

On the Scene

AUTUMN 2012 NEWS AND STORIES FROM THE SALVATION ARMY AUSTRALIA EASTERN TERRITORY

New skills, new hope

“They’re beautiful kids ...They’re starting to get their lives together... and are now doing certificates you wouldn’t think possible when they first started.

“We do a lot of work with parents too and they are in tears. They can’t get over the difference in their kids, and they are so relieved that someone has finally taken an interest.” TOM OSBORNE

When they first turn up at **The Salvation Army Tom Quinn Centre**, Bundaberg (Qld) some of the young people enrolled in the Social Inclusion Program (SIP) are completely withdrawn and lack the confidence to make any eye contact. Others are self-harming. Many are struggling with school, or have left school early.

For many young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), or a range of mild disabilities (and at times with a dual diagnosis with a mental health issue) life may involve subtle peer rejection at best, or cruel bullying at worst.

Trying to manage in a world where they may be expected to function ‘normally’ but may struggle to read other people’s emotions and social cues, can make classroom learning a challenge.

Tom Osborne who manages the Tom Quinn Centre (which runs a wide array of accredited training and work experience programs for around 80-90 people each day) says: “We’ve always had disabled clients coming to the centre



ABOVE: THE SALVATION ARMY’S JODY SCHNEIDER WITH KIDS FROM THE TOM QUINN CENTRE.

with carers to use the pool, or do some woodwork, but what we started finding was a large number of young people, with milder disabilities, were just getting dropped here to hang around, by parents at their wits end.

“Our facilitator Jody (Schneider), who was studying disability services, saw a huge gap in services for these young people, and so we created the SIP.”

The SIP currently supports around 19 young people with mild disabilities, aged 12 to 21, who are able to learn, but who are struggling at school, or who are early school leavers and need some form

of training and employment. Participants must be registered with the Queensland Government’s Disability and Community Care Services.

The program offers school based support and work experience in a range of subjects such as horticulture, hospitality, retail, business and woodwork. The program is designed to lead to genuine sustainable employment, also offering lifeskills training and work placement.

The SIP also offers SAGALA (Salvation Army Guards and Legion Activities) which is a church based life skills program

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focus



RED SHIELD
APPEAL

We need you

The Salvation Army needs volunteer collectors for the 2012 Red Shield Appeal Doorknock to be held on the weekend of 19th and 20th May.

The Red Shield Appeal helps finance The Salvation Army's vast network of social and community services.

Please come along yourself, or organise a team of friends or workmates. The Doorknock is great fun and only takes a few hours. To volunteer, call **13 SALVOS (13 72 58)** or visit **salvos.org.au**

Alcohol and mental health

New research released by The Salvation Army, as part of its annual Alcohol Awareness Week, explores community perceptions of the link between alcohol consumption and mental health.

The Roy Morgan research found that 15.1 million people aged 14 plus (81 per cent) consider that drinking alcohol can worsen a person's state of mental health. More information at **salvos.org.au/alcohol**

Salvos Stores take on the big guns

Salvos Stores (Eastern Territory – covering NSW, QLD and the ACT) made it into the finals of the Oracle World Retail Awards in late 2011, in the "Responsible Retailer of the Year" category, competing against retailers such as Marks and Spencer (which has a revenue of £9.7 billion).

The Oracle World Retail Awards has attracted a record number of entries this year.

They recognise global excellence across all the key areas of retail.

For more information on Salvos Stores visit **salvos.org.au/stores**

Financial recovery after floods

As part of the ongoing response to the community rebuilding effort, and with funding from the Queensland Department of Communities, The Salvation Army has established three new Moneycare services around the 2011 Queensland flood-damaged towns of Laidley, Gatton and Dalby, also providing additional staff for the Moneycare service in Toowoomba.



ABOVE: MONEYCARE COUNSELLOR, GEORGE NATHAN, WHO WAS EMPLOYED IN THE LOCKYER VALLEY AREA TO MEET INCREASED DEMAND FOLLOWING THE QUEENSLAND FLOODS.

Moneycare is a free financial counselling service which runs in around 40 locations throughout Australia.

According to Moneycare head Tony Devlin, who recently visited the area, many residents remain quite shell-shocked and, with so many still living in temporary accommodation, are also suffering a great sense of displacement.

Tony says the new services not only offer traditional financial counselling, but also work to alert flood-affected residents to all grants and services available.

He says: "I recently spent a week in the area with The Salvation Army's recovery team ... and there's a long, long way to go. Some communities have really been decimated ... houses were vacant and the complete internal linings were gone.

