

On the Scene

SPRING 2011 NEWS AND STORIES FROM THE SALVATION ARMY AUSTRALIA EASTERN TERRITORY

Saving grace

“My mum attended our corps (church) anniversary. We performed on stage singing, and doing other items, and my mother said she watched us performing knowing, full well, the next day she would kill us. She felt calm – no remorse.

“But Brigadier Spillet, The Salvation Army officer, got up to speak and mum told me his next words pierced her heart. He said: ‘I feel in my heart God is telling me that there is an adult here that needs Jesus to forgive your sin and heal your hurts ... God has told me that this decision will not wait until tomorrow, it has to be tonight!’ Mum stood up and walked quickly forward, bursting into uncontrollable tears.” GARY RAYMOND

If it wasn't for a knock on the door, many years ago, by a **Salvation Army** officer inviting five little boys to attend the local Sunday school, Gary Raymond APM, OAM, could have been dead within weeks, and would never have had the chance to go on to help save the lives of innumerable others.

His highly depressed mother, who was exhausted by poverty, often unable to feed her children and living with a husband who drank and gambled heavily, had circled the date on the calendar when she would drug and then gas Gary, along with his four younger brothers and herself.



ABOVE: GARY RAYMOND APM, OAM, HAS GONE ON TO HELP SAVE THE LIVES OF INNUMERABLE OTHERS.

She simply had no hope. The transformation in his family, the day after the Sunday school celebration, was astonishing, says Gary, who went on to become a highly decorated NSW Police Force Chief Inspector and today serves as a member of The Salvation Army Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Board.

Gary says when his mother told his father what she had been planning to do, “My father expressed his deep sorrow and promised things would change, which they drastically did.

“Several members of our family, including my mum, and later myself, went on to serve The Salvation Army in uniform.”

After a distinguished police career which included suicide negotiation, Gary works in ‘retirement’ in a range of volunteer roles including chaplain to the NSW Police Post Trauma Support Groups. He carries out around 80 speaking engagements each year

and runs free training and workshops, through The Salvation Army, in suicide prevention, suicide crisis negotiation, and support for those bereaved by suicide.

In 2007, Gary was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to the community in critical incident stress management, suicide prevention and exemplary police service.

Gary today maintains a passion for seeing lives saved physically and spiritually, and says: “The Salvation Army has been involved in suicide prevention since 1907, and in my work I have seen amazing things over the years, which I call God’s miracles out of messes.

“God used me so many times to save the lives of suicidal people. As I negotiated, I was able to tell them that God loved them and had a plan for their life. Often, this was enough to cause people to come back from the edge and give their life another go!”

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focus



**RED SHIELD
APPEAL**

Thank you Australia

The Salvation Army Appeals Director, Major Jeff Winterburn, has thanked Australians for their incredible generosity in donating to the 2011 Red Shield Appeal, which has raised more than \$69 million nationally. Specifically he has thanked the army of volunteers who assisted with the Doorknock, in late May, exceeding the target and contributing \$10 million to the total.

Major Winterburn says: "The simple reality is the need for funds is critical this year. After all the challenges we've been facing in recent months, helping the victims of floods and people in crisis, our resources are severely stretched."

In their footsteps

The life of Salvation Army Chaplain Major Albert Moore has been featured in a Channel 9 television program titled *In Their Footsteps*, a 10-part series, which examines the long-term effects of war on Australian families.

Salvos Legal Expands

In July 2011, The Salvation Army launched the Salvos Legal Commercial arm specialising in property and conveyancing law, at market competitive rates.

The unique business model of Salvos Legal means that it operates independently of donations, with all profits from the Commercial arm, funding the Salvos Legal Humanitarian arm (which provides free advice and representation to people most in need who can't afford a lawyer).

For more information visit salvoslegal.org.au

Standing together – Qld disaster report

Six months after flood and cyclone disasters devastated large areas of Queensland, The Salvation Army has released a report documenting its immediate and ongoing relief efforts.

Standing Together provides details on how the \$23.6 million generously donated to The Salvation Army, after the disasters, is being spent.

During the crisis more than 200,000 meals and refreshments were served by officers, staff and volunteers at 25 different disaster zones across the state.

