt. Well, for many people anyway. But that frontline work that we speak of ... let's just say, that didn't slow down for a minute.

There was one day that will likely be forever etched in my memory, because, when your very first request of the day is a guy experiencing homelessness who wants, or perhaps more accurately, needs, to talk because he is suicidal with an active plan, you'd better believe that I'm eating toast with loads of butter and peanut butter afterwards. And maybe chocolate. A day like that sticks with you.

Here's the point of sharing my toast and coffee with you. People's needs haven't changed. They still need food and shelter, healthcare and companionship. I spent about an hour or so with this man that morning; it took him almost that long to tell me what was really going on for him.

Realistically, there is a lot that could have tipped this guy over the edge, but it's loneliness that had been the final straw.

At least six times he said, "I've got no one." But he had a family once. He was a regular church attender once. He had a job and mates. I don't know the full story of how he got to that place, but in that place he felt like he had no one.



PHOTO BY SABRI TUZCU ON UNSPLASH

People today still need food and shelter, healthcare and companionship.



Feelings of loneliness have been heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We couldn't find him a bed in a detox unit or a homelessness service, but that wasn't what got to him. It was the loneliness of his life that had him weeping in my office. COVID-19 made a bed impossible to find, but the pandemic of loneliness was what was crushing him – and that's been around much longer.

I thought that he would eventually be okay. At the time, though, he wasn't okay. It got me thinking – just how many people do we know that aren't okay at the moment?

Once upon a time, what feels now like a very long time ago, I was a nurse in a small but almost chaotically busy, emergency department in Sydney. I loved it – even on the especially chaotically busy shifts. But I noticed something one day and took the doctor responsible aside to ask her about it. What I had noticed was that every time she picked up a patient who had self-harmed, attempted to end their life or were experiencing a mental health crisis, she would bring them to one of my beds. So much so that it seemed she would even wait sometimes until I had a

spare bed. Why? That was my question for her that day, and her answer should have been a 'no brainer' really. She said, "Belinda, you and I both know Jesus, and the people that I'm bringing to you for us to care for are probably having, not just their toughest day, or their saddest day, or their most physically painful day – it's their loneliest day. Between you, me and Jesus, at least in this moment, they aren't going to be alone."

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**Between you, me and Jesus
... no one needs to be alone.**

”

I don't think I will ever forget that. Whatever spaces I move in now, whoever I might encounter, between you, me and Jesus, for the time that we are with them, no one needs to be alone. ▶



It's important to ask ourselves who we are connecting with in order to genuinely hear.

Loneliness and lack of community didn't start with COVID-19, but the pandemic has certainly heightened it. How many of our friends and colleagues, given the hour, might get around to telling us how they are really doing? And how many won't? Because the stigma around saying, "I'm lonely and I'm not okay" is, sadly, still very real. And the Church is not exempt from that. I think sometimes, if we are really honest with ourselves, we've been the worst at it. An "I'm lonely and I'm not okay" translates in too many church circles to a lack of faith or positivity or resilience, instead of a courageous moment of truth-telling.

And, I don't know if you ever checked, but when I read the Scriptures, Jesus never criticised anyone for their lack of positivity. He never suggested to anyone that they aren't cutting it because of their perceived limited resilience. He did, however, create spaces, almost every single time as it happens, for people to share honestly and openly about

the realities of their situation. And the loneliest among them, at least for that moment, weren't alone. If we are followers of Christ, shouldn't we be doing the same?

COVID-19 isn't going away yet. Isolation continues. I fear that we'll be socially distancing to some degree for quite a while to come. But even when COVID-19 isn't a headline anymore, who are we reaching out to? Who are we calling and asking real questions? Who are we connecting with in a bid to genuinely hear?

Captain Belinda Cassie is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in Tasmania.



Scan here for more on homelessness.

Love beyond the teddy bears

Celebrating the gift everyone can afford – kindness

WORDS COLLEEN MORRIS

Valentine's Day celebrates the richness of love – not just with a romantic partner, but with our children, neighbours, colleagues, strangers and people who are hurting.

Commercially, we are encouraged to get lost in roses, cards and expensive chocolates – but if we're honest, we don't all feel 'loved' on Valentine's Day. And as we navigate COVID-19, many of us feel more isolated than ever. That's why, depending on your circumstances, Valentine's Day will reinforce one of the following statements about you:

- I am in a happy, loving relationship.
- The relationship I am in falls beneath my expectations of what a loving relationship should look like.
- I am alone (and it sucks).

