

salvos

magazine

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK 12-18 JUNE

The silent sufferers

Helping men build healthy emotional habits and connections



Vol. 004 | No. 20
10 June 2023
AUD \$1.00
PRINT POST APPROVED
PP100001474

salvosonline.org.au

FEATURE

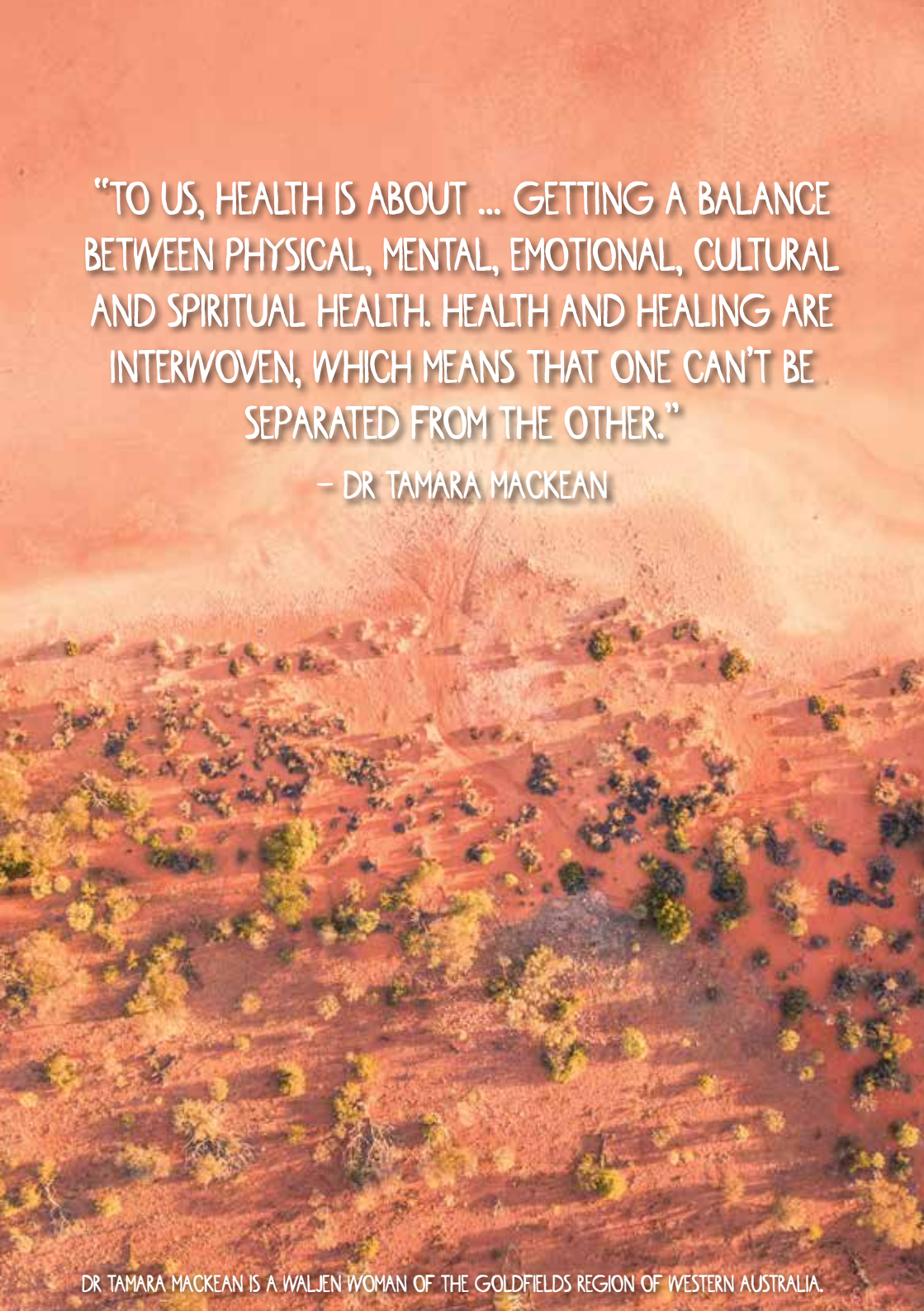
Youth tackle life's challenges

FAITH TALK

From darkness to light

MY STORY

Living in the moment

An aerial photograph of a vast, arid desert landscape. The ground is a deep, rich red color, characteristic of iron-rich soil. Scattered across the terrain are numerous small, scrubby bushes and trees in shades of green and yellow, indicating some vegetation. The lighting is bright, creating strong shadows and highlighting the textures of the soil and plants. The overall scene is one of a rugged, natural environment.

“TO US, HEALTH IS ABOUT ... GETTING A BALANCE
BETWEEN PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, CULTURAL
AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH. HEALTH AND HEALING ARE
INTERWOVEN, WHICH MEANS THAT ONE CAN'T BE
SEPARATED FROM THE OTHER.”

– DR TAMARA MACKEAN



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



The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders, past, present, and future. We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and well-being of people of all ages, particularly children.

Salvos Magazine

Founders William and Catherine Booth

General Brian Peddle

Territorial Leader Commissioner Miriam Gluyas

Secretary for Communications and Editor-In-Chief

Colonel Rodney Walters

Publications Manager Cheryl Tinker

Editor Simone Worthing

Graphic Designer Ryan Harrison

Enquiry email publications@salvationarmy.org.au

All other Salvation Army enquiries 13 72 58

Press date 26 May 2023

Printed and published for The Salvation Army by Commissioner Miriam Gluyas at Focus Print Group, South Granville, NSW



salvosonline.org.au



Feature [4]
The silent sufferers

