A Long Way Off nearly here!

Salvationists will gain a deeper understanding of Christ’s parable of the prodigal son and be surprised, deeply moved and thoroughly entertained by the world premiere of A Long Way Off during the “Welcome Home” commissioning weekend, June 8-10, in Milwaukee, Wis.

This Broadway-style production is the result of a collaboration between Joe Caddy, territorial fine arts ministry director, and Phil Laeger, worship leader and composer. Buzz about the musical has been spreading throughout the territory with its 24-member cast and 10-member pit band representing eight divisions.

Set in the Midwest during the Great Depression, this fresh reframing of the parable features a wayward brother, Hunter, and his sister, Hannah.

The musical examines members of their family as well as the close-knit farming community in which they live and work.

When Hannah leaves home to search for her brother in the big city, she encounters all sorts of obstacles as she seeks reconciliation with and redemption for Hunter.

This inspiring, complex story comes to life through 17 original musical numbers penned for the production, which will be available on CD and for digital download at commissioning.

Inspiration for the play came to Joe more than five years ago after reading Timothy Keller’s book, Prodigal God.

“It opened up new spiritual depths for me,” said Joe. “I’d always viewed the parable as being about a son who messed up and a father who forgave him. I thought the only take-away was that we have a heavenly Father who will