

salvos

magazine



**The
literacy
key**
Unlocking
a path to
freedom and
empowerment



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FEATURE

For the
love of
reading

FAITH TALK

Everyone
has a part
to play

MY STORY

Kerry has
a place to
call home

“To learn to read
is to light a fire;
every syllable that is
spelled out is a spark.”

– Victor Hugo





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.

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Finding freedom

When we learn to read, we don't always think about the freedom it brings to our lives – the freedom to learn, imagine, grow, earn a living, help others, fully participate in our communities – and so much more. We can easily take it for granted.

As International Literacy Day approaches on 8 September, this edition focuses on reading and education around the world. We look at the sobering statistics, both in Australia and overseas, of reading and writing levels among millions of students, and the small but significant part the Salvos play through their education services and programs.

The Salvos in Australia run homework and after-school clubs in some areas, as well as focused reading programs. Lerrisse Smith explores one such program – STeP123 – operating in Southern Tasmania.

In Faith Talk, Michelle Gibson also writes about being small but significant and how important and wanted we all are to God. Everyone counts. Everyone matters, regardless of who they are or where they come from. Including you. Including me.

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

Simone Worthing **Editor**



The literacy key



Unlocking a path to freedom and empowerment

By Fay Foster

Each year on 8 September, International Literacy Day is celebrated around the world to raise awareness of the importance of literacy and promote lifelong learning for all people.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Literacy is not just about educating, it is a unique and powerful tool to eradicate poverty and a strong means for social and human progress."

Literacy empowers and liberates people, expanding their ability to participate in the labour market and thereby reducing poverty. Women empowered by literacy have greater life choices for themselves and an immediate impact on the health and education of their families – in particular, the education of girl children (unesco.org/en/literacy/need-know).



Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on education. At the peak of the crisis in 2020, 94 percent of the world's student population – 1.6 billion students – were forced out of school. At least a third of school children (463 million) were unable to access remote learning (UNICEF, 2020). It is estimated that the resulting learning losses and disruption have acutely affected 617 million children and adolescents – who already were not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics.

“

In 2020, 94 percent of the world's student population were forced out of school.

”

In April 2023, it was estimated that half of the world's student population (more than 800 million learners) were still affected by full or partial school closures. In 29 countries, schools remained fully closed (bit.ly/3X0BEdb).

UNESCO has estimated that in 2020 alone, around 24 million learners from pre-primary to tertiary education would not return to their studies, including 5.9 million students in South and West Asia, and another 5.3 million students in



sub-Saharan Africa. The resulting poor reading and writing abilities expose these people to greater risk of missing life-saving information and losing their livelihoods, while their poor literacy skills and life circumstances also limit their access to distance learning offered by digital and other technologies (bit.ly/3YMeSHw).

“

We cannot continue to allow a large percentage of the world’s students to miss out on literacy learning.

”

Around the world, The Salvation Army is attempting to ensure that children in developing countries continue to gain the literacy skills they need to fully participate in their societies. In 2023, their education services included 1,399

primary schools, 564 secondary and high schools and 448 pre-school kindergartens – educating 549,423 students. There were also 54 vocational training centres and 18 colleges and universities.

In some areas in Australia, the Salvos also run homework or after-school clubs where children receive help with their homework, tutoring, or just a safe and welcoming place to complete their assignments.

International Literacy Day 2024 will focus on Literacy teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond, with a focus on the role of educators and changing teaching practices. We cannot continue to allow a large percentage of the world’s students to miss out on literacy learning because of their inability to access the required technology.



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

For the love of reading

Building consistency, conversations and confidence

It's a sobering reality. Australia has a reading problem. One-third of our children can't read proficiently. But there's good news. The Salvation Army's STeP123 Literacy is transforming children's lives one step at a time through an exciting program initiative that fosters a love of reading, enhanced literacy skills and positive relationships, and as *Salvos Magazine* journalist, LERISSE SMITH, discovered, it's working a treat.

It was an exceptionally poignant moment that left a lasting impression.

When a young second-grader excitedly picked up a book with his STeP123 volunteer to immerse himself in yet another captivating story, he went to turn the pages – but couldn't. His small fingers simply could not handle the task due to underdeveloped fine motor skills.