Faith Talk [10]
From darkness to light



My Story [12]
Living in the moment

Healthy habits

Next week is Men's Health Week (12-18 June). The theme for the week is Healthy Habits.

This edition of *Salvos Magazine* looks at a couple of related topics and how the Salvos are helping to support men and boys in different ways.

Psychologist Maris Depers talks about the importance of focusing on men's emotional and social health, as well as physical wellbeing. This includes strategies around helping men who suffer in silence, and creating spaces where men and boys can connect safely with others and talk about different aspects of their lives.

Anthony Castle writes about some of the mental health struggles men experience, but keep hidden, and gives a personal example of how talking to others and seeking professional help as needed brings healing and hope.

Jason Poutawa talks about a unique program in Moree working with youth, particularly boys, to help them with exploring their mental and psycho-social health.

For these stories and more, go to salvosonline.org.au

Simone Worthing **Editor**

The silent sufferers

Helping men build healthy emotional habits and connections

As Men's Health Week (12-18 June) approaches, *Salvos Magazine* spoke to psychologist Maris Depers, who runs The Salvation Army's First Floor program in Wollongong, about issues surrounding men's health.

The theme for Men's Health Week is Healthy Habits. What are healthy habits and how can men (or anyone really) build them?

Healthy habits are any practices which create the conditions for wellbeing. It's really important when we think about healthy habits that we include all domains of health – physical, mental, emotional and social – and work from a preventative perspective. For example, what is it I can do today to stop X happening tomorrow or in five years' time?

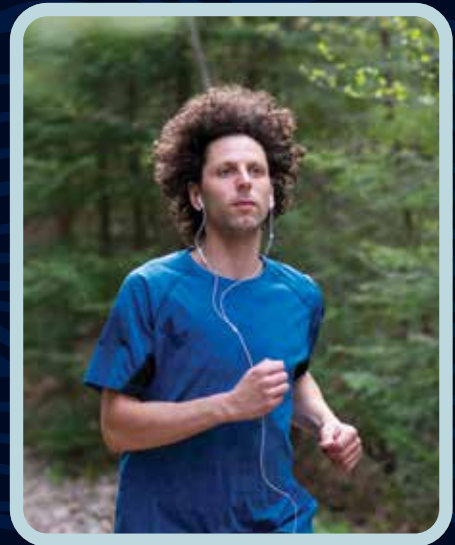
Building healthy habits takes intention, a clear goal, consistency, practice and time.