Whether you resonate with statement one, two or three, you deserve a gift this Valentine's Day. And if you're sharing the day with someone else, they can be given this present as well.

It is one of the most undervalued, yet affordable gifts that you can give to your partner or friend. And no, it's not a teddy bear that says, "I love you."

It is the gift of kindness.

On an almost daily basis, I witness people say they experience conflict in their couple ▶



relationship, but they love each other. I believe that one of the chief indicators of a loving relationship is kindness. Kindness is being a true, genuine and generous friend to your partner or loved one. It is also about being kind to yourself, acknowledging you are worthy of love and being able to give it to others.

Where a relationship does not feel secure and we feel alone, Valentine's Day invites us to make the intentional effort to show people we love them through a gesture or gift. Being a person who loves the occasional gift, I believe that this can still be a beautiful expression of love when given with thought and intent. However, the notion that a romantic gesture or gift is 'enough' to sustain any relationship, is false.

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**We have the ability to
change someone else's day.**

”

Use Valentine's Day as an opportunity to change the way you treat all your loved ones by doing something special – a small gift, a meal together or even a walk along the beach or in a park. Be as creative as you like, just so long as it is something that they will enjoy.

If you are alone this Valentine's Day, then the gift of self-kindness is equally important. It is easy to become prey to your own negative thoughts when the media tells us that 'everyone' is in love and deliriously happy – which, of course, is simply not true.

Self-kindness is an absolute necessity for good mental health and positive wellbeing.



It might begin at that place where you practise saying “no” to a request for help and do something that you enjoy instead. Go for a walk, buy yourself a bunch of flowers, read that book, have a massage – you get the idea!

Instead of feeling inadequate or alone this Valentine's Day, practise kindness. It is the best gift for a partner, a friend, a stranger – and even yourself. Whether a gesture is big or small, we have the ability to change someone else's day. Remember, it's people that matter, not things. So be kind, and accept the kindness you also deserve. That's how Valentine's Day can be filled with enough love for everyone.

Colleen Morris is a family therapist in Geelong.



Scan here for more
on finding meaning.

Salvos Funerals expands care into Victoria

The Salvation Army's care for families and individuals experiencing the loss of a loved one has grown, with Salvos Funerals expanding from New South Wales into Victoria, offering cremation-only services.

Salvos Funerals has served more than 1400 families since it began in 2017 in the Sydney and Central Coast area. Late in 2020, it began offering cremation-only services in Melbourne, with plans to offer its full range of funeral services by autumn 2021.

Overseeing the initial expansion into Melbourne is Senior Funeral Planner and Funeral Sector Advisor Marc Allison, who says he is looking forward to bringing the service to his home town.

"Funerals can help us to pause and reflect on who and what we have lost," says Marc. They bring people together to grieve, comfort one another and find hope."

The move into the Melbourne market, with a key focus on the city of Casey and the Mornington Peninsula, is an exciting step for the enterprise – providing further opportunities to connect with and support the community and, in turn, generating extra income to maintain vital Salvos social programs and services. Marc hopes that Salvos Funerals will emerge as a trusted funeral provider for people in the area. – **Holly Reed**

For more information, go to salvosfunerals.com.au

Report details long-term disaster assistance

The Salvation Army has released a progress report on its recovery work in Townsville, two years on from the monsoonal flooding that devastated parts of the North Queensland city.

The report details the Salvos' initial emergency services response, followed by disaster recovery at community recovery hubs. The flooding resulted in 3000 homes being damaged, with nearly 1000 made uninhabitable.

The Salvos' long-term recovery work began in May 2019 with the appointment of a recovery support worker, Tamara Forde, whose contract has been extended until mid-2021 to continue case-work support in conjunction with the State Government and the community rebuild project, Making a House a Home Again.

Tamara said long-term support is crucial to



Outlying suburbs of the city were inundated by flood waters.

assist those who have 'slipped between the cracks': "[These are people that] are over the initial shock and they've tried to use their own resources as much as possible, but now those resources are exhausted, and they're exhausted. That's where I can step in and help them in some small way." – **Lauren Martin**

To read the full 18-month progress report, go to tinyurl.com/y26mm4wc

God in the neighbourhood

Sharing life authentically in a caring community

WORDS BRYCE DAVIES

My wife – the lovely Sue – and I, live in a block of four ground-floor villas with a shared driveway and shared carports. It's a terrific little community and we call it 'The Village'.

Our neighbours all look out for each other. On bin night, our bins always arrive back at our doorstep, as someone has just brought them in for us. If our bins are overflowing, as sometimes happens when I forget to put them out, we can always load up our neighbours' bins and they are fine with that. When we have a big garden clean-up, we all share the green waste bins. Bins and rubbish are a big part of community life.

