

salvos

magazine



Family volunteering

Sharing the joy of Christmas



Vol. 004 | No. 45
2 December 2023
AUD \$1.00
PRINT POST APPROVED
PP100001474

salvosonline.org.au

FEATURE

Avenue
of trees

FAITH TALK

The real gift
of Christmas

MY STORY

Christmas
transformation



*“Volunteering is at the very core
of being a human.
No one has made it through life
without someone else’s help.”*

- Heather French Henry





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 wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children.

Salvos Magazine

Founders William and Catherine Booth

Salvation Army World Leaders

General Lyndon and Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham

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 17 November 2023

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



salvosonline.org.au



Feature [4]
Family
volunteering

Faith Talk [10]
The real gift
of Christmas

My Story [12]
Christmas
transformation

Volunteering joy

To-do lists are starting to get longer in the busy lead-up to Christmas, yet for many thousands of people in our community, 'volunteering' is one of the first things on their list.

The Salvos are so grateful to those who give their time to pack and distribute hampers, cook and serve meals, provide emergency assistance and organise so many events to make Christmas a happier, more hopeful time for those in need.

In this edition of *Salvos Magazine*, we chat to some volunteers who help the Salvos to help others. Trevor and Lucy have sorted toys and other hamper items at the Salvos in Cairns for about five years; Trevor says, "This grounds us, it's what Christmas is really about – giving joy."

Young mum Julia and her two daughters will sort and distribute gifts, hampers and vouchers in Sydney again this year.

"As a family we have learned the secret of volunteering," Julia says. "You set out to give something to others, but you discover you are far more blessed, enriched and get so much joy when caring for others."

And to all volunteers, we acknowledge you with appreciation and many thanks on International Volunteer Day, 5 December.

Faye Michelson **Salvos Writer**

Family volunteering

Sharing the joy at Christmas

By Naomi Singlehurst

As a young mum who volunteered at her local Sydney Salvos church to sort Christmas gifts, Julia arrived ready to pop her (then) toddler Isabelle on a mat with some toys of her own to keep occupied while she did what she could to help. But Julia was in for a surprise. Even as a toddler, Isabelle started enthusiastically pulling gifts out of bags and helping carry them to their designated areas.

Now aged nine, Isabelle, together with her six-year-old sister Zoe, remains an enthusiastic Salvos Christmas volunteer.

“

I'd be sad if we woke up with no presents. I don't want other kids to feel like that.

”

Julia says volunteering and serving together has enriched the family in more ways than she could have ever imagined.

Showing empathy

Last Christmas, Julia and her daughters were among more than 20,000 volunteers who, together with Salvos workers, sorted and distributed gifts, vouchers and hampers.

Despite their tender years, Isabelle and Zoe overflow with enthusiasm when they talk about helping other kids who

might not otherwise have food or gifts over Christmas time.

“I think others should do [volunteering] too,” says Isabelle. “It shows how much you care about others and makes them feel appreciated and loved and cared for. It makes their day brighter. I'd be sad if we woke up with no presents. I don't want other kids to feel like that – including us.”

Zoe wholeheartedly agrees with her sister, saying, “I like helping others. It's good to do and it's nice.”

Making sacrifices

Helping with Salvos Christmas, as well as The Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal every year, Julia says her girls have learned that volunteering and helping others can mean sacrifice.

“They helped first with the physical doorknock and then, as it turned digital in 2020, doing fitness fundraising challenges as a family. In 2023, everything was themed around 100 and the girls did 100km of walking throughout the month of May.

“There were days when it was tough. They were tired. They got sick at one point, or it was cold outside. A borrowed treadmill meant they could walk even on rainy days, and they kept committed to the end goal.”

Enriching lives

Julia says she and her family are looking forward to volunteering again as a family this Christmas. Julia and her



husband are so happy Isabelle and Zoe are committed to helping others. They now actively and enthusiastically look for ways to care for others and show random acts of kindness.