When the wind and waters subsided, The Salvation Army moved out of evacuation centres and into people's streets, standing alongside flood and cyclone survivors, struggling to rebuild their homes and lives.

More than 1000 volunteers were involved in the crisis response, with Salvation Army teams flown in from NSW and ACT to assist. Many volunteers spent weeks on the road, moving from one disaster zone to the next.

Trauma counsellors have been employed, financial counselling services increased and a 24-hour disaster hotline is still operational.

In April, The Salvation Army hosted a holiday camp at its Collaroy Youth Centre in Sydney for a number of families affected by the disaster – many of them still grieving the loss of loved ones.

"The Salvation Army has been overwhelmed by the needs we have encountered in Qld communities impacted by flooding and Cyclone Yasi earlier this year," says Major Paul

Moulds, who is heading up The Salvation Army's flood response effort.

"We are so grateful to Australians who have trusted us with the resources to respond to these needs. We will not let you down," he says.

Standing Together can be viewed at salvos.org.au/disaster

Salvation Army flood and cyclone assistance line – **1300 66 22 17**



ABOVE: SALVATION ARMY OFFICER MAJOR MARGARET DOBBIE HELPED FEED THOUSANDS AT FLOOD EVACUATION CENTRES AND ALSO CAME ALONGSIDE VICTIMS AS THEY COPED WITH THE PAIN OF LOSING EVERYTHING.

'Angels' rebuild with forgotten flooded

"Out of the blue, Neville arrived at our farm, parked his car and stayed. He got on the tractor and did the work we couldn't pay anyone else to do. He was amazing ... He's turned up three times, just at the right time, and I actually said to my husband – are you sure he's a real person and not an angel?" JODIE

Jodie and Richard, with their three young children, own 2000 acres (500ha) of mixed farming properties, which span the NSW/Qld border. After years of drought, the couple, like so many other farming families, hoped that this was the year they would make a decent income, and finally make a dent in what was becoming a frightening debt.

Then, in January, floods of unheard of proportions roared through their properties, "Sovereignton" and "Old Mingoola", wiping out sheep, seed, bikes, spray units, around \$250,000 worth of hay, plus their vegetable crop, which was potentially worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Emergency flood assistance funding didn't stretch to their farmhouse, based on the NSW side of the border.

Jodie says: "All our land, our sheds and our machinery were also affected, and about \$300,000 was not covered by insurance."

Stunned and trying to deal with the very real possibility of losing it all, they were feeling shell-shocked and very alone when, **Salvation Army** Southern Queensland Rural Chaplain, Envoy Neville Radecker, turned up, unannounced, to lend a hand.

With some help from Neville, whom they had never met before, the family worked day and night to replant a smaller crop, hoping it would bring in enough money to survive.

Jodie says: "Neville's help was very humbling.

"It was very tough even before the floods and I hadn't dared open the mail for months, so at first I was a mess, but when Neville thought I was ready, he sat down with me and we opened the bills together. He helped with a few we couldn't pay – and without that we probably couldn't have continued at all.

"We had no idea that there were



ABOVE: RICHARD SURVEYS IRRIGATION PIPES DAMAGED DURING THE FLOODS. & INSET: SALVATION ARMY NORTH NSW RURAL CHAPLAINS, MAJORS PETER AND JEAN RIDLEY.



rural Salvation Army chaplains, and that they were so devoted to helping rural Australians."

A week after the floods, Salvation Army Rural Chaplains for Northern NSW, Majors Jean and Peter Ridley, were on their way home following the funeral of Jean's aunt (who had been killed in Qld flooding) and decided also to detour through the same Mingoola/Bonshaw area.

Shocked at the horrendous devastation, and the mood of the locals as funds and emergency services were already completely overstretched dealing with the flooding over the border in Qld, Peter and Jean raced home, hooked up their caravan and headed back. They ended up staying for months.

"We got there exactly a week after the flood hit so the people were still fairly raw. The immediate need was just listening to their stories, crying with them ... They were so devastated, we had people who couldn't even talk," Peter says.

Realising that the task was simply too big, the couple called on a number of friends from Salvation Army corps (churches) – all retirees.

Peter says: "They helped clear fence lines, pick-up rubbish, clean houses ...

anything to help. We went to all the properties. I don't think there were any we missed."

