

On the Scene

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

A burning passion for education

“The most important advice I give young people is get educated – knowledge is power. Education levels the playing field and once you have skills and a qualification, no-one can ever take it away from you.” – REBECCA

Helping to educate close to 60 homeless young people each year through **The Salvation Army** Oasis Youth Support Network, full-time teacher Rebecca says: “I truly believe education is the key to changing your life.

“I’m proof of that,” she smiles.

Although Rebecca is very careful not to superimpose her own experiences of homelessness and foster care onto her students, she says it does give her a deeper sense of understanding, and explains that her own childhood “wasn’t always smooth sailing.”

“We moved around a lot so my early life lacked structure and security. Bills wouldn’t get paid, so we were just constantly moving, and always in the dead of the night.”

When Rebecca was aged eleven, her mother passed away and so began an even more painful journey through a range of various foster carers, and through to homelessness.

After high school, working hard, but still struggling to find some stability, her turning point came when a workmate told her about Vera Loblay House (now managed by the Salvos), which offers long-term accommodation for homeless



SHARON PATENSON



ABOVE: REBECCA, TEACHER AT THE OASIS YOUTH SUPPORT NETWORK, BELIEVES THAT EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO CHANGING YOUR LIFE. & INSET: REBECCA HELPING ONE OF HER STUDENTS.

young people committed to pursuing their education, training or employment.

Rebecca says: “Being able to live in the house gave me the chance to feel that security I had been craving.

“It allowed me to start making a future for myself which was one of the greatest gifts I’ve ever been offered.”

It was while living at Vera Loblay House that Rebecca decided she would become a teacher.

With no family or financial support, the road ahead was challenging, but, in 2008, she realised her ambition and

proudly graduated from university with a double degree in Education and Arts.

Not surprisingly, in 2010, when the teaching position to help young people struggling with pain, poverty and disadvantage became available, Rebecca jumped at the opportunity to teach at The Salvation Army Oasis Youth Support Network. As well as teaching, she is now a passionate advocate for further official recognition of alternative education and an advocate for youth homelessness.

“With more than 32,000 young

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Helping us to help others

A huge 'thank you' to all who have volunteered or donated so far to the 2012 Red Shield Appeal and Doorknock.

The Red Shield Appeal is the major annual fundraiser of The Salvation Army and supports well over a million Australians each year. The 2012 Appeal is open until June 30, and aims to raise \$81.5 million.

To donate, please call **13 SALVOS**, visit salvos.org.au, donate at any Westpac branch, or post your cheque to PO Box 9888 in your capital city.

Emergency medals honour

The Salvation Army's Gwen Hammerton and Major Bruce Dobbie were among the first Australians to receive a National Emergency Medal, as part of a special Australia Day ceremony at Parliament House.

The Innisfail Salvation Army team, led by Gwen, were the first volunteers to reach Tully (Qld) following Cyclone Yasi while Bruce coordinated The Salvation Army's relief team in Ipswich during floods in early 2011.

While grateful and humbled, both said the emergency response had been a team effort.

For information on the ongoing flood recovery visit salvos.org.au

Building a sense of belonging

More than 230 people from a wide range of countries of origin and faiths, recently took part in the annual Kwetu Camp, at The Salvation Army's Collaroy Centre.

The Salvation Army Auburn Corps (church) hosted the camp for local community members and Salvation Army Captain Nesan Kistan says: "For so many of the refugees their pathways in life have been hard. By helping to build relationships and a bond, we can work to help overcome trauma."

Love's triumph over tragedy

"Out of one of the most devastating events to ever impact this state ... Out of that tragedy – love blossoms, a new relationship and future is born, and today that journey leads to this place and this joyous moment." – SALVATION ARMY MAJOR PAUL MOULDS

John lost more than most in the 2011 Queensland floods.

When his home in Bundaberg was flooded in late December 2010, he retreated with his salvaged belongings to his parents' home in the Lockyer Valley. Five days later floodwaters swept through and took not only the house, but his father's life.

In the five weeks of uncertainty before John's father's body was recovered, John met Charlotte – an old neighbour who still lived in the area. Despite the tragedy, love triumphed.

"Charlotte was the most compassionate, caring and loving person I had ever met," John remembers. Within a month he knew she was the person he wanted to spend his life with.

