



Shoulder to shoulder in recovery



SHARON PATTERSON

TIM AND JONO HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED BY THE SPALLS (CENTRE).

“The effects of a disaster like this hang like the resulting smoke that infiltrates every part of a community and so The Salvation Army will stand shoulder to shoulder with the communities impacted for as long as it takes.”

– Salvation Army Major Darrell Slater

As dry conditions sparked the first major bushfires of the season in October 2013, Blue Mountains-based volunteer fire-fighters and brothers Jono and Tim, together with friend Nathan, worked feverishly to help save homes and lives.

When the fires, which eventually destroyed nearly 200 homes, blazed into Nathan’s neighbourhood, he and his NSW Rural Fire Service team moved in to defend the area.

As Nathan arrived, he found his own rental property (which he shared with Tim and Jono) alight.

He smashed his way in to save his Pa’s World War Two memorabilia, and then when the roof started crashing down around him, he was pulled to safety by his crew.

Saving those who serve

After putting their own lives at risk to save others, the trio then had to face the reality of the destruction in their lives.

The Salvation Army’s Majors Ian and Kerry Spall, Senior Chaplains to the NSW Rural Fire Service, offered immediate emotional and financial support and later helped the flatmates

work through the various issues they were facing after the loss of their home.

Nathan says of the Spalls: “They are unbelievable. I can’t say ‘thank you’ enough to those two – they are amazing.”

Long-term recovery

The flatmates have also received ongoing support from the team at The Salvation Army’s Recovery Centre, established in Springwood following the fires.

The Salvation Army’s Pam Wilkes, who is running the centre, says the generosity of others has deeply touched those who lost everything. She says, “People are overwhelmed – just so touched by other people’s generosity and kindness.”

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Recovery Services recognised with prestigious award

The Salvation Army Recovery Services have been publicly recognised at the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association Awards. The Salvation Army Bridge Program received the Significant Contribution to the Therapeutic Communities Movement in Australasia – Program Service Intervention. Also, Territorial – in the middle, should read, Mission and Resource Director (Recovery) Major David Pullen received an award for Significant Contribution to the Therapeutic Communities Movement as an Individual. The ACTA awards are given based on peer voting, so for Major David Pullen, these awards are a testament to the recovery services program.

My Salvos Stores launches on to eBay

My Salvos Stores launched its eBay site at District01 in Surry Hills in November, with brand ambassador and Channel Ten’s The Living Room host, Barry du Bois.

Hats off to Collaroy catering

For the second year in a row, The Collaroy Centre’s catering team was a finalist at the Sydney Metropolitan Restaurant and Catering Awards on 30 September. Competing against nine catering and restaurant businesses in the function/venue caterer category, The Collaroy Centre’s catering team went up against high-profile establishments including Doltone House and Taronga Zoo. The team also competed against Scotts College in the industrial/institution caterer category.

Supporter story Henry and Jenny Ngai

Philanthropist and friend to those in need

When fires raged in the Blue Mountains and Southern Highlands (NSW) in October 2013, founder and Managing Director of ABC Tissues, Henry Ngai, and wife Jenny, immediately offered support to The Salvation Army’s Bushfire Appeal.

When Henry and Jenny arrived in Australia on a business migrant visa more than 25 years ago, they had a suitcase full of dreams.

They raised their three children in Sydney and started a small tissue business in their garage. The successful business now employs 700 people locally in Wetherill Park and spans Australia,

New Zealand, Hong Kong and China.

In 2013 Henry was awarded the Champion of Champions award at the 25th annual Ethnic Business Awards. The award recognises the achievements of migrant and indigenous business men and women.

At the time of the October 2013 fires, Henry and Jenny donated \$100,000 to **The Salvation Army** Bushfire fire appeal, as well as 200 crates of Quilton toilet tissue products. Henry and Jenny have previously been generous donors to Salvation Army Australian and overseas disaster relief efforts, especially at the time of the devastating floods in Queensland in 2011. *o*



GENEROUS DONORS HENRY AND JENNY NGAI.

Giving Back to Australians

Major Bruce Harmer, Communications and PR Secretary at The Salvation Army, commented, “Henry and Jenny, and their family, give from their heart. They are also very passionate about ‘giving back’ to Australians.”

Over the years, Henry and Jenny Ngai have generously supported a range of causes, both local and South-east Asian, including helping facilitate cataract surgery for over

45,000 people and donating 150,000 hearing aids to hearing-impaired children and adults in developing countries. They intend to donate another 150,000 hearing aids in 2014.

“To tens of thousands of people in need in Australia, and internationally, including families recovering from bushfire devastation in Australia,” Bruce says, “Henry and Jenny have truly been a God-send.”

We would love to hear why you support The Salvation Army. Tell us what motivates you to give and you may feature in our next edition of *On the Scene* Email generosity@ae.salvationarmy.org

Rebuilding their shattered community



DESPITE THEIR OWN STRUGGLES, LINDA AND VICTOR ARE NOW HELPING OTHERS WITH LONG-TERM DISASTER SUPPORT.

“You see so many people still struggling, or who have become homeless after storms and two cyclones. Within the area nobody escaped.” – Linda

As part of the ongoing **Salvation Army** commitment to provide long-term support following Cyclones Larry and Yasi, a new Salvation Army Red Shield Family Store and centre has been established in Innisfail (Qld). The centre is providing welfare support, referrals to counsellors, financial counselling, plus offers a range of affordable goods to those in need.

Linda, who is one of the new volunteer supervisors of the store and part-time welfare support officer, says the permanent Salvation Army presence in the area is essential.