"The financial and emotional issues are really hitting people considerably now and I think they will keep doing so for the next 12 or 18 months."

The Salvation Army's 12 month report on the ongoing flood recovery response, including stories of lives touched, such as George Nathan (pictured), will be posted at **salvos.org.au/disaster** at the end of February. ○

FROM PAGE 1 for youth, similar to Scouts, and is the first time it has been implemented in a Salvation Army social centre.

A weekly soccer tournament with other young people from local disability services (and strongly supported by the local Diggers Football Club) is a highlight, and many of the young people who have been socially isolated often begin to form their first real friendships.

Course creator and facilitator Jody Schneider says: "Many of our clients have ASD or Asperger Syndrome, and a proportion also come from dysfunctional homes. They are not fitting into mainstream school, but they can't get into special schools because their disabilities are deemed too mild.

"Three years on, we are now getting great feedback from families, from the Department of Communities and the schools. They love the results, which certainly don't come overnight, as they

are complex kids with complex needs.

"For example, we have two guys who are coming into their third year who both have jobs now. One of the young men has a mental health illness as well as ASD. He was addicted to computer games. He would lock himself alone in his room all day. I couldn't bear to think of what would have happened to him if he didn't come to us.

"We have a young girl who self harmed and had such a struggle at school, and she just refused to go. She's now working in the Tom Quinn Café and asking to do year 10 and wants to become a pastry cook."

Team co-worker Janette Young agrees and says: "The program is one of a kind and we don't know anything else like it that's been done.

"One young man couldn't look anyone in the eye or talk to anybody when he first came here. He's now on a work placement and he has done his Certificate II in Horticulture. The change in so many of these kids is just amazing!" ○

Goats and innovation in aged care

“Recently I watched as one resident took his son and grandchildren out to the animal enclosure. It was a beautiful day and he sat with his son while his grandchildren fed the goats. It was lovely to witness.” SALVATION ARMY MAJOR STEVEN O’NEILL

When he took on the role earlier this year as manager of The Salvation Army Cairns Aged Care Centre (Brisbane) Salvation Army Major Steven O’Neill understood the design philosophy behind the spacious, light and airy rooms, along with the raised garden beds, aviaries and fruit trees. He knew such features were highly conducive to resident wellbeing,

adding touches of beauty, and making the centre feel like home, rather than an institution.

However, he was slightly uncertain about the benefit of a proposed hobby farm, and the first of its residents – five pet goats.

He says: “Initially, when we opened the Cairns Centre in January last year (named after former Salvation Army Commissioner William Cairns OA and his brother Commissioner Alistair Cairns) we weren’t sure whether the farm would have a positive effect on residents, but now we have no doubts.

“Even yesterday afternoon I was sitting in the office and I glanced out the

window and I saw a man, his son and grandchildren. The kids were running along and they went straight to the goat enclosure. I think it adds something to the family experience of visiting a nursing home. It is not viewed as a negative thing, or a duty, but as a positive, joyous experience for the grandkids, and can be a wonderful discussion starter between the different generations.”

Officially opened in December 2010, The Salvation Army’s 126 bed centre is state-of-the-art in design and technology, and innovatively designed for light and space.

Accommodation is provided at varying care levels including low-care, high-care, and respite, with single and twin rooms. The centre features a chapel and library, plus a secure Memory Support Unit for residents living with dementia.

Steven says: “What The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus wanted to do was take a whole new approach to the delivery of care, with an uncompromising commitment to our residents.

“For example, for residents struggling with dementia, the secure Memory Support Unit is purposefully located on the ground floor with a landscaped secure garden area which also has an aviary. Memory boxes with items from the residents’ generation are displayed around the unit.”

Les, 82, is one of the 126 new Cairns Centre residents, and says that he really enjoys the centre.

“I find it very caring,” he says. “The staff are very helpful and treat me very well.”

Regularly, Les goes out to help feed the goats and says he thoroughly enjoys the routine.

He says with a cheeky smile and a twinkle in his eye: “We’re just a few old goats together. I enjoy the goats, and they will talk to you if you talk to them!”

*The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus has also joined healthcare researchers at the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre, University of Technology Queensland, in a study aimed at improving the quality of care for people with dementia and their care givers.

The year-long research project is being conducted at seven key aged care residential facilities, including two Salvation Army Aged Care Plus facilities – the Cairns Aged Care Centre (Brisbane) and Woodport Retirement Village in Erina (NSW).



SHARON PATERSON

ABOVE: SALVATION ARMY MAJOR STEVEN O’NEILL WITH AGED CARE RESIDENT LES, WHO ENJOYS VISITING THE GOATS REGULARLY.

