

**NEWS**

David Boon supports Salvos Housing

**FAITH TALK**

Peace in the pandemic

**MY STORY**

'Superhero' Salvos

# Building hope and a future

A group of Aussie Salvos opens doors to education for hundreds of children in Sierra Leone



# SALVOS

MAGAZINE

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*When the world says, “Give up”,  
hope whispers, “Try it one more time”.*  
*Author unknown*



## 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

# Salvos Magazine

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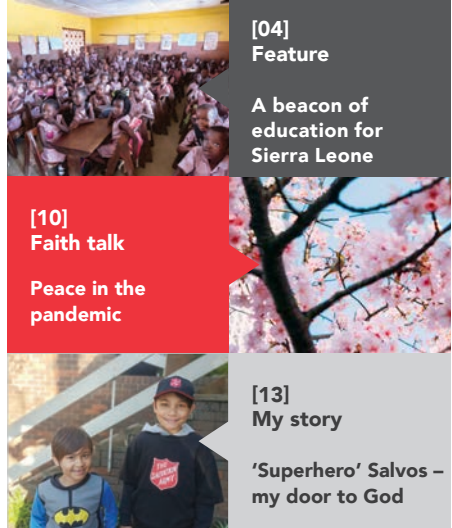
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[04]  
Feature

A beacon of education for Sierra Leone

[10]  
Faith talk

Peace in the pandemic

[13]  
My story

'Superhero' Salvos – my door to God

## Hope and renewal

It has been said that education is “the passport to the future”. For millions of children around the world, especially girls, education is something they can only dream about.

For hundreds of children in the West African nation of Sierra Leone, that dream has just come true. In our cover story, we highlight the work of a group of Aussie Salvos who built a school just outside the capital Freetown, and the difference that is already making in that community and beyond.

We also look at the ongoing work of the Salvos in Melbourne and Victoria as the second lockdown continues, Jessica Morris shares her battle with anxiety and how her faith in God brings peace and strength, and we hear from Aboriginal Elder Uncle Peter, on the power of stories to bring about reconciliation.

You will see a few images of cherry blossoms – a flower that symbolises hope and renewal. The *Salvos Magazine* team prays you will find a message of hope within these pages.

Simone Worthing  
**Assistant Editor**

# A beacon of education for Sierra Leone

Australia-2-Africa project builds hope and a future for schoolchildren

## WORDS

BILL SIMPSON

As they reached the crest of a hill on a dusty, pot-holed road in civil war-ravaged Sierra Leone, this entrepreneurial Australian Salvo couple – Ron and Janette Smart – were overcome with emotion. What they had come to see in this struggling West African nation was now, for the first time, in clear view before them.

They had seen drawings and photos, talked about it and worked towards it for almost 10 years. They had travelled for 40 hours from Sydney by plane and ferry to get there. And, now, here it was in front of them. The tears flowed.

Before the renovation, the school had dilapidated and rundown facilities with only a few children attending.

It was a school for 1000 students, constructed from funds and support provided, in various ways, by fellow Salvos and friends back home in Australia – major donors, families, couples, individuals, children pledging a few dollars a week, people who attended two significant band concerts in Sydney and Melbourne. They provided almost half a million Australian dollars. It was a huge – sometimes frustrating and debilitating – effort. But here it was, finished. To see it and know what it meant to Sierra Leone, well, says Ron, it was overwhelming at that moment for him and his wife. “Both of us cried. We couldn’t hold back the tears.”

Ron, as project committee chairman, and Janette, as fundraising coordinator, along with project manager Frank Briggs and Nabieu Wallace as liaison officer, were in the village of Jui, a 45-minute, at times dangerous, drive from the capital Freetown, for the official opening. As Ron and Janette arrived for the opening ceremony, 1000 or so children in school uniform, parents, teachers and town officials waving bright colour banners lined the road into the school. The Sierra Leone Police Band marched ahead of the official party, which included government members, playing them into the main auditorium – named The Australia Hall.

The naming was an act of appreciation, for the committee had called their project Australia-2-Africa. Originally, it was Auburn-2-Africa. Auburn Salvos is a strongly multicultural church in Sydney’s west. African asylum seekers and refugees are prominent among the congregation.