The experience was to become a significant and touching chapter in the volunteer's mission to support young children in developing their literacy skills. It also highlighted that not all children have access to books or are used to reading, and that many today are glued to screens rather than to books.



Reading Together plays an important role in children's lives
Photo courtesy Lina Kivaka (pexels.com)

Thanks to the STeP123 Literacy's *Reading Together* program, initiated in Tasmania, many primary school children are turning the pages of much-beloved books and opening their world up to the enchantment of stories.

"You certainly can't beat a beautiful, illustrated book with an amazing story," said Suzanne West, STeP123 Literacy Program Coordinator. "A story that can captivate a child to be caught up in and create a passion for reading."

“

You certainly can't beat a beautiful, illustrated book with an amazing story.

”

About 120 primary school students aged six and upwards are involved with the initiative, plus 30 volunteers across nine primary schools in Southern Tasmania.

LITERACY SKILLS

It was launched with the concept that STeP123 would collaborate with teachers to identify and assist children in developing their literacy skills.



Suzanne West coordinates the SteP123 Literacy Program.

Currently, the children are engaged in the weekly program, allowing them to read alongside and converse with an adult volunteer mentor.

"The idea is to get the children to enjoy reading and develop their enthusiasm for reading and conversation," Suzanne said.

"Many children these days don't have adults who read with them at home due to many factors, and the subsequent conversation is crucial to increasing the ability to read. *Reading Together* is valuable for children and volunteers to nurture positive relationships together.



Community volunteers read weekly with each child.

"Volunteers are paired with a child, and the feedback received is that self-esteem and confidence in individual reading skills has risen dramatically."

MENTORING

The volunteers read with a child one-on-one each week for about 20 minutes, providing consistency and continuity for the students involved to develop their literacy skills and self-worth. They usually read to at least three children in a session.

“

The feedback received is that self-esteem and confidence in individual reading skills have risen dramatically.

”

"They feel that they are making a positive and important difference in the life and future of the child they are sharing with," Suzanne said.

"They will say they can notice great differences in the levels of the reading and their literacy development and their comprehension. Over the years, since the program's inception, teachers have reported they are seeing positive results with individual children's literacy development in their classes."



Scan here to read the full story and more from the Salvos.

Generous bequests helping Salvos ease housing crisis in Cairns

New housing hub putting roof over heads of city's most vulnerable people

For many people, tropical Cairns recalls memories of relaxing holidays and visits to nearby rainforests. But beyond the glossy postcard images of Far North Queensland, a severe housing crisis is pushing people into homelessness.

Locals with nowhere to go are being forced to live in their cars and tents. Hundreds of people are sleeping rough in the Cairns CBD, and crisis services are being inundated with pleas for help.

But now, a special group of Salvation Army supporters is helping change the future for those without a roof over their heads.

These supporters have all left The Salvation Army a gift in their wills, totaling \$1 million. With the help of these

generous bequests, a modern housing hub will be built in Cairns. It will provide a permanent place to call home for some of the city's most vulnerable people.

The new hub will include 40 modern social housing units for single people aged over 25 who are at a high risk of long-term homelessness.

Aaron Pimlott, Homelessness Manager for Queensland, says the new housing hub will help fill "a massive gap".

"This new hub will provide people in need with immediate housing for as long as they need it. They will also receive wraparound case management support. Each unit can even be a forever home if the person wishes it to be," he says.



An artist's impression of the new social housing units to be constructed in Cairns, Far North Queensland.



“
The best thing is
being able to come
home with my
kids to somewhere
that’s mine.

– Shelley

“There is a bottleneck of people who are seeking to leave crisis accommodation for permanent homes. There isn’t enough long-term housing for people who have fallen through the cracks.”

SECOND CHANCE FOR SHELLEY

For Queenslanders like Shelley, permanent housing is a second chance at life. Shelley had experienced family violence and was battling drug addiction. Then, she lost custody of her children and became homeless.

“The pain of that time will never leave me,” she says. “I was couch surfing and sleeping in the car. I had my kids ripped from me and had to do everything I could to get them back.”