“

You don't have to have a lot to be able to give.

”

“You should never underestimate what kids can do just because they are young,” Julia says.

“They love helping at Christmas time to sort the toys because it's fun, but also because they recognise how much they have and how other kids don't have that. They also love Jesus and know that the Bible calls us to do good works out of our love for Jesus.

“The good thing about volunteering is that you don't need to have a lot to be able to give. It doesn't cost anything

except time to stand next to a Salvation Army sign and collect donations. It doesn't cost anything to sort out toys at the collection sites. But it gives the person volunteering so much satisfaction and it blesses others in immeasurable ways.

“As parents whose kids also volunteer, my husband and I try to teach our children to have gratitude and be grateful for what they have. Today's world encourages a mindset of 'more' and 'must have' and 'never enough'. That isn't healthy. It's important to us to live with gratitude and be thankful for our blessings.

“And as a family we have learned the secret of volunteering. You set out to give something to others, and as a family that follows Jesus, this is so important. But the thing you discover is, you are far more blessed, enriched and get so much joy when caring for others.”



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

Avenue of Trees

A beautiful Christmas at Eastlakes

By Terri Muendel

We were hosting carols services every Christmas, and it became increasingly difficult to find a date that didn't clash with another community carols event. They were everywhere! So, we felt it was time to do something different; it seemed crazy to put in so much effort for something that so many others were doing. So now we love to go along to one of the other community carols to support them.

In 2020, I heard about an event in New Zealand called the Avenue of Trees. I loved the idea of it. Something I'd never heard of before. Now every year, we have our nativity Sunday service where everyone comes dressed as their favourite nativity character (hilarious donkeys, camels, stars, angels,

wise men, shepherds! So fun!). Then afterwards we set up our trees.

“

We have beautiful lighting and Christmas music playing. It's magical!

”

The last couple of years we've had over 60 trees. We make up a Spotto clue list of things for kids to find (such as the number of trees topped with stars, and the number of nativity scenes), then



everyone casts a vote for their favourite tree. Whoever decorated the winning tree gets a lovely Christmas hamper.

COMMUNITY EFFORT

Everyone at church can be involved by decorating a tree, bringing in a nativity set or being on our team for the three nights of the Avenue. There are many ways to volunteer.

We have all sorts of people decorating trees – businesses, local schools, different ministries and families from Eastlakes Salvos. Then we throw the doors open and provide refreshments for people as they come through. We also open on our last day for people who come in for emergency relief.

We have beautiful lighting and Christmas music playing. It's magical! We've had people walk in and burst into tears! We thought people would stay for 10-15 minutes, but we find most people stay for at least an hour. We have little gifts for the kids as well. Some kids go through two or three times looking for clues and trying to choose a favourite tree.

“

In the Avenue, people just wander through and take their time.

”

When we did carols, we didn't have time to mingle and spend time with people from our community – but in the Avenue, people just wander through and take their time; they are relaxed and just enjoy a chat. It's wonderful.



We have a young mum who came through who is now a regular attendee at Eastlakes Salvos with her little boy. Our Mainly Music families all love to come along as well. We have a sausage sizzle each night. We open the doors at 6pm and close at 8pm. It's nice and early for young families.

We have never charged for entry but put a donation bucket out for people to give if they like. This year, though, we will ask people to bring pantry items to help us stock up our community Salvos Pantry for the new year.

Auxiliary-Lieutenant Terri Muendel is a Salvation Army corps officer (church pastor) in the Hunter region of NSW.



Scan here to read more stories of hope.

What Christmas is all about

Cairns couple enriched by volunteering experience

Trevor and Lucy Auer (pictured) are Salvation Army volunteers in Cairns, Far North Queensland. *Salvos Magazine* talked with them about their experience of volunteering at Christmas.

"We always wanted to do something for others," says Trevor, "but we didn't know what. We are both teachers, and between work and children, we were busy.