What do you see as some of the key areas around men's health?

We don't think about health holistically. We're getting better at talking about mental health issues but not about mental wellbeing. We talk about the signs of mental health struggles, but not as much about the steps we can take to maintain mental wellbeing through life.

We're getting better at talking about stress-based disorders, depression and anxiety, but we're not so good at guarding against these conditions.

It's particularly complex for men. For a long time, men have been socialised away from their emotions and other protective factors. This has helped



create unacceptable rates of male suicide and mental health issues. We need to create spaces where men can express themselves and talk openly to partners, family, friends and others about their emotional world.

It took time to understand physical health and wellbeing – what a balanced diet looks like, the roles of different food groups, the importance of exercise and the link between habits and disease prevention. We don't have the same language yet around cognitive practices and psychological strategies for emotional health, particularly in men.



Is real change happening?

We are starting to see positive changes in relation to some of these spaces. Many communities now have men's groups that even five years ago would have been rare. These groups can give men places to connect with others and talk about their lives in different ways.

These opportunities are helping to combat one of the biggest men's health issues – suffering in silence, which shows up as detachment earlier in life and isolation later in life. For a long time, men have suffered in silence, even when they have good peer networks and a supportive family.

What do you see as some of the key issues around men's health?

The biggest issue for men is emotional health and this is closely linked to their mental health. We know that men are at a greater risk of death by suicide, and this is a direct result of issues related to emotional health and wellbeing.

If we as a community want to change this story, we need to create a culture of emotional awareness and expression in

men and boys, one that gives permission for them to speak about their inner world, and understand themselves and others.

Creating a space for vulnerability will help more men seek assistance for both physical and mental health issues. There's evidence to show that doing this will also help address other issues including domestic and family violence.

“

For a long time, men have been socialised away from their emotions ...

”

What is some of the negative messaging men have to face?

Some of this messaging is around the idea of male strength and competitiveness. It has developed a culture that says 'masculine men' don't need help. For too long, this has stopped them from reaching out for help. ▶



Even physically, men are less likely than women to seek assistance for evident and treatable physical issues. We have to create conditions where it's acceptable for men to be seen as vulnerable and to say when they are suffering and struggling.

Are there some specific habits that would particularly help men's physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing?

Like most habits and goals, we can usually break it down into something we can do each day, each week – work now to create what we want in the future.

We know that if we want to run a marathon in 12 months, we need to train and prepare. This is also true with emotional and psychological health but we're not in the habit of seeing it through the same lens. It's about training and practice.

One of the biggest things would be men talking about their issues, especially with family and friends. So often men struggle alone even though they have people around them who could help if only they were aware.

Being a part of a community and being connected to others is also important

and lends itself to health improvement – joining a gym, a social sports team, a walking group, book club or men's shed all are ways to connect with others and improve aspects of health.

What are some of the barriers to building healthy habits?

If we don't value something or see its relevance, we will be much less likely to engage in any habit in a sustainable way. Too often we seek help or make a change when it is imposed upon us by failing health or a crisis of some sort.

Typically, if we value something and it is important to us, most of the other barriers disappear or we find a way to work around them – we make time, get up earlier or push ourselves out into the cold or whatever.

“

We have to create conditions where it's acceptable for men ... to say when they are suffering and struggling.

”

Time is a barrier, but not an insurmountable one, if we are able to choose activities that fit our lives. Maybe they are small or stepping stones towards something bigger, but there is usually something we can do today.

How can individuals and communities help build male health?

Most health messages include cultural elements. A sense of community, connection, involvement and support is important for ensuring all types of



health are culturally embedded. This can have a particular impact on men.

Many communities are close-knit but can also be disconnected from other elements of the community. Sometimes there can be language barriers, for example, that exacerbate men's health issues.

