

Together

Summer 2017

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION



Te Ope Whakaora



A Journey of Change

A two-year journey with The Salvation Army has helped transform Coral* from a shy woman into a confident, motivated mother for her children—with a ‘mean’ chicken stir-fry recipe to boot.

Two years ago, Coral was in limbo. In 2013 she had made the brave decision to leave an abusive relationship, taking two of her youngest children with her.

Despite being on the Government waiting list for a subsidised house, there was no immediate housing solution in sight. With little income and a shortage of other options, the family was forced to live in a boarding situation.

A conversation with Sifa, a social worker at The Salvation Army’s Royal Oak Community Ministries in Auckland who Coral had received social work help from previously, led to Coral seeking the Army’s support with transitional housing.

Royal Oak has several units available in their transitional housing programme, which is typically offered to single

mothers with young children who are facing homelessness.

Coral met with the team at Royal Oak where they assessed her needs and looked at her strengths and challenges. Sifa says that when she first met Coral, she was noticeably shy.

“Coral wouldn’t say much when we first met, she was almost wordless and wouldn’t make eye contact.”

‘Coral wouldn’t say much when we first met, she was almost wordless and wouldn’t make eye contact.

‘We could tell she had a good heart, was caring and her children meant absolutely everything to her—but she lacked basic parenting skills. We wanted to give her the tools that’d allow her to be a more confident person and a better mum.’

A plan was put in place for Coral, utilising the broad range of services that The Salvation Army could offer. As part

of being accepted into Royal Oak's transitional housing programme, she would enrol in Army-run courses that would help her gain the skills she needed. This included cooking classes and specialised parenting programmes.

Coral admits that the cooking classes were daunting at first.

'It was scary for me because I had never really learnt how to cook or bake and didn't know much about it. The tutors were so helpful, they showed me the basics like how to read recipes and how to measure out things like flour.'

The cooking course gave Coral the skills she needed to cook low-budget, nutritious meals at home for her and her children, and to pack them healthy lunches for school.

She says her two favourite recipes are chicken stir-fry, a 'family favourite', and a chocolate slice that her kids love.

Coral also found the parenting courses to be extremely helpful, especially learning how to effectively deal with children when they were misbehaving.

'The courses were really good, they taught me how to best manage my kids when they've been playing up.'

The courses also taught Coral how to manage herself better.

'I know now that yelling was not a solution, it was only showing I wasn't in control of myself. The programme also taught me about speaking at a child's level.'

Sifa says that it's common for a client to come in for one particular need, then realise they can receive other help.

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Fast forward to today and Coral and her family are happy in their home, which the Army worked with Housing New Zealand to get them into. The stable living situation has meant Coral's other children can now also be in her care.

Coral and her family still receive guidance from Sifa and the Royal Oak team, in the form of ongoing parenting classes

and advice. Coral also volunteers at the Royal Oak Salvation Army Family Store and at their crèche, which she says is her way of giving back to the Army for all they've done for her and her family.

Her children also have regular contact with The Salvation Army, with the family regularly going to Royal Oak's community dinner (called 'messy church'), and two of her children attending the Army's Aspire youth programme.

Sifa says that it's been amazing to be part of Coral's journey over the past two years and to witness her transformation.

'She's a different person now from that timid woman who first sat down to talk to me. She's now someone who smiles, can hold a conversation and is able to advocate for herself.'

'She needed a pathway to move forward, and has gone from strength to strength—we're proud of her.'

For Coral, her future goals are clear.

'My main goal is to keep my children safe, and to get more life skills so I can help them thrive and stay out of trouble.'

** Name and image changed to protect client's privacy.*



Royal Oak: A Snapshot

Royal Oak Community Ministries (CM) is one of 68 Salvation Army centres spread across New Zealand.

It is also among the busiest social service centres in Auckland, providing a broad range of social services to those in need.

Here's a snapshot of some of the work that Royal Oak CM has achieved in the past 12 months (to 30 June 2017).



3,531
food parcels
to **1,575**
families

1,125
budgeting
sessions to
365 clients



2,622
instances of
social work and
counselling to
344 clients



2,228
Bed nights of
temporary accommodation

415 packages of
practical aid to **135** clients





▲ (FROM LEFT) DAVINIA WITH MATTHEW FROM BAYSWIM



From Our Public Relations Director

There's a common saying that for some people, it's as much about the journey itself as it is the outcome of that journey.

At The Salvation Army, we often see this reflected in the people we help each day. It's not uncommon for the support we provide starting off as urgent and short-term—such as a food parcel or a roof over their heads—with this support growing and broadening as we work alongside the client to address the root of their struggles.

If a client wants to change for the better, we're here to help them transform into the person they want to be and to give them the chance for a better life. And it's the journey to this outcome that strengthens the person, giving them the courage and positivity needed to achieve their goals.

In this issue of *Together* we speak with Coral, whose journey with the Army has taken her and her family from a dark place to a much brighter one.