"Five or six years ago we thought, the Salvos do a lot of good, and they helped us in the past. So we found out about Christmas volunteering at the Salvos and offered our help.

"We do different things each year. Most years we sort out the toys and other products into categories, then people come and choose for themselves. The focus is all about the clients to make it special for them, an opportunity to go Christmas shopping.

"There are bags with women's personal products, for women who are pregnant, baby things – I wish we could get more of these items, they are really needed," says Lucy.

"We help the community members, talk to them and encourage them," says Trevor. "We try to find out the interests of the children so they can receive presents they will love. It's much harder to get teenage gifts.

"I tend to ask those who come in how they're going, and often they start to open up about how difficult their lives are, why they're coming in. This grounds us, it's what Christmas really is about – giving



joy. It's the true spirit of Christmas, something Jesus would be doing.

Lucy adds, "There is no judgment, no pressure on any of the community members who come. We welcome all cultures and all walks of life. We've found the church that walks the talk, and that is what we like."

"To volunteer before Christmas makes Christmas really Christmas," says Trevor. "People appreciate that you take the time to listen. Some of them cry, some can't believe they are getting this stuff given to them. Just seeing the relief in their faces, it says, 'I've actually got something to give my children on Christmas morning'.

"Volunteering with the Salvos enriches our lives and makes us feel a part of something good and meaningful. Sometimes people don't realise they give us more than we give them."

Gifts that mean more

Discover the joy of giving pre-loved presents this festive season

By Olivia Hurley

Why gift someone a regular Christmas gift when you could give them a landfill-diverting, emissions-limiting, water-sparing, chemical-avoiding, homelessness-reducing, local community-supporting, pre-loved Christmas gift?

This Christmas, Salvos Stores are encouraging Aussies to 'Give a Gift That Means More' by shopping for second-hand presents. Gifts from Salvos Stores mean more because of the added benefits that come with preloved gifts, including the contributions that your purchase will make toward protecting our environment and supporting local communities.

We know that preloved gifting is a new concept to some of us, but when there are so many extra benefits to second-hand gifts compared to those bought from mainstream retailers, why not give it a go?

Every purchase you make at Salvos Stores goes towards supporting The Salvation Army's network of over 2000 vital community programs and services across Australia. These programs provide a helping hand to the members of Australian communities who need it most.

In addition to supporting community programs, your preloved gift will also 'mean more' because it will come with the reassurance that your Christmas shopping is not hurting the environment. In the past year, our customers have helped Salvos Stores save more than 42 million items from landfill!

There are so many great quality, affordable gifts waiting to be uncovered at your local Salvos, or online at salvostores.com.au. Whether your loved one is partial to tugboat sweater vests, vegan recipe books, vintage video game consoles, or something totally unique, you might just be able to find them the perfect present at Salvos Stores. And it will be made all the more meaningful by the social and environmental good behind your purchase.

Gift a gift that means more this Christmas.



The real gift of Christmas

Despair can be the moment when hope is born

By Anthony Castle

I sat with a friend one night. They had started out on a new life that year, getting married and moving into a large home. Things looked bright, but as time had passed, they were increasingly in conflict with their partner. The house had become too expensive, and debts were growing. They had looked forward to the future but as times got tough, things were coming to an end. They had planned to separate and move out in the new year, just after Christmas.

“

What we get from Christmas is hope, but Christmas is not a time of hope for all.

”

At their darkest point, my friend spoke about the prospect of how the holidays would feel. They pictured the rituals of the season, decorating the house, listening to carols, unwrapping gifts and that feeling of the morning, knowing that it was all over.

ONE MORE CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a fresh start for so many but for my friend, the celebrations and cheer seemed worthless. I look forward to Christmas each year, finding something important in the rituals, but in this moment my friend turned to me

in despair; “I just don’t know how I’m going to do one more Christmas.”