A few months after the floods, John and Charlotte were invited to attend a **Salvation Army** retreat in Sydney for people affected by the Queensland disasters.

"The camp was good," remembers John. "It was good to be away from Queensland for a little while – a good break."

There, they met The Salvation Army's Major Paul Moulds, coordinator of the Queensland relief effort, and a friendship formed. They kept in contact and as John and



ABOVE: JOHN AND CHARLOTTE, WHO FOUND LOVE FOLLOWING DEVASTATION IN THE QUEENSLAND FLOODS, WERE MARRIED BY MAJOR PAUL MOULDS EARLIER THIS YEAR.

Charlotte's relationship grew stronger, Paul offered them support and encouragement.

"Paul's been great. He's always been there for us – he's a bit like a second family," says John.

On New Years Day 2012 Paul had the honour of marrying John and Charlotte in an emotional ceremony, saying: "You have walked together the road of suffering and heartache. You know you will be there for each other, because you already have been."

"Charlotte and John have chosen today, the first day of the new year, as a symbol of the power of redemption, of good coming out of bad. After a difficult and life changing 2011, they symbolically claim a new 2012, a year of happiness and new experiences, a new journey together." ○

FROM PAGE 1 Australians having no place to call home, youth homelessness remains a largely hidden issue, requiring urgent attention," she says.

"Oasis has a profound understanding of the needs of homeless people. It holistically addresses all of the issues of

the young person – right from their education to mental health, to housing. It is just extraordinary.

"The young people who access this school have been cast aside in so many areas, it is unthinkable that education wouldn't be available to them!" ○

Caring with cars

For those who need to travel for work, study or urgent medical attention to or from areas where public transport is sporadic or non-existent, a car breakdown in a tough time can prove disastrous.

A Salvos' community-focused initiative that aims to help those in need by offering assistance with a variety of motor vehicle-related issues, CarCare began informally in 2007, in school teacher Brock Saunders' garage.

He had the skills and, most importantly, a burning desire to help those who were struggling.

"In the first few years, people would donate old cars and I would fix them up from my garage and give them to needy families," says Brock.

In late February, a new 12x12m CarCare Shed, complementing the existing community facilities operated by **The Salvation Army** Lake Community Church (of which Brock is a part) was officially opened. Local businesses donated

generously to provide tools and a hoist.

Brock now works three days a week as a sports teacher. Then, two days a week, he and his team of volunteers work at the CarCare Shed.

Much more than just a car service, Brock says: "The shed also provides a great location for us to conduct a men's shed.

"We also offer work experience to kids from local high schools," he says. "It's a great way to chat with them and build them up while they're gaining skills and working on a project."

Since the construction of the CarCare Shed in late 2011, the service has completed 27 vehicle repairs, at little or no cost to the client, and has prepared 5 vehicles for donation to local people in need. In the last few weeks, another 12 older cars have been donated by supportive locals to CarCare.

Brock, his church, and a volunteer team, see the service as a part of a holistic range of care to help people find stability and move forward.

He says: "The guidelines for having a car fixed or donated by CarCare are that the lack of vehicle, or broken vehicle, and lack of access to transport is a barrier in that person's life – often in areas such as employment and education.

"One guy had gone through some

really hard yards in life and was putting all that behind him with a lawn mowing business he had just started. Then his vehicle packed it in.

"We were able to fix his car, get it back on the road and it has had a big impact," Brock says.

Liz, who was the recipient of an older refurbished car, spoke at the new shed opening and explained: "About 12 months ago I was having problems, so I was put in contact with The Salvation Army at Forest Lake; and from there I ended up with Karen who has been my case worker since then. Karen was trying, with great difficulty, to sift through some of my problems.

"As this was happening one thing went wrong with my old car, then another, and another.

She says her children's schooling was even becoming disrupted.

Liz said she was incredibly grateful to Brock, Karen and the team and says now: "It's a real pleasure to go somewhere knowing we are going to get there."

"And this," Brock says, "is really what's behind CarCare.

"Bringing hope into the lives of families, refugees, single parents, the elderly and others in need." ○



ABOVE: BROCK SAUNDERS, WHO HAS BEEN WORKING TO FIX UP OLD CARS TO GIVE TO FAMILIES IN NEED.