Shelley had successfully completed rehab. Soon after, she was able to access permanent housing like that in the new Cairns hub. No longer using drugs, and with a safe and secure home, Shelley could have her children back to live with her.

“It is the biggest step in rebuilding my life,” Shelley says. “It is having stability and being able to fill my home with things I love. The best thing is being able to come home with my kids to somewhere that’s mine.”

If you are considering a gift in your will, Aaron wants you to know something important. “You will be creating something extraordinary beyond your lifetime,” he says.

“Your gift is going into bricks and mortar. You are providing vulnerable people with housing for many, many years to come.

“When you leave this earth and give this gift to the world, your legacy continues. I can’t thank you enough.”



Scan here for
more information
on Salvation
Army services.

Small is significant

Everyone has a part to play

By Michelle Gibson



We had finally bought a new printer after a couple of years of putting up with our old, not-so-good one. We had tried to buy one earlier, but new printers were almost impossible to buy due to an apparent shortage of a micro-chip. Yes, COVID-19 was to blame.

So, we were happy when we could buy a new one. We bought it from a shop in Darwin, and fortunately had a friend coming the three-hour drive to Katherine, so we didn't need to pick it up.

It wasn't something that had to be put together, except for one piece. My husband Niall took it carefully out of the box ... and the phone rang! Well, he accidentally dropped that one piece which was sitting on top of the printer.

A little part fell off. The tiniest of parts. We could see where we thought that it should go, but we couldn't work out how to get it back on.

FINDING THE CULPRIT

The printer worked well anyway. That was, until we wanted to do back-to-back copies. The first page came out nicely, but the second page would misfeed, which meant that both pages were ruined. We weren't sure whether it was a fault with the whole printer, or whether this little suspect part was the culprit.

So, the next time we went to Darwin we took the bigger piece and the tiny little part and visited the shop. The shop assistant was very helpful, investigating



with us how to put the pieces together again. He also said that if that wasn't the problem, they would just replace the whole printer, which was nice of him.

We found how to put it together within a few minutes, and, you have probably guessed the result. Yes, perfect printing!

“

We are all important, no matter what part we play.

”

It just goes to show that a tiny part can make a big difference. Firstly, a tiny part stopped us from buying a printer altogether; then a tiny part stopped us from using our printer to its best ability.

WE ARE ALL IMPORTANT

We might think that we are only a 'tiny part', that what we do is insignificant. We might think that we won't be missed if we don't turn up. However, we are

all important, no matter what part we play. Like the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians, all the parts of the body are important and serve a purpose, big or small. In fact, he says, "Some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary" (1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 22 *New Living Translation*).

So, next time you think that no one will miss you if you don't turn up for your sports game or choir practice, church or family dinner, remember that we are all important, from the big photocopier down to the tiny bit which turns the paper over on the rare times that we need it.

Major Michelle Gibson is a Salvation Army officer living on the lands of the Jawoyn, Dagoman and Wardaman peoples, Katherine, Northern Territory.



Scan here for more stories of hope.

The path to permanent housing

Kerry and her children find a place to call home

Kerry shares her story of the challenges of being a single mum and trying to secure permanent housing. The Salvation Army's Emergency and Transitional Housing Service, Oakleigh House (Tas.) helped Kerry with accommodation, school enrolments and general links to community support. Every client has a case-worker, so they are supported along the way and never feel alone. Kerry says she is happy and relieved to know her children now have a place to call home again.

"We were private renters and the house that we were in – the owner decided he wanted to put his family in it," says Kerry. "Having two kids and looking for a place, it was very challenging. Getting nowhere with private rental wasn't easy either. Being a single parent, apparently, I wasn't making enough money, so I was starting to get very worried. I thought we would end up on the street.

"I heard about Oakleigh House from Housing Connect and they told me to give them a call. In 48 hours, they said we had a place."

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Karen Riley is the team leader at Oakleigh House, where the Salvos provide crisis and transitional accommodation in the community.