## FOCUS ON EDUCATION

The Auburn Salvo officers (pastors) at the time – Captains Nesan and Cheryl Kistan – heard the cries of their Sierra Leone members for assistance to help improve life for families in their homeland, devastated by a long, cruel and bloody civil war. Nesan and Cheryl consulted with Ron and Janette, then members of Hurstville Salvos and now at





The children are now proud of their school, and attendance is soaring.

Wollongong Salvos. A small committee was formed. It agreed that education was the best way to help Sierra Leone in the circumstances.

As the committee proceeded, membership altered and its area of expertise expanded. In addition to Ron, Janette, Frank (Hurstville Salvos) and Nabieu (firstly Auburn but now Dandenong Salvos in Victoria), Nesan (now Tustin Ranch, USA) and Peter Lucas (Ryde Salvos but now living in London) made up the existing decision-makers.

Nabieu was an asylum seeker from Sierra Leone, who became a Salvation Army member. He was the committee's 'man on the ground', making occasional visits to Freetown and Jui to ensure that project plans

were progressing and sorting out local issues. His emotions on opening day were mixed. He had seen the school redevelopment progress. "But now," he says of the opening, "I was looking at what had been a dilapidated school for 30 years, with no desks for the children or tables for the teachers, transformed into something wonderful. Imagine, the children now had benches and the teachers had tables and chairs and cupboards. There was running water to flush the toilets. Before, the children had to run into the bush to go to the toilet."

For Frank, it was more a sense of satisfaction that such an establishment had been provided for schoolchildren. "I had seen plans and lots of photos over a long period," he says. "The ►



Photos 1 and 2 show the former dilapidated facilities. Photos 3 and 4 show a new toilet block and auditorium respectively.

buildings I was seeing finished were what I had expected. This was a beacon of education for Sierra Leone. The most positive thing for me was the number of children whose lives would be changed because of this project. It will do incredible things for their education."

A Sydney Rotarian, Ron engaged the assistance of Rotary Australia World Community, which has expertise in overseas education projects, to manage the funds. Local tradespeople were engaged for the construction. They rebuilt, refurbished, refurnished and expanded a ragtag block of buildings into one of Sierra Leone's finest education establishments.

Electricity was supplied to the school for the first time. Water connection provided the first-ever flush toilets. An old well destroyed in the civil war was restored to provide drinking water. A school clinic will not only aid students, but will also be open to the treat the public.

The massive auditorium will be available for community use, raising extra funds for the

school, and a substantial security wall is being constructed to keep thieves out. Classrooms have been built to accommodate nursery, infants and primary students.

"Now," says Janette, "teachers in Sierra Leone are lining up to teach at the school. Previously, about 300 kids turned up occasionally for classes. Now, more than 1000 kids are enrolled and they love their school."

**TO GOD BE THE GLORY**

The Sierra Leone Government has taken responsibility for the school's operation now that it is complete. At the school on official opening day, the Australian flag flew alongside the Sierra Leone flag. The Sierra Leone Police Band played 'Advance Australia Fair', as well as the Sierra Leone national anthem. "I was very proud to be an Australian," Ron says.

There was an inspection of every classroom, where students in each room sang their own versions of welcome songs to the Australian visitors. Everybody wanted to say thank you.



3.



4.

In the main auditorium – the biggest school hall in all of Sierra Leone – the children and adults sang, clapped and cheered their way through hours of celebration in stifling heat. The opening made the front page of Sierra Leone’s main newspaper.

“I think I was in tears for most of the day,” Ron says. “Seeing the faces of 1000 little children was, well, I can still see the faces. I don’t think I will ever forget the faces.” For Janette, the opening was the realisation of a dream. “When we first started talking about this project it was with Nesan and Cheryl at Auburn. They have been the motivators, the encouragers. At the end of our early committee meetings, we would pray for the people in Sierra Leone. While we were praying for them, they were praying in Sierra Leone for somebody to come to help them. God answered their prayer: we came.

“And, now, here we were, in Sierra Leone, seeing the result of our prayers. For me, there is contentment now that the school is in safe hands with wonderful teachers and

learning facilities. Who knows the future of these children? There might be a future president or school principal among them. The children now have a future that would never have been available to them before.”

At the conclusion of her opening ceremony speech, a Sierra Leone government minister surprised the Australian Salvationists by asking if she could lead a song. She began to sing, “To God be the glory, great things he has done ...” The Sierra Leone Police Band began to play. The children began to sing.

It was, says Ron, the perfect benediction to the Australia-2-Africa school project.

