

On the Scene

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

Journey from despair to glorious hope

“Finally I did go and see the Salvos. They didn’t judge my inability to get it right along the way and they recognised I had been winging it for most of my life and really had no clue how to actually live and not just survive.” – HAILEY

Less than six years ago, Hailey, who for more than three years has been the full-time manager of **The Salvation Army’s** Caloundra Centrepoint Family Store, was a painfully shy volunteer, too timid to even sit at the staff lunch table.

Today, Hailey not only holds a management position but is also finishing a diploma in business management and is planning further study at university.

She believes the skewed thinking and poor self-image that plagued much of her adult life stemmed from a painful past.

“My parents divorced when I was 13 and within a week my mum had moved her boyfriend in. I was soon removed from her care for my own safety,” she explains.

She says some of her foster placements were positive, but she was a bewildered and hurting teen and was moved often. Other placements were horrendous, she explains, saying: “In one of the homes, the natural kids of that family were providing drugs.

“So,” she says, “I ran away and lived on the streets, feeling much safer. It was just a whirlwind of confusion.”

Looking for the love she craved, Hailey married but the relationship eventually broke down. Hailey says this simply confirmed in her own mind that that she must be unlovable.

And so began the next stage of her journey, as a single parent raising two daughters (one with mild cerebral palsy).

“I generally made a big mess of things,” Hailey says. “I was blessed with good friends, instead of family, so it wasn’t all bad. Still, my finances and self-esteem and confidence were messier than my teenage daughter’s bedroom.”

When she finally admitted to a friend that she simply had no hope at all for the future, he suggested she contact the local Salvos.

“Strange as it was, I still had some pride and fear, so I left it at that for another six months,” Hailey says. “People say you can only go up from there, but I found you can coast along sideways at rock bottom for as long as



SHARON PATERSON

THROUGH THE SALVATION ARMY, HAILEY HAS OVERCOME HER OWN STRUGGLES TO CARE FOR THOSE IN NEED.

pride and fear will allow you.”

When Hailey finally visited the Caloundra Family Store for help with bills, she says: “Patience with me and my buckets full of long-held-in tears were the first things I noticed. So many tears; a lifetime of tears I’d locked up. I think they ran out of boxes of tissues.”

During that time, she was also encouraged to enrol in a life skills course.

“That taught me budgeting, I learned the difference between needs and wants – just basics that I’d never learned, plus cooking, hygiene, how to prepare resumes.

CONTINUED PAGE 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE ▼



2 CARE ON WHEELS



3 MUSIC THERAPY

PAGE 2 Mobile classroom reaches out to youth

PAGE 3 Kids with disabilities flourish through music

PAGE 4 Bringing light in the darkness

focus

HOPE
THE SALVATION ARMY

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Christmas Cheer

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, The Salvation Army wishes you, your family and loved ones a peaceful, joyous, happy, healthy and safe Christmas.

If you would like to join Salvation Army Christmas celebrations and events including community Christmas meals, carol singing, corps (church) meetings, or would like to support the work of The Salvation Army at Christmas, please go to: salvos.org.au or phone **13 SALVOS (13 72 58)**. There are also lots of great tips available on the website such as cooking a two-course Christmas dinner for \$10 per person, and managing the budget at Christmas.

Aged Care volunteers

The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus encourages anyone in the community interested in volunteering to make contact with their local Aged Care Plus centre.

"Our volunteers add so much joy and life to our centres," says Aged Care Plus Volunteer Coordinator, Bill Li. More info at agedcare.salvos.org.au

Fostering Young Lives

The Salvation Army has recently been accredited to provide foster care services in NSW, under the service name Young Hope. It has made the commitment to provide effective, nurturing and best-practice care to children and young people who have been placed in statutory out-of-home care.

"A foster carer creates a place of belonging that invests in the immediate and long-term wellbeing of children and young people," says Captain Michelle White, Director of Young Hope.

To find out about applying to become a carer, please contact Captain White on **(02) 9266 9796** or go to salvos.org.au/younghope

Community care on wheels

Lake Macquarie Youth Worker of the Year James Cameron says he is "privileged" to work with the community to help provide skills and confidence to young people in need.

James runs the Ourspace Outreach and Training Program, the latest innovation from the Oasis Hunter (NSW) Youth Network, which seeks to support disadvantaged and isolated young people and their families.

The new mobile classroom, a joint venture between **The Salvation Army** and the NSW Department of Education and Training, features a Mitsubishi Fuso Deluxe bus that has been fitted with desks, laptops and high-speed internet. The service offers nationally accredited Certificate II training in Information Technology, Hospitality or Asset Maintenance.