Many Christmas traditions originated in mid-winter festivals, celebrating the end of the darkest days of the year. We decorate our houses in fake snow and stars and sing songs of the dawn. We wake up to unwrap presents under a plastic tree, but what I get from these rituals isn’t just old customs and new junk. When times get tough, I find myself looking ahead to this time, sometimes saying ‘just one more Christmas’. When the year seems darkest, I want that feeling of the morning, waking up to the promise of a fresh start.

What we get from Christmas is hope, but Christmas is not a time of hope for all.

The reality is that December and January are often the busiest months for family violence support services. The cost-of-living crisis is seeing more and more people waking up on Christmas morning after sleeping rough in their cars. Mental health support services are in peak demand over the holidays, with a significant increase in people dying by suicide on Christmas Eve. No amount of tinsel and trees can change what this time of year means for those increasingly at-risk and in need.

While I often find myself looking forward to the holidays, to one more Christmas, I know there are many who don’t know how they’ll do it when things get dark, and the despair is too much. The inequality and isolation of our society



is a form of oppression, and for some, one more Christmas might just be one Christmas too many.

“

The darkness is when we need the dawn the most.

”

HOPE COMES

There is a song I often hear the night before Christmas, one of the rituals of the holiday season. *O Holy Night* began as a poem written by a French atheist and wine-seller, but the lyrics spoke of the Christmas story, the darkest point of the night when Christ is born among people living under oppression. The song is a Christmas cliché at this point, but its message is one of a coming liberation, resonating with abolitionists who fought to end slavery in the 1800s. It's a song about despair, and the hope

that comes when we need it, and a reminder of why we find Christmas important. The darkness is when we need the dawn the most.

I had no advice for my friend that night, no gift that would change the things that were over for them. I told them so and spoke about the fresh start that could be coming, that things can get brighter.

While Christmas can seem like worthless customs and junk, these traditions speak to something much more important. The nature of hope is that we don't need it when things are bright but when they're darkest, and this message is the real gift these rituals can give us. Despair can be the moment when hope is born.

*If you or someone you know needs help, contact Lifeline on **13 11 14**.*



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

Christmas transformation

A community housing makeover in Tasmania

By Naomi Singlehurst

There was a happy buzz of chatter and a great deal of laughter as more than 30 members of a community housing complex shared a meal and swapped Christmas gifts. Despite freezing weather, pouring rain and a lot of hard work to organise this and a range of other Christmas parties, Salvation Army Housing Tasmania (SAHT) housing manager Rachel couldn't wipe the grin from her face.

This Christmas lunch was so much more than simply a fun event. It was a major breakthrough!

BUILDING A COMMUNITY

Several years ago, when the Salvos took over management of the housing complex, staff discovered drug-related crime was rampant and tenants were fearful and isolated. Most chose to stay locked in and away from each other.

The small Salvos team, headed by Rachel, worked to radically improve security, clean up the area and offer referrals and support for tenants. A Christmas party was also planned to help encourage community connection.

The first year, only two people turned up.

Rachel says, "Last Christmas, though, more than half the tenants showed up for the Christmas celebration, despite the really terrible weather. And you could see they felt safe and they [now] knew and cared for each other."



MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

Housing around 60 tenants, the complex is one of 194 properties managed by SAHT – an affordable, long-term, community housing provider in Tasmania.

The service currently manages a range of Housing Tasmania public housing and Salvation Army-owned properties and includes a dedicated complex for over 60s, as well as housing for those who have left situations of family and domestic violence. With some tenants coming from backgrounds of disadvantage, homelessness and/or struggles with mental health, the SAHT team offers layers of support beyond housing, including referrals to additional Salvation Army services and to a wide range of external service providers.

“

If you can help somebody just one little bit, then they will help another person.

”

SENSE OF BELONGING

Rachel believes the greatest gift for so many tenants, beyond housing, has been a feeling of safety and belonging.

She says: “When we took over the complex where no one came to Christmas the first year, there were eight drug dealers on site, so it took two years of back and forth going to court and cleaning it up. We offered referrals and housing alternatives to some tenants to help change the demographic.