The LGBTIQ+ community is much more likely to experience mental health issues and difficulties and is more at risk of suicide. Men's health is not a homogenous conversation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are also more at risk for mental health issues and have worse outcomes. With conversations around racism, the Voice, treaty and truth, there is greater social pressure and issues that may create health problems for them.

To sum up, what are the most important healthy habits for men to cultivate?

Building and maintaining social connections (friends, family, community) is paramount. For any gender of any age, daily social connection is important.

Emotional expression is vital – whether that be through a consult with counselor, talking about our inner world, talking to family online or in a journal about what's happening in our lives.

Some activities have added value – physical exercise a few times a week also has mental health value, so you can get more from one activity.

Imagine a group of men talking together about their week as a group – this meets physical, mental, social and psychological needs all in one.

It's absolutely a positive sign that we have Men's Health Week. We haven't cracked it yet, but the message is gaining increased attention, and the more we publicise this the closer we will get to optimum men's health.

Maris Depers is a psychologist with the First Floor Program in Wollongong.



Scan here for more stories of hope.

Helping youth tackle life's challenges

New program focuses on wellbeing and resilience

WORDS Anthony Castle

The Positive Lifestyle Program (PLP) is used by Salvation Army chaplains, counsellors and volunteer facilitators throughout Australia.

A new youth resource has been adapted from the PLP and made relevant to the lived experience of young people. It aims to equip local leaders to engage with high schools, and the material has found its way into a rugby club in northern New South Wales.

“

They came up with their own tools for problem solving. It was a groundbreaking time.

”

“I’ve used PLP over a range of settings in ministry and work,” says Jason Poutawa, Program Coordinator at Moree Salvos. “When the rugby club asked me to be involved in what they do, I suggested we take all the teen boys, from ages 14-18, on a camp. I said, ‘Let’s focus on footy and teamwork, and I will incorporate activities into the sessions so that the PLP is team-oriented.’”

While Jason has been at Moree for six years, he has 15 years of experience working with marginalised young people.



Jason Poutawa has 15 years of experience working with marginalised and struggling youth.

ADAPTED FOR YOUTH

“A number of the boys here in Moree can be quite isolated in the country,” Jason explains. “Some kids are struggling in their economic circumstances, in their social circumstances, in the family unit. Drugs are a huge temptation for young people. Teens having babies early, criminal activity and violence, all the things that are consistent with the challenges in Moree. Footy is a big part of how people find belonging – there isn’t much else that’s healthy.”

The material at the weekend camp explored important topics and challenges that young people face.



Jason worked with 15 boys from the Moree Junior Rugby Club over a weekend camp.

“One of the good sessions was around assertiveness,” shares Jason. “How they go about their first instincts and what they can do to change their direction about conflict. They came up with their own tools for problem solving. It was a groundbreaking time.”

The resource positions Salvos to journey alongside high school-aged young people as they develop tools in areas including self-awareness, anger, depression and loneliness, stress, grief and loss, self-esteem and future direction.

MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS

“We hear from the frontlines that they need something for young people’s mental health,” explains John Marion, Youth Specialist with the Salvos Youth and Young Adults Team. “There is a large need for schools to help young people with wellbeing and resilience, and we know that in PLP we had content that could help. What we needed was to put it in ways that young people could understand and that could be effective for them.”

PLP runs across eight sessions that encourage young people to explore

their emotional and psychosocial development in group settings through activities and fun learning methods. The course can be run in high schools, youth groups, social services, after-school programs, rugby camps, mentoring groups and Bible studies.

“Young people have found the material engaging,” John says. “Facilitators find the material helpful and easy to use, giving them ways to start conversations. Schools love it and ask for the resources to run it again. Parents are reporting back that their children are positive, more hopeful and have the tools they need for the problems they face.”

The Salvos’ Youth and Young Adults team is developing further projects, including resources for young women and training and support for the material that ensures the impact of PLP will continue.



Jason takes boys from the Moree Junior Rugby Club through the adapted Positive Lifestyle Program.