*Bill Simpson is a contributing writer for Salvos Magazine.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

## Boonie hits a hole in one for Salvos Housing

Most Tassie golfers pack away their clubs for the chilly winter, but many warmed to the idea of a round of golf with cricket legend David Boon recently to raise \$20,000 for the Salvos.

Twenty corporate teams took part in the second annual Common Ground Cup, hosted by the former Test cricketer turned keen golfer, which raises money for Salvation Army Housing in Campbell Street, Hobart.

Blue skies greeted more than 100 business partners at Ratho Farm golf course near Hobart, who took part in a day of golf followed by a dinner and silent-auction fundraiser.

“Boonie sat on the first tee and at the 18th green – and as the teams came around you could pay \$5 per shot for him to shoot for you!” laughs Jade Munnings, a tenancy officer at the Campbell Street complex, which provides accommodation for vulnerable people who are most at risk of homelessness.

“We plan to use the funds to upgrade to a



David Boon (far right) takes part in the silent auction as part of the annual Common Ground Cup golf day.

commercial kitchen, allowing us to engage with on-the-job training and education with tenants on-site.”

The Salvation Army Housing facility in Campbell Street forms an integral part of the overall continuum of services the Salvos offer to those who experience, or are at risk of, homelessness.

“Having the support of someone like Boonie helps us to draw attention to not only the programs we offer there, but also to the issues of hardship and injustice that lead to homelessness, while helping raise funds for key upgrades and projects for the team in the city,” said Major Brad Watson, Public Relations Secretary. – **Jessica Morris**

## Bellarine team to ‘coach’ Parks Victoria

A relationship with Parks Victoria has enabled Bellarine Peninsula Salvos to reach people experiencing homelessness in the You Yangs Regional Park. After realising multiple people were living from their cars in the area just north of Geelong, Parks Victoria invited Captain Peter Hobbs to ‘coach’ staff on how to best treat people experiencing homelessness.

“That’s where we are in the Salvos now,” said Peter. “We have to be in a relational space. The programs are nice, but they’re not going to transform people. Only relationships do that.” The relationship with Parks Victoria has

expanded to include interaction with people across Bacchus Marsh and Queenscliff, and the Bellarine Peninsula Salvos continue to facilitate relationships with local authorities to best support people experiencing homelessness. “We meet the vulnerable and build trust, and help heal them, and do whatever they need,” said Peter.



Scan here for more on homelessness.



## Taiwanese community supports Salvos in Melbourne

The Taiwanese community of Melbourne has donated 10,000 face masks to The Salvation Army for distribution to vulnerable people in the city.

The Melbourne Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce made the donation to The Salvation Army Melbourne Project 614, which Salvos officer (pastor) Major Brendan Nottle described as “a godsend”.

“One of the major issues we have been facing is helping people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to access face masks that are clean,” he explained.



The Taiwanese community of Melbourne has donated 10,000 face masks to the Salvos for distribution in the city.

“The problem we have is that some people have gotten hold of one disposable face mask or a cloth mask and kept wearing it. This is an obvious risk of infection.”

Brendan said the donated masks are being given to “people who are homeless, or in temporary accommodation, and even people in permanent accommodation who don’t have access to clean PPE [personal protective equipment]”.

“It will go a long way towards keeping vulnerable people safe during this difficult time. Our thanks to the Taiwanese community, and to Lieutenant-Colonel Xuyen Pho [Salvos officer for Multicultural Community in Victoria] for his great work in the community, helping build strong community connections.”

Xuyen said the Taiwanese community took the initiative to work with The Salvation Army.

“The multicultural community is taking responsibility – they want to take part in ensuring the whole community is supported, and they see this donation as a vehicle to help people in need,” he said.

Director-General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Melbourne, Abraham Lin, expressed his thanks to the Melbourne Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce for the donation. – **Barry Gittins**



Scan here for more on disasters and emergencies.



Scan here to learn how to make a cloth mask.

If you would like to make cloth masks for the Salvos to distribute, please send them to Gary Reid, The Salvation Army, National Communications Warehouse, PO Box 297, Richmond 3121, Victoria.

# Peace in the pandemic

How to find strength and assurance in the middle of uncertainty and fear

## WORDS

JESSICA MORRIS

As someone who lives with chronic anxiety, 2020 has been an unprecedented year. Not only am I experiencing constant worries about the world, my life and others, but I am seeing this mirrored in the people around me.