“Tenants wanted security screens, cameras and lights; we secured those through a grant. Then the next thing they wanted was a vegetable garden, so we had tenant engagement meetings for the community garden. I love gardening myself, so I regularly bring in seedlings and we swap produce,” she says.

CHRISTMAS CARE

In the middle of each year, Rachel also starts slowly buying food to make up almost 200 Christmas hampers.

“Last year we also organised small gifts and a funny gift draw for two of the complexes at their Christmas parties and the tenants loved it. If they got something they knew someone else needed they swapped it. It was a lot of fun.”

HEALTHY TRANSFORMATION

Over time, Rachel says the whole atmosphere has changed, especially in the complex that had been so troubled.

“I know from experience that every little bit of support and community-building helps,” she says.

“If you can help somebody just one little bit, then they will help another person. It’s all about building a healthy community and building good relationships. So in that complex, they now look after one another.

“There’s a very healthy sense of community ownership now. And that is a great thing to be a part of.”



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

Milo Biscuits



Ingredients

125g butter, softened, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup brown sugar, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup raw sugar, 1 egg, 1 tsp vanilla essence, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups self raising flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Milo

Method

- Preheat oven to 160°C.
- Cream butter, brown sugar and raw sugar together.
- Beat in egg and vanilla.
- Fold in flour and Milo.
- Roll mixture into balls and place on a baking tray.
- Flatten biscuits with a spoon or fork.
- Bake for 10 minutes for soft biscuits or 15 minutes for crunchy biscuits.



Quick quiz

1. The British incorporated cookies into their daily tea routine in the 19th century, but called them what?
2. In Medieval England, what baked treat was thought to have medicinal properties?
3. Which character on *Sesame Street* is famous for saying "Om Nom Nom Nom"?
4. What flavour cookie was invented by accident in 1938 by US chef Ruth Wakefield adding an ingredient to her butter drop dough cookies?
5. What name did she give these cookies?

Bible byte

"Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!"

Psalm 34, verse 8
New Living Translation

Tum-Tum

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



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

Wordsearch

Words are hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, forwards and backwards. Enjoy!

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| Bake | Honey |
| Biscuit | Ingredient |
| Bowl | Knead |
| Butter | Melt |
| Chocolate | Mix |
| Cocoa | Oven |
| Cookie | Salt |
| Dough | Stir |
| Eggs | Topping |
| Flavour | Tray |
| Flour | Treat |
| Glaze | Vanilla |
| Gluten | Whisk |

FUNNY THINGS KIDS SAY

**"They brought Jesus gold and myrrh but I would have brought him a nice warm blanket."
 Rebecca, 5**

**"I don't know what those presents were the wise men brought Jesus, but a Lego set would have been better."
 William, 7**



At my grandson's nativity play, the third wise man was hilarious when he marched up to the manger and bellowed: "Frank sent this!"

DID YOU KNOW?

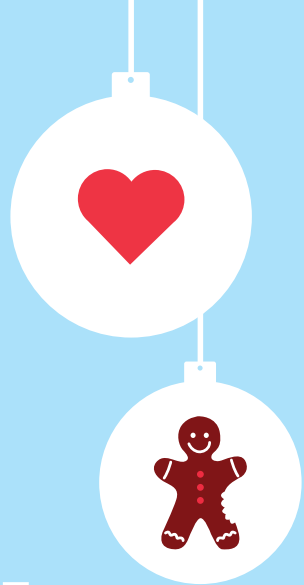
Cookie Day is celebrated on 4 December.

The word 'cookie' comes from the Dutch word 'koekje', meaning little cake.

The earliest cookies are thought to date back to the 7th century in Persia after the use of sugar became common in the area.

Quiz answers: 1. Biscuits 2. Gingerbread 3. Cookie Monster 4. Chocolate chip cookies 5. Toll House Cookie
Turn-Turn: is hiding amongst the milk on page 12.

Give a
gift that
means
more



salvos

STORES