In the two years that she's been on her journey with us, she's learnt skills and gained experience needed to truly transform—into a more confident woman and a better parent for her children.

We also talk with other people who have journeyed with The Salvation Army at different points in their lives. Paul has been working with the Army to tick off the goals he has set for himself—to have a stable home, a rewarding job and a life free from drugs and alcohol dependency.

And Elsie is using the Army's low-income loan scheme to help break free from debt and the trap of high-interest loans. On the other end of the spectrum, Tauranga Community Ministries has partnered with a local swimming school, ensuring children from low-decile areas can learn water safety.

As a supporter of The Salvation Army and its work, you're also a part of the journey for these people and many others. Thank you for choosing to help others and to bring about positive change.

Shane Chisholm
Public Relations Director
The Salvation Army

Safe in the Water

Some of Tauranga's youngest are learning to swim with confidence, thanks to a new partnership with The Salvation Army.

Tauranga Community Ministries manager Davina Plummer said they were approached by BaySwim swimming school about an initiative to help pre-school children from families in hardship have swimming lessons.

The partnership sees Tauranga businesses sponsoring lessons and free pool access for children whose families would otherwise be unable to afford lessons, with Community Ministries helping by nominating children who would otherwise miss out. To date, 19 pre-school children have started lessons.

The lessons focus on developing each child's basic skills, and include 40 weeks of swimming development, six weeks of water skills and a year's free access for the child and a supervising parent to four pools around Tauranga.

Davina says their Community Ministries was thrilled to be a part of the programme.

'It's great seeing so many children getting lessons, and they and their parents enjoying the opportunity.'

The mother of one child said their family had been desperate to get them into swimming lessons, but couldn't fit it in the budget. The lessons had been fantastic, she said. Another mum said swimming had been amazing for helping her child grow in confidence and building social skills.

The swimming partnership was also timely, given the increase in people living below the poverty line. This has led to many children missing out on vital extracurricular skills like learning to swim.

According to Water Safety New Zealand research, children aged between one and four years are 88 per cent less likely to drown if they have had formal swimming lessons.



Setting Goals for a Better Life

For Paul*, life has been a challenge. After experiencing issues with drug and alcohol abuse for the past 15 years, he reached his lowest point when he ended up in hospital with mental health issues.

When he came out of hospital, Paul realised he had nowhere to go. He made his way to The Salvation Army's Supportive Accommodation centre in Addington.

Addington Supportive Accommodation provides temporary accommodation for men seeking to make positive changes. They provide three months of supported accommodation for over 80 male clients, alongside other wraparound care.

Addington's Centre Manager, Pip Mills, says that men coming to the hostel have brought with them increasingly complex and inter-connected problems to solve before they can live safely and independently in the wider community.

'It's now quite unusual to get a client with only a mental health diagnosis and nothing else, or someone who has been through the justice system and has no other issues—all our clients are complex.'

For Paul, the team at Addington were helpful and friendly.

'The lady there was like a life coach—I met up with her and wrote down some goals for my life, which we then broke down to mini steps.'

Paul says that breaking the goals down made it attainable for him, helping him to get his driving license back and giving him confidence to conquer other goals on his list.

'I had some debts and another lady helped me with my budgeting to get those paid. She also helped me approach Housing New Zealand and find a new place to live.'

When it came time to move into a new place, The Salvation Army team continued to support Paul. They attended a

meeting with him and Work and Income, and provided furniture and transport to him move into his new place.

The new stability also gave Paul a base from which he could begin to seriously address his addiction issues.

While at Addington he enrolled in The Salvation Army Bridge Programme, located next door, which provides a safe and integrated treatment service to people whose lives have been affected by alcohol or drugs.

The programme helped Paul to make positive changes in his life, which he found worthwhile, and he now regularly attends a recovery group with other men who have similarly battled through addiction.

"I still have a support worker and we catch up often. That after-care support is quite vital, helping me to stay clean."

'I still have a support worker and we catch up often. That after-care support is quite vital, helping me to stay clean.'

Paul also joined DALTA (Deliberate Acts of Love to All), a group run out of The Salvation Army in Sydenham that does practical work in the Christchurch community.

'We clean up people's sections who need some help, get them to a point where they can maintain them and things like that. I'm thoroughly enjoying it, as it gets me out of my place and gives me purpose. I'm giving back to the community, which is great as I've done some wrong in my history with drug addiction—so I think it's important.'

Paul says that DALTA also has been helping him get back into work routines, and to get the skills and confidence he needs to get back into a job—another goal on his list.

** Name and image changed to protect client's privacy.*

Low-Interest Scheme Expands

The Salvation Army's successful low and no-interest loan scheme has recently expanded their pilot into Tauranga with a Community Finance initiative.

Established by Good Shepherd New Zealand and BNZ back in 2014 in partnership with The Salvation Army, this initiative provides loans to Kiwis who are 'financially vulnerable' - meaning they do not meet standard bank criteria and have exhausted their Work and Income options.