Given my anxiety, it's always a challenge to centre myself and find peace. In the past, I would often look to friends and family for reassurance – a reminder that even though I feel like my world is falling apart it is actually still spinning; that we have hope.

And we do have hope – after all, the sun still rises every morning. But now that the world is in a constant state of uncertainty, I've realised that it is harder for everyone to tap into hope and peace. And often, the people I look to for assurance need that same support from me.

So where do I go for peace?

In a year of bushfires, a pandemic, job instability and more, the one unchanging thing in my life is God. And I know that, because in the middle of chaos, he has been my peace.

God was there when I spoke to survivors of the Victorian bushfires early one morning in January and had to write their story. God was there when my friend told me he had been diagnosed with COVID-19. God was there when Melbourne entered lockdown for a



PHOTO BY ATUL VINAYAK ON UNSPLASH

second time and the curve spiked again, leaving my loved ones at high risk. God was there when my family unexpectedly grew by one (a foster child] in the middle of the pandemic. And God was with me when I went back to counselling last week and cried, because I couldn't make sense of any of this.

Accepting God's peace doesn't mean I'm not afraid. Like many of us, I have no idea what the future looks like. And most of the time I feel like I'm clinging on to hope second by second. Survival is a victory in 2020, and I will celebrate every moment we show up with kindness, compassion and grace.

But in the midst of this survival, I believe we have a certainty that conquers even the biggest



of fears and uncertainties – that hope is bigger than illness, job instability, transition and mental health issues. It is bigger than tragedy and isolation and even chronic anxiety.

My hope is in God’s promise, that he will do more than just help me to survive – he will give me new strength, so I can thrive.

In the Bible, God promises us this in the book of Isaiah chapter 40, verses 29-31: “He [God] gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength” (NIV).

It’s wild to think those words were written

thousands of years ago, before we even knew what 2020 would bring. But here and now, I’ve never needed that assurance from God more.

We will make it through today, and tomorrow. We will work together to see this pandemic lift, and we will make sure that no one gets left behind. And God will give us the strength to do this, one day, one step, one breath at a time.

And that is where I find a peace greater than all fear.



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

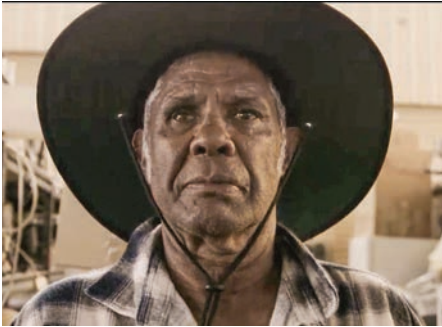
# Stories at the heart of acceptance

Uncle Peter knows that sharing stories leads to reconciliation

## WORDS

JESSICA MORRIS

Uncle Peter is a traditional owner of the Yidinji tribal land in Far North Queensland. He is a member of the Gimuy Walubara peoples and speaks to school students about the origins of the land they walk upon.



"I would teach the kids my language and corroboree," he says. "I would tell them what my dad told me – how to cook, how to behave myself and how to dance."

At the age of 62, Uncle Peter (above) hit a rough patch in life and struggled with alcohol. Sent by Centrelink to work at The Salvation Army Red Shield Family Store in Cairns, he poured himself into the job. Unexpectedly, he found common ground with the staff – in particular Alison Geno, the store manager and a member of Cairns Salvos.

"I met those people there and we started talking, so when I went a bit off-road [I knew I] had a friend, and they asked about life," he says. "I told them I was a traditional owner, and we talked a bit of language."

The conversations led Uncle Peter to become a Christian, but his new friends had more for him. "I met the Lord, and they said, 'You can now come to church to play guitar!'"

Befriending Salvation Army officer (pastor) Major Ben Johnson, who he calls 'Brother Benjamin', Uncle Peter began sharing generations of stories with his new church family, just as he had done at schools.

Soon he was volunteering with Ben in the community, welcoming guests from Papua New Guinea to the Salvos, and embracing the church's diverse peoples with a welcome to country, traditional music and art.

"Reconciliation in the Church is not overtaking the Lord; it's not getting away from the Lord. It's really good for the soul," says Uncle Peter. "I know Brother Benjamin talks about 'For God so loved the world ...' and [I know] the house of God is for Aboriginal people, Chinese people, white people."

With a renewed heart and mind, Uncle Peter is modelling what it means to be reconciled to God, land and one another, one story at a time.