"We also offer community activities," James says. "This allows us to become an

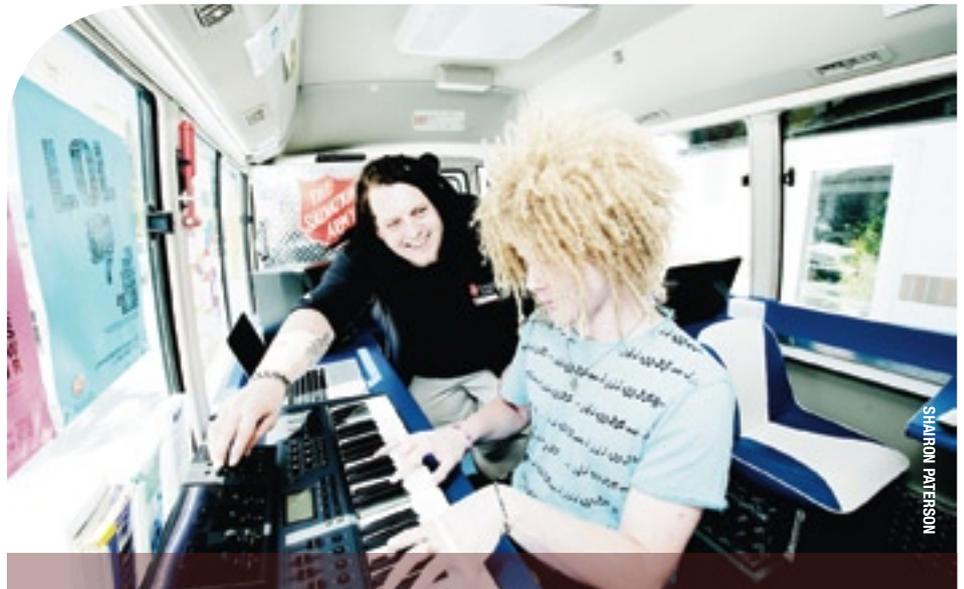
integral part of the early intervention strategy for young people in collaboration with the Port Stephens and Lake Macquarie city councils."

The bus is also being used to partner with local schools to run such services as workshops to raise awareness of the issues around cyber-bullying and the dangers of internet use.

Staff and volunteers are also supporting grandparents who are "parenting" grandchildren, to help them understand the social media these youngsters may be using.

"We developed the Grandparents Support Program [GSP] because it is about not just being able to get out and support young people, but also being able to support the people who support young people," James explains.

James was announced as the youth worker of the year at the recent Regional Youth Development Officer Network Conference. *o*



YOUTHWORKER JAMES CAMERON HAS BEEN RECOGNISED FOR HIS WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

FROM PAGE 1 Thankfully, they also referred me to the beautiful and talented counsellor they have on staff," Hailey says.

She soon mustered the courage to volunteer in the Family Store. "They were the loveliest, loveliest people, very patient and gentle and accepting," she says.

"I was more alive and hopeful than I had ever truly been and my daughters thrived."

Hailey says after a year as a volunteer she successfully applied for a management

job. She "absolutely loves" managing the Caloundra store, especially supporting those in need.

"I think everything I've been through God has used. Needy customers come in and as soon as you touch their arm they burst into tears," Hailey says.

"If I hadn't had the support I received I don't think that I'd be alive. I didn't want to die, but I couldn't continue living the way that I had been. I didn't have any hope.

"I am just so thankful." *o*

Kids with disabilities flourish through music

“To my absolute delight the words slowly started to come. He would say ‘drums’, ‘guitar’ and so on. But the most amazing thing of all, he started singing the songs he was learning while playing a musical instrument and then taking the microphone and singing into it, which was the sweetest sound I’ve ever heard.” – SALLY.

When preschooler Jordan* began music therapy a year ago through **The Salvation Army**, he had no speech and was barely able to use his muscles to chew food. Today, says music therapist Talitha Evans, Jordan talks and passionately sings the words of all his favourite songs.

Like so many parents of a special needs child, Jordan’s mother Sally* was exhausted by the search for therapies for her son who had been diagnosed with autism. Jordan was basically non-verbal and had a range of behavioural issues that seemed to stem from extreme frustration.

Within months of starting the free music therapy course run through The Salvation Army’s Tuggerah Lakes Corps (church) on the NSW Central Coast, Sally began to see a remarkable turnaround in her son.

Jordan’s love of music grew and singing the words to the songs seemed to mark the onset of speech.

“After the first few months of trying the music therapy I could already see a huge change as he was doing something he absolutely loved,” Sally explains.

“I found after having a lesson, his behaviour and sensory issues were changing for the better.

“Looking at my son today and how far he has come in a year thanks to music therapy, I can see a bright, happy future for him with his love of music. I can’t thank The Salvation Army enough.”

The first music therapy group began over a year ago when a local schoolteacher asked if there was a way that her Salvation Army corps at Tuggerah Lakes could provide an activity for a number of children from her school who had been diagnosed with autism.

Salvation Army Captain Laithe Greenaway applied for a government grant to start the service, which now continues with funding by the Salvation



MUSIC THERAPIST TALITHA BROWN PLAYS DRUMS WITH ONE HER SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS.

Army’s local Family Store. Laithe contacted Talitha, who attends a Salvation Army corps in Parramatta (NSW) and has a degree in music and a master’s degree in music therapy.

Talitha and a band of volunteers now run four school groups a week. They also have a group for preschoolers and run one-on-one sessions at Tuggerah Lakes Corps.

Talitha’s corps then offered support (with some extra corporate sponsorship) to run another five groups in a number of schools in Parramatta.

The groups help support children with autism, multiple disabilities and “at risk” kids with behavioural issues.

During the session, children use a variety of instruments as well as sing and listen to a wide range of music.

“For many of these children who find it so hard to verbally interact in a social setting, the music is communication and even if the children aren’t able to speak, they are still able to beat the drum or play the ukuleles,

piano, sing or harmonise,” says Talitha.

“They are still able to achieve and find satisfaction and joy.

“We are working with a school counsellor from one of the high schools and only yesterday she said she was absolutely blown away by the way one girl had opened up. This was a teenage girl who is normally just really withdrawn, quiet but she was singing at the top of her lungs. It was just amazing.”

The service also aims to give support and hope to teachers and parents.

“A lot of these families are just so desperate for any kind of help. Plus, all their therapies can cost huge amounts of money,” says Talitha.

“The program is a chance for The Salvation Army, which has such a rich history of music, to say, ‘this is a need that we see and that we can meet’. When the parents see the joy the kids are experiencing and how much they are learning, it just blows them away.” *o*

* Names changed at family’s request.