There are a few older ladies in the mix who have dodgy hips or knees, so me and Trev, the other guy in the complex, do the lawns, trim the hedges, and weed the gardens. If there is anything heavy to be lifted or a little maintenance job to be done, the ladies give us a call and we come over and fix it. Not long after these calls, my favourite chocolate bar often mysteriously appears at our front door.

When we run out of sugar or need some soy sauce for a recipe, we just pop next door and get what we need. During lockdowns, we shared the shopping and met for a socially distanced coffee catch-up each week in our driveways.

Each year, we get together for The Village Christmas party, and it's great fun. We wear silly hats, have a 'Secret Santa' and eat a delicious meal together. When something

difficult happens to any of us, we call and catch up. We often stop and chat in the driveway, and really do care about and look after each other. It's old-fashioned neighbourly goodness, and I love it.

“

It's old-fashioned neighbourly goodness, and I love it.

”

Recently, one of our neighbours had a son come home from hospital and she had the extended family over. Maybe 10 people. It was emotional and she was feeling the pressure. She asked me to go to the Chinese restaurant up the road and pick up a meal. Of course, this was no problem at all and I'm sure it just made the night a little bit easier for my friend. It felt good to be able to do something practical to show my care. I'm glad she felt comfortable enough to ask.

There is a beautiful atmosphere of love and support in our little village, and I think it makes everyone feel a bit safer and free to be themselves and to share life authentically.

I was recently chatting to my mate Andrew, who lives in London, and he has been in the same street now for 17 years. He has seen



it change from a quite isolated and disconnected community to one that is now really engaged and supportive.

Andrew is a friendly and enthusiastic sort of guy, and I am sure he has wholeheartedly been involved in every effort to build this community over the years with things like barbecues and, during lockdowns, little street sing-a-longs. People now wave, and stop and chat, and they know each other's names. Every Christmas now, they close off the street for a big party, and I know he is out there in the cold, putting up lights and making sure all the locals get into the spirit of things. I am sure everyone in that street is glad Andrew and his family moved into the neighbourhood.

When describing the coming of Jesus into the world, one version of the Bible says, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood" (John chapter 1, verse 14 *The Message Bible translation*).

I love this image. The God of all love, grace and truth comes close, assimilates into our lives like a friendly supportive neighbour and floods our souls with love, hope and joy. I know for me, because I am open to it, I live with an authentic connection with the spirit of Jesus and am often aware of being loved and hopeful. Sometimes I just smile for no reason at all. It's a mysterious thing and hard to describe really. It's a bit like knowing that a spiritual Andrew lives next door and is ready, willing and available to listen, encourage and help out whenever I need him – 24/7.

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



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

Responding to need

Lyn's courageous act of kindness reunites a father and son

WORDS KEVIN ELSLEY

When Salvos officers (pastors) Captains Philip and Donna Sutcliffe handed their congregation copies of a 'fatherhood' DVD on Father's Day 2020, little did they know the impact it would make.

The Sutcliffes, working in Lismore in Northern NSW, marked the 6 September occasion by distributing copies of *Courageous*, a moving film based on domestic issues confronting four law enforcement officers. Recipients were invited to forward the DVD to a friend or family member who could benefit from its challenge relating to fatherhood.

And that's what Salvo Lyn Scotney did when visiting a nearby supermarket as soon as the service concluded, never envisaging the life-changing story that would evolve from a simple act of kindness.

Lyn encountered an elderly man sitting outside the supermarket and, to her, looking as though he needed a friend. She introduced herself and asked if she could sit and chat. The man, named Graham, then revealed his life story. It was a sad story about alcoholism, domestic violence and not having spoken to his son Brian for 18 years.

At this point, Lyn believes God intervened. "I asked Graham would he do me a favour by accepting my DVD, then give me a call for his thoughts after watching it," she said. "I didn't hear anything for over a week, then Graham rang. He was excited. He said the DVD tugged at his heartstrings and he was

compelled to ring his son Brian, which he did. Brian was in shock after all these years. They reunited for a coffee and a meal out."

Lyn said everything was going really well until Brian told his father he was dying of brain cancer.

“

**Talk to God like you're
talking to me ...**

”

"Graham kept in touch with me," said Lyn. "Among other things, he asked if I could teach him how to pray to help his son. He said he couldn't use all the fancy words, so I said to him, 'Talk to God like you are talking to me because God understands when it is coming from the heart.'"