“Our town still definitely needs so much help,” she says. “Many have lost homes, or face losing their homes, and some are still living in severely damaged houses.”

Dark times

Like so many of their friends and neighbours, Linda and husband Victor

suffered severe damage to their property after Cyclone Larry. They then spent years fighting to have their insurer undertake repairs.

The couple had previously experienced a freak flood, so when Cyclone Yasi hit in February 2011 they were already emotionally exhausted and financially drained.

Linda says, “I had also been in hospital for a simple operation and ended up having five micro strokes during the operation and had no balance and no sight. Then only a few months later we went through Cyclone Yasi.”

Living on the disability and carer’s pension (Victor struggles with Acquired Brain Injury), they were devastated to discover damage to pumps and a tractor on their property was not covered under insurance.

Salvos support

Ongoing Salvation Army disaster relief kept food on their table as they battled to pay their bills and replace equipment.

Linda says: “We were also given a wonderful holiday through a Salvation Army worker who shared their home with us.”

Despite her own struggles, Linda says she jumped at the opportunity, when asked to consider assisting The Salvation Army’s Gwen Hammerton* who had been organising recovery support in the area.

Linda, who together with Victor, recently became a Salvation Army ‘soldier’, had already faced a lifetime of pain prior to the disasters that included being abandoned as a baby and an horrific assault as a teen, and says: “I feel God’s given me the strength to be able to get to the point where I can help other people.”

She believes that lives may have already been saved through the new centre, with so many struggling with major depression and stress.

She says: “Just today one lady came in, who is also facing violence at home and needing welfare support. She was in tears and gave me a big hug and said ‘if it wasn’t for you people, I don’t know where I’d be.’” *o*

* Gwen led The Salvation Army Innisfail Emergency Services team after Cyclone Yasi. She coordinated initial disaster relief efforts into Tully and continues the ongoing recovery support work on the Cassowary Coast. She was awarded a National Emergency Medal in 2012.

A world of possibilities



The Salvation Army's Adrian Kistan says indigenous young people are half as likely to complete Year 12, than non-indigenous and only 44 per cent of Aboriginal people are in mainstream employment. Forty-four per 1000 indigenous young people are under juvenile justice supervision, compared with three per 1000 non-indigenous youth.

KYLE (RIGHT) WITH ADRIAN, SAYS HE HAS BEEN GIVEN THE CHANCE TO FULFIL HIS DREAMS. INSET: THE KISTANS WITH THEIR EXTENDED COMMUNITY HOUSE 'FAMILY'.

"When it comes to challenges indigenous young people face, there is no quick fix. It is labour intensive and requires individuals to stand in the gap to help young people thrive and achieve their dreams." – Adrian Kistan

For Kyle, one of a number of teenagers living in **The Salvation Army's** Indigenous Community House in Sydney, dreams really do come true. Having just signed a three-year deal with the Manly Sea Eagles NRL team, Kyle says: "Coming from a small town is pretty hard, but everyone has a dream they can reach."

The Salvation Army Community House is a partnership between The Salvation Army and Northern Beaches Christian School.

Indigenous students from remote rural areas receive a scholarship from the school and complete their studies while living in a family setting with Adrian and Natalie Kistan and their three children.

Culture and dreams

A descendant of the Gamilaroi tribe from the Moree area (NSW), Kyle is in his third year of the program with his move to Sydney supported by the local elder of his tribe and his family.

Kyle says Sydney was initially "a shock", but he loves being able to teach his new friends about his heritage. He says: "A lot of people ask about my family and culture ... I usually show them the indigenous map and point out what tribe I'm from and tell them about the history."

Ever since he was a small boy, Kyle also dreamt of becoming an NRL player. He says: "I wanted to come for the footy but also do Year 12 in a distinguished school and get a good education."

Blossoming with opportunities

For Adrian and Natalie, helping young indigenous teens access educational resources, achieve dreams and develop into potential community leaders, is

a role they are passionate about. They become very much a part of our family," Adrian says. "It is a real privilege."

Adrian says the young people in their care remain actively engaged in their culture and stay in close contact with their families.

His greatest joy, he says, is seeing the young people blossom with greater health, education and geographic opportunities.

He explains, "One of the girls was in Moree for her first term and had something like 30 days absent from school. Then when she came here, she had no more absences for the rest of the year.

She also used to get marks that were nowhere near a pass, but soon came racing home here all excited, saying, 'I got my history/geography assessment task back and I got 87 per cent. She said 'you know how you keep saying I could possibly be a school teacher, well I reckon I can do it.' ○

Thank you

Natural disasters are an ongoing reality in Australia and can markedly impact the life of an individual, or change the face of a family, or a community.

Abundant generosity is also an integral part of the character of Australian life.

The Salvation Army would like to say a deep and heart-felt 'thank you' to the millions of incredibly compassionate and generous individuals, small businesses and major corporations that have entrusted us with resources to share with those who have been significantly affected by recent natural disasters such as the October 2013 NSW fires.

Long-term commitment

One year ago, in February 2013, as floods devastated Bundaberg and surrounds, The Salvation Army was immediately able to provide 28,000 meals and 43,000 snacks to the evacuated and to emergency services personnel.

A year on, many homes are still being repaired, and hundreds of others remain damaged as owners lack the resources for repairs. Through generous donations, the Salvation Army has been able to assist well over 1000 flood-affected families in the past year.

Bundaberg Salvation Army Major Kevin Unicomb says the service is committed to work side-by-side with those affected in the essential recovery phase, offering material, spiritual and emotional support.

"It makes a huge difference to people knowing they have support and that someone cares," he says.



We're about people finding freedom.

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