"[When] we first met Kerry, she was referred to us by another shelter," Karen explains. "When she moved in, we helped her with school enrolments and generally linking her into the supports that she had identified in the community. It is all self-contained, but we do have workers here on site. All our clients have a caseworker assigned to them



Kerry, left, now has permanent housing, thanks to the work of Karen Riley, right, and her team at Oakleigh House.



Kerry is happy and relieved to finally have a secure place where she and her children have settled.

who will work with them on their goals and how they can get from here to their own permanent housing.”

Kerry and her children were just happy knowing they had “a roof over our heads” until they could find another home.

“

When I found out I was going into permanent housing, I felt really happy...

”

“The workers were very supportive and very friendly,” Kerry shares. “They made it feel like we were just normal human beings. With my support worker, she helped us if we needed anything. They were just there to have a normal conversation. So, you didn’t feel isolated.

“When I found out I was going into permanent housing, I felt really happy knowing that my kids had a place that they could call home again.”

WONDERFUL RELIEF

Karen explains that “[The Salvos] will stay involved for a little while just to make sure that if she needs help navigating supports and things, we can help with that.

“I think the most rewarding thing is seeing people get to that end. So, like with Kerry today, she has been offered her own home, she is settled in, she is so happy. We follow them right from the start when they come in from crisis, then transitional, and then they get their own permanent housing which is just wonderful.”

Kerry says that she would “like people to know about The Salvation Army, that they are very helpful, they care about you, they don’t judge. It has been a big relief.”

As told to Salvos Studios bit.ly/3X3NYJV



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

Waldorf Salad



Ingredients

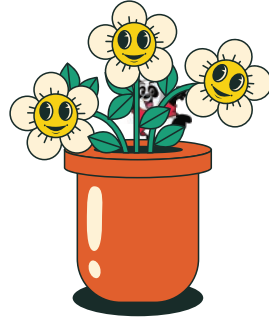
6 tblsp plain yogurt; 1 tblsp lemon juice; salt and pepper to taste; 2 apples, cored and chopped; ½ cup raisins; 1 cup thinly sliced celery; 1 cup chopped walnuts; lettuce

Optional extras: grapes, dried cranberries, diced pineapple, dried dates, chicken or turkey, onion, sunflower seeds, pecans

Method

- In a medium bowl whisk together yogurt, lemon juice, salt and pepper.
- Stir in apple, raisins, celery and walnuts.
- Chill until ready to serve.
- Serve on a bed of fresh lettuce with optional extras of your choice.

HAVE A LAUGH



What do flowers call their grandfathers?
Poppy.

What flower in the garden
is fiercest of them all?
The tiger lily.

What do you call flowers who are BFFs?
Buds.

Why are flowers so lazy?
Because they are always in a bed.

SIGNING IN



Sudoku

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

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



1. In which country did the Olympics originate?
2. What is the official motto for the Olympics?
3. What colours are the Olympic rings?
4. What do the Olympic rings represent?
5. When and where were the first Winter Olympics held?
6. What prize was given to winners of the Olympics in ancient Greece?
7. When did the Olympics first award gold, silver and bronze medals?
8. Which country has hosted the most Olympic Games?

Tum-Tum



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

Bible byte

"So, the impossible is possible with God."

Luke chapter 1, verse 37
The Voice Bible translation

Quiz answers: 1. Greece. 2. Citrus. 3. Blue, yellow, black, green and red. 4. Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania. 5. Chamoniix, France in 1924. 6. Olive branch crown. 7. 1904. 8. United States. I am: Ian Thorpe. Tum-Tum: is hiding behind the flowers on page 14.

WHO AM I?

I have won five Olympic gold medals, three silver and one bronze.

I was the most successful athlete at the 2000 Summer Olympics in my hometown.

At the age of 14, I became the youngest-ever individual male World Champion with victory in the 400-metre freestyle. I continued to dominate this event for the next six years.

I was named Australian Swimmer of the Year from 1999 to 2003, and Young Australian of the Year in 2000.

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

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			5.	6.	7.	8.
			9.	10.	11.	12.

Emergency assistance
The Salvation Army Emergency Assistance Centre (EAC) provides financial and non-financial assistance to people in need. For more information, visit www.salvationarmy.org.au or call 1800 650 650.

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*Images subject to change