“I will be using it for years,” Jason says. “A lot of the kids came back and said they had a great time. Parents contacted me the next week – parents I don’t even know – to say thank you, that their kid found it impacting. The faith values and the material are aligned, putting our worldview into something positive that can influence people’s lives.”

From darkness to light

Sharing our hidden pain can bring healing and hope

WORDS Anthony Castle

There are things we don't share with others.

There are things we don't speak about, that we hide, even from those close to us. These might be things we typically keep private – ordinary things. Sometimes we might hide how we feel about our lives, our relationships or memories of past events.

We keep these things to ourselves because we might not know how to share them. Perhaps our problems run deeper than others suspect. Maybe we have regrets, or feel shame for the things we have done, or the things that have been done to us. Perhaps the thought of sharing these things seems painful, or we may feel unsure about how others will respond, but the things we keep secret aren't necessarily about excluding others. We keep secrets to feel safe.

MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

Each June, Men's Health Week raises awareness around the issues men face, particularly mental health challenges. The theme for this year is Healthy Habits, encouraging men to form habits that build wellbeing. The reality is, though, that men are struggling with mental health in Australia. Men make up an average of seven out of every nine suicides each day.

The data shows that a quarter of Australian men will experience a diagnosed mental health disorder in

their lifetime (aifs.gov.au), but only 25 per cent will seek help from a mental health professional. Of those men who had contacted a GP, only 40 per cent had seen a mental health professional. Men are not sharing about their mental health challenges enough or seeking the supports that can help. We often keep secrets to feel safe, but for some men, it's the secrets that are dangerous.

“

We often keep secrets to feel safe, but for some men, it's the secrets that are dangerous.

”

I have known men who have been hurt by the things they didn't share, when what was kept inside became too much. I have known men who haven't known how to speak about their unhappiness until it tore their lives apart. I have known men who kept their darkest parts hidden. Men who didn't seek professional help. Men who are no longer here.

In some ways, I was one of these men. Over the years I have had to learn how to share things – things I have kept on the inside, seeking out professional help when I need it.



SHARING TO HEAL

Throughout this process there is a Scripture verse that has come to mind, from James chapter 5, verse 16: “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”

I remember this verse because I have come to see confession as an important idea, inasmuch as sharing what is hidden with others can bring some healing. It can save lives.

There are two questions I have found myself asking others over the years, healthy habits I practise with men when I can see they are struggling on the inside. I ask, “Do you want to talk?” and “Have you shared this with a professional who can help?”

There are many things we don’t share with others, and while we often keep secrets to feel safe, the danger of hiding our mental health struggles is all too real.

In a country where twice as many men die by suicide each year than on the roads, we need to make a habit of sharing about mental health. The dark things that are kept inside are often best shared, brought out into the light, with others who can help.

If you or someone you know needs help, contact MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78. MensLine offers free professional 24/7 telephone counselling support for men with concerns about mental health, anger management, family violence (using and experiencing), addiction, relationship, stress and wellbeing.



Scan here for more stories of hope.

Living in the moment

Connection and service central to Jonno's recovery story

On New Year's Day 2022, Jonno was discharged from a Brisbane hospital after a suicide attempt. His psychiatrist challenged him with a blunt assessment of his future and what he could do to stop drinking.

Jonno's slide into alcohol addiction sprang from an attempt to deal with challenging early-life experiences.

"I struggled to deal with the wreckage of the past and an uncertain future," he says. "I've learned to live in the moment more, to look at those things but not dwell on them."

JOURNEY OF RECOVERY

Jonno began his journey of recovery through connection with others. "Until then I felt like I was on a hamster wheel with no way off."

He was given a list of local Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings and, "within 15 minutes I knew I was in the right place," he says. "People were telling stories similar to mine, but they were sober, and they were happy."

A graduate of the Salvos' Brisbane Recovery Services (Moonyah) – who later became Jonno's sponsor – had a



Jonno, with volunteer Bernetta, preparing a meal for the Streetlevel community.

conversation with him after the meeting, offering to help him through his recovery, and has stuck with him since.