"A traditional owner loves the Lord and he welcomes you – there's no barrier between him and you and God," says Uncle Peter. "People of this land [know that]. They are very soft. There's an appreciation and love for the Lord. That's what reconciliation means to the Aboriginal people."



# 'Superhero' Salvos – my door to God

Von shares how God opened a door for her and she has never looked back.

## WORDS

LAUREN MARTIN

Just three years ago, Von's family life was chaotic. She was struggling with an addiction to ice (crystal methamphetamine) and an unhealthy relationship. In what she would now describe as "God opening a door", she was given the opportunity to journey to recovery at The Salvation Army William Booth House in Sydney. She spent seven months there as her supportive family took care of her three children. "It completely turned my life around," she said.

After graduating, Von undertook a Diploma of Community Services. She has continued to be a faithful volunteer at the Salvos Sydney Congress Hall church in inner-city Sydney, being part of outreach ministries to vulnerable people. She has taken her two eldest children – Isaac and his older brother Denzel – with her during these outreaches so they can experience what it's like to "love God and love others".

Von knows it wasn't the Salvos that saved her, but God. She's passionate, however, about giving back to the organisation that assisted her in her time of need.

And she's proud of Isaac, 10, who's taking after his mother in his excitement to serve others. He will tell you that Salvos are superheroes. He would also tell you that three years ago the Salvos saved his mum's life.

“

**I'm passionate about giving back to the Salvos who assisted me in my time of need.**

”

When his primary school recently held a 'Dress up as your idol' mufti day (casual clothes day), he asked his mum if he could go as a Salvation Army worker, just like her. So, she adjusted her Salvation Army volunteer T-shirt to fit and he wore it proudly all day.

"He just loves what I do now," says Von.



Scan here for more on addiction.

## Tabouli (Lebanese salad)



PHOTO BY HANMZA ZAIDI ON UNSPLASH

### Ingredients

1 cup bourghal (couscous can also be used), 1 cup chopped parsley, 1 cup chopped mint, ¼ to ½ cup sliced spring onions, 2 medium tomatoes, diced, ½ cup olive oil, ½ cup lemon juice, ½ tsp salt, 1 clove minced garlic, pepper to taste

### Method

Moisten bourghal with boiling water and allow to swell (15-30 minutes).

Add chopped herbs, onions and tomatoes.

Mix the dressing – olive oil, lemon juice, salt, garlic and pepper – and add to salad before serving.

Tabouli keeps well in the fridge for two days.

## Figure it out



1. What can travel around the world while staying in a corner?
2. What has many keys but can't open a single lock?
3. What runs all around a backyard, yet never moves?
4. What tastes better than it smells?
5. I am an odd number. Take away a letter and I become even. What number am I?
6. If two's company, and three's a crowd, what are four and five?
7. Which word in the dictionary is spelled incorrectly?

Answers: 1. A stamp 2. A piano 3. A fence 4. A tongue 5. Seven 6. Nine 7. Incorrectly

## Bible byte

"Dedicate your children to God and point them in the way that they should go, and the values they've learned from you will be with them for life."

Proverbs chapter 22, verse 6  
*The Passion Bible translation*

# Wordsearch

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

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| BLOOM      | INTRICATE  |
| BLOSSOMS   | JAPAN      |
| CHERRY     | LANTERNS   |
| DELICATE   | ORNAMENTAL |
| EDIBLE     | PERFUME    |
| EURASIA    | PETALS     |
| FLOWERS    | PINK       |
| FRIENDSHIP | RENEWAL    |
| HIMALAYAS  | SCENT      |
| HOPE       | SPECIES    |
| ILLUMINATE | SPRING     |

# Quick quiz



- Besides spring, what else do cherry blossoms symbolise?
- Cherry blossoms are native to which region of the world?
- How many different varieties of cherry blossoms are there?
- Besides pink, what other colour of cherry blossom flowers grow?
- What do trees represent in the Bible?

# Tum-Tum



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

**Answers:** 1. Renewal and hope 2. Eurasia (Himalayas) 3. Around 200 4. White 5. Physical and spiritual nourishment, growth and transformation  
**Tum-Tum:** is poking out from behind the picture on page 13.

# Did you know?

- Your nostrils work one at a time.
- Copper doorknobs are self-disinfecting.
- Only two mammals like spicy food: humans and the tree shrew.

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# kid zone

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