"One family was packed for their first ever family holiday," says Jean, "but ended up sheltered in their shearing shed.

"When they came back down to the house, the three kids were living in a little room off the lounge room and all the bedrooms were filled with torn-up carpet. We organised our teams and spent three days there, painted their rooms for them and cleared fence lines. They just couldn't believe it."

When the Rotary Club in Tenterfield raised \$15,000 for fencing material for the area, The Salvation Army matched it and later raised funds for more.

Peter and Jean say the mood in the area is now reasonably good, but a great deal of trauma remains.

Asked why they have such a passion for caring, Peter explains: "There's a Bible verse that says, 'the love of Christ compels us.'

"Our hearts go out to these people who have lost everything."

And, it's far from a one-way blessing, they say.

"We've got friends at Mingoola now for life," Peter says. ○

From survive to thrive

“Years of addiction take a toll ... The focus when you are in addiction is the addiction – the next hit, the next drink, the next bet ... Many rehabilitation participants have either lost life skills, such as cooking and budgeting, or never had them in the first place. So part of the process is to help them gain confidence by learning and mastering new skills. Their confidence absolutely grows.” PATRICK BOOTH, LIFE SKILLS WORKER, MOONYAH

A year ago Adam was so sick his mother had to carry him around the house. Food was little more than fuel to drag his drug-addicted body from one hit to the next.

“I could barely finish a cheeseburger without vomiting. I could go days without eating anything,” he says.

Today, Adam, who has now graduated from The Salvation Army’s residential rehabilitation centre, ‘Moonyah’ (Qld), loves his food! He recently participated in the first series of cookery classes run by hospitality professional Sally Lynch, who volunteers her time at the centre.

“It was great,” Adam says. “Sally taught us how to take normal ingredients and turn them into something spectacular.”

Explaining the course, Sally says: “What we do, for example, is make a big batch of Bolognese sauce and turn it into tacos, then shepherds pie, then throw in some noodles and add stock, and make a beautiful soup. It taught participants that they could feed themselves all week on about \$12 and, with one or two basic ingredients and recipes, they could eat really delicious stuff, rather than spend \$40 a week on takeaway.”

The course is part of a wide range of living skills taught at the centre, which offers 83 long-term residential rehabilitation beds, plus a 12-bed detoxification unit, extended care beds, and a range of services for outpatients, such as ongoing counselling.



ABOVE: SALLY LYNCH (CENTRE) HELPS THOSE IN REHABILITATION DISCOVER THE JOY OF COOKING AND SHARING FOOD.

Participants can also study literacy, numeracy, computer literacy and budgeting; learn about cooking, anger management and positive parenting; and take part in an Australian-first tax preparation service (run in partnership with the Australian Taxation Office).

Moonyah Assistant Manager Major Joan Birch says life skills training is an essential part of the rehabilitation process not only for practical reasons, but also to boost self-confidence.

She says: “We have some clients who could run rings around any of us with the skills they have – what they’ve achieved in their lives – but addiction has got the better of them.

“But there are others who started using drugs and alcohol at an early age and their living/social skills are minimal.”

After leading her first cookery class, Sally Lynch decided that her classes could, and should, offer much more than basic cooking skills.

She was shocked, after years of taking enthusiastic tourists on food holidays and day trips, to watch Moonyah participants all working alone and then retreating to silently eat alone. Sally says: “Many were looking after themselves, because it was quite likely taking every fibre of their will to fight their addiction. But thinking about other people really is part of the healing process.”

So Sally encouraged participants to not only learn the basics of cooking, but to work in teams, and discover the joy of setting an attractive table, inviting friends to join them and eating together as a group, in the beautiful garden where the classes are held.

“It all became a lovely ritual,” she says. “The transformation in the group members was amazing.”

People featured in photographs in this newsletter (and past editions) are not necessarily the clients of the services.



If you would like further information, please tick the relevant boxes and return by mail to: **The Salvation Army, GPO Box 9888, Your Capital City.** Or fax to: **02 9266 9805.**

- Worship and church programs
- Community services
- How I may make regular donations to the Red Shield Appeal
- Wills and bequests

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Letters & feedback welcome!