Jonno then spent time in Moonyah himself. "I had a choice of life or death," he says. "I think seeing people living a solution gave me enough hope to believe I could too."

After three months at Moonyah, a Salvo friend suggested he go to the Salvos' Streetlevel Mission (drop-in centre) because they needed a chef, which was Jonno's professional training.

SERVING OTHERS

"I am so blessed to cook and serve at Streetlevel," he says. "I check in with the regulars, and look out for new faces, which is something that gives value to my life, and hopefully to theirs."

As well as serving at Streetlevel, Jonno cares for his physical and mental wellbeing through participation in the Streetlevel Striders parkrun group.

“

My recovery showed I couldn't run on my own steam, and I hope I can help others on their journey too.

”

He also attends God's Sports Arena (GSA), a Salvos church supported financially, and with resources, by Brisbane City Salvos. GSA is focused on supporting Brisbane's vulnerable population, and Jonno often brings food and makes coffee for the meetings.



Jonno feels blessed to serve others at Streetlevel.

"God's Sports Arena is a beautiful place where there is love, encouragement, and no judging," he says. "We have open and honest conversations, lots of free-flowing connections, opportunities to heal, and it's where I find peace.

"As well as needing God, I've learned we need other humans. My recovery showed I couldn't run on my own steam, and I hope I can help others on their journey too.

"Helping others is vital," he adds, "because it gets my mind off self. Plus it is great to share my journey, and to share our experiences, strength and hope."



Scan here for more stories of hope.

Tuna pasta



Ingredients

400g pasta, 2 cloves garlic, 3-4 tsp capers, rind of 1 lemon, 425g can tuna, olive oil, seasoning

Method

- Bring a pot of water to the boil and add pasta. Stir every minute or two so pasta doesn't stick together.
- Squash garlic cloves with the flat side of a knife to crush them, then chop into small pieces.
- Chop up capers.
- Shave rind off the lemon and chop into small pieces. Add to capers and garlic mix.
- Strain cooked pasta and add tuna. Stir through garlic, capers and lemon mix.
- Add a dash of olive oil and seasoning to taste.
- Serve as soon as possible.

HAVE A LAUGH



Whatever you do in life, give 100 per cent - unless you're giving blood.

Two red blood cells met and fell in love, but alas it was in vein.

What blood type do happy people have?
B positive.

SIGNING IN



Sudoku

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

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

Tum-Tum



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

Bible byte

"Don't forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices."
 Hebrews chapter 13, verse 16
Common English Bible

Quiz answers: 1. 470ml or about 8 per cent of the average adult's blood volume. 2. 24-48 hours 3. 42 days 4. Eight 5. O positive (38 per cent) 6. Ab negative (1 per cent).
Tum-Tums: is hiding behind a mug on page 5.



Quick quiz

1. When someone donates blood, how much is taken from them?
2. After donating blood, how long does it take for the human body to fully restore its blood volume?
3. How long do donated red blood cells last?
4. How many main blood types are there?
5. What is the most common blood type?
6. What is the rarest blood type, with plasma, able to be given to anyone?

World Blood Donor Day is celebrated on 14 June every year.

The day serves to raise awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products and to thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their lifesaving gifts of blood.

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood says one blood donation every 18 seconds is needed in Australia.

DID YOU KNOW?

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



THANKS TO YOU, NOBODY STRUGGLES ALONE.

"The Salvos gave me the chance to get back to a normal life again. I'm so grateful."

- Adam*

Right across Australia, ordinary people are struggling with hardship, homelessness, domestic violence, natural disasters, and mental illness.

The moment The Salvation Army makes contact with someone – even though their struggle may not be over – they are no longer alone. They have a community of caring officers, dedicated staff, passionate volunteers and donors, who will fight alongside them for as long as it takes.

*Names changed to protect privacy.



DONATE TODAY.

salvationarmy.org.au/adam



**RED
SHIELD
APPEAL**