As a result, many are forced to take out loans with alternative lenders, many of whom charge high-interest rates and fees. Good Shepherd Chief Executive Fleur Howard says that Community Finance provides access to a safe and affordable line of credit for people on low incomes.

'We are delighted that the success of the pilot has led to the funding that is enabling us to launch our new regions.

Fleur says there are broader societal benefits in what the loans deliver. 'A reliable car for many of our customers is

what they need to hold down a full-time job. A computer can help with further education.'

Major Pam Waugh, The Salvation Army's head of social services, says running a tight budget can be hard enough without the added pressure of predatory lenders.

'The reduced stress these Community Finance loans deliver can make such a difference to people's family life.

'What's also been impressive is that 93% of the people who have used this service paid the loan back in full—that's a much better rate than for any alternative lender.'

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The initiative is also available in Auckland, Hamilton, Rotorua, Invercargill, Wellington, Whangarei, Palmerston North, Hawke's Bay and Christchurch, with more new locations expected soon.

Stepping Up for Elsie

Swapping a 'rent-to-own' deal for a low-interest, affordable Community Finance loan has given Wellington mother Elsie piece of mind.

Elsie says that the dread of expecting demand letters for arrears at any moment and concern her appliances would be repossessed are now a thing of the past.

'I own them—I don't need to worry about if I can afford to pay that weekly payment. Now I pay way less than I was paying before and it works in with my budget. It has freed up money to go on other debts and for the children as well.'

Elsie is a widow who lives in Porirua with her family. She works casually at the moment and hopes to go back to a full-time position in the near future. Elsie says the everyday tasks of feeding and clothing her family are now far less stressful thanks to her loan.

She first heard about The Salvation Army's StepUP loan scheme through a Salvation Army budget adviser. She says that at the time she was financially struggling, in a lot of debt and had loans which were high interest.

'I applied for the StepUP loan, so that I'd own the goods. Because of me being in so much debt, I thought I wouldn't be able to get a loan. Once I was told I could get it I was so happy. It made a big change for me.'

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Elsie used her StepUP loan to purchase a fridge/freezer, a washing machine, a dryer and a television for her family and end her 'rent-to-own' agreement.

'Thirty-odd dollars a week is way better than \$120, and also the interest is way better than it was when I was paying the "rent-to-own" company,' Elsie says.

Applying for a Community Finance loan was simple and the team at The Salvation Army was very supportive, Elsie says.

'It will make a difference in your lives. It doesn't matter what your circumstances are, the people will do their best to support your family and help you out.'

▼ ELSIE WITH HER NEW FRIDGE





▲ DIANA SERVES UP A FAVOURITE AT A RECENT MASH DINNER

A Meal at Sallie's House

An Army-run dinner has been helping to bring the Johnsonville community together for the past 15 years.

The weekly dinner, called 'MASH' (for 'Meal at Sallie's House') is held every Wednesday night at The Salvation Army's Johnsonville Corps in Wellington. It offers a two-course meal, with attendees sitting at communal tables so they can converse while they eat, and there is often a guest speaker or entertainment such as live music.

People typically hear about the dinner through contact with The Salvation Army's social services or from other local social service agencies. Its doors are open to anyone, and MASH cook Diana says there's a broad range of clientele who all come for different reasons.

'A lot of people come here for the food. I've had people tell me it's their only chance to eat a proper meal for the week.

'Others, young and old, come here for companionship—a chance to engage with others and build a support network.'

The food is in part paid for by income generated by The Salvation Army's Johnsonville Family Store, with attendees also asked for a donation or small koha upon entry.

“Others, young and old, come here for companionship—a chance to engage with others and build a support network.”

Diana says lots of 'regulars' attend, including single mothers with young children, homeless people seeking a warm meal and elderly people who have no family living in the area.

'Some people have been coming for as long as I have, and I've gotten to know them all over time.'

Part of Diana's role is to organise the meals to be served,

including managing the volunteers to help cook and serve the meals to the guests. Each dinner typically caters for between 65 to 80 people, with Diana estimating the team serves over 3,500 meals each year.

'I typically do a four-week meal plan. We know the most popular meals are the bacon and egg pie and roast pork, so we make sure to include these on a semi-regular basis.'

Diana's own journey with this community dinner started 14 years ago, when she read about the newly-created MASH dinner in the local newspaper.

Her son and grandson had recently returned to New Zealand from Australia, and she encouraged them to attend as a way to re-connect with the community and to seek some support networks. She attended a few of the dinners with her son until he felt comfortable enough to go alone.

'He'd had a bit of drama in his life at that time, and through MASH he was able to meet some new friends and support people in the community to help him get through it.'

One night her son came home after MASH and told Diana there was an opening for a job as the MASH cook, as she was an experienced short-hand cook.

Seeing the difference the dinner had made for her son and others, Diana started work almost immediately. Fourteen years later, she's a regular fixture at every meal.

Diana says she gets as much out of the dinner as the guests do.

'I get a lot of enjoyment out of it, and it makes a big difference to those who come. I know many of the guests really look forward to it.'