At church the following week, pastor Philip announced that he had received a thank-you letter directed to Lyn from Brian, mentioning that, "the world would be a better place if there were more caring Lyn Scotneys".

A few weeks later, Graham told Lyn that his son had been admitted to a Gold Coast hospital. Aged 88, and not holding a driver's licence, Graham was offered a lift to the Gold Coast by a friend, but once there was told there



Lyn with a copy of the *Courageous* DVD that made such a difference in the lives of two men.

was little that could be done for Brian as the tumour had moved to an awkward position.

COVID-19 border restrictions prevented Lyn from visiting the hospital; however, after some negotiation, a phone hook-up was arranged between herself, Graham and Brian. They prayed for strength, calmness and healing.

Sadly, six days later, Graham, who was also suffering from serious health issues, collapsed in a lift and despite treatment, passed away.

“When Brian received the news, he said there was nothing more to live for. He refused further treatment and a few days after his father’s death, he, too, left this life,” Lyn said.

Lyn’s boldness in reaching out to Graham

outside that shopping centre encapsulated The Salvation Army’s 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.”

Lyn’s love for Jesus resulted in a father and son reuniting after many years and even praying together, transforming two lives at once.

Kevin Elsley is a Salvo in Lismore, Northern NSW.



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

Pancakes



Ingredients

2 cups self-raising flour, ½ cup caster sugar, a pinch of salt, 1 egg, 2-3 cups of milk, 3-4 tbsp butter

Method

Sift flour, sugar and salt into a large mixing bowl. Add egg and whisk together, adding enough milk until you have a nice runny mixture.

Melt 1-2 tsp of butter in a frying pan.

Use a ladle or jug to pour about ½ cup of mixture into the pan, forming a nice round shape.

Let the pancake cook until you see lots of bubbles on the surface and the mixture seems mostly set.

Use an egg lifter to flip the pancake over and cook for a further minute.

Melt a bit more butter in the pan and continue cooking until you run out of mixture.

Serve while still hot with ice cream and maple syrup, icing sugar and lemon, or your own favourite topping.

Have a laugh



Why did the yoghurt go to the art exhibition?

Because it was cultured.



Why did the kids cross the playground?

To get to the other slide.



What do you call a droid that takes the long way around?

R2 detour.

Bible byte

“Kind words are like honey – sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.”

Proverbs chapter 16, verse 24
New Living Translation

Wordsearch

T C E P S E R Y H T A P M E F
 U W A R M T H K X O C U N G R
 H N N O I T C E F F A N F E I
 O Q D C O N C E R N R V N N E
 S F X E H C F Y L C E B O E N
 P B F P R H I R L H D C I R D
 I Z P I H S D N E I R F S O L
 T H O U G H T F U L N E S S I
 A A C C E P T A N C E Q A I N
 B J G E N T L E N E S S P T E
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| ACCEPTANCE | GOODWILL |
| AFFECTION | GRACIOUS |
| CARE | HOSPITABLE |
| COMPASSION | KINDNESS |
| CONCERN | LOVE |
| EMPATHY | PATIENCE |
| FORGIVENESS | RESPECT |
| FRIENDLINESS | SINCERITY |
| FRIENDSHIP | THOUGHTFULNESS |
| GENEROSITY | UNDERSTANDING |
| GENTLENESS | WARMTH |

Quick quiz

PHOTO BY SIMON RAE ON LIMEFLASH



1. How many years would it take to visit a new Australian beach every day?
2. Australia is home to approximately how many beaches?
3. What percentage of Australians live within 50km of the coast?
4. What do the red and yellow flags on patrolled beaches indicate?
5. The name 'Bondi' (Bondi Beach) comes from the Aboriginal word which means what?

Tum-Tum



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

Did you know?

- The most tosses of a pancake in one minute is 140.
- Killer whales aren't whales – they're dolphins.
- Four times more people speak English as a second language than as a native one.

Answers: 1. 27 2. Around 10,700 3. 85 per cent 4. Where it is safe to swim. 5. Water breaking over rocks.
Tum-Tum: is hiding behind a cushion on page 6.



SALVOS

MAGAZINE



Salvos Magazine is about giving hope where it's needed most.

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This mobile site features a range of articles and videos about the work and services of the Salvos, as well as personal stories and reflections.

The site can also help you connect with one or more of our social services. We can assist in many areas – from financial stress and homelessness, to addiction and family violence – and offer hope to those struggling for meaning and purpose in life.

Each service provides a variety of ways to get in touch and receive the help you need. We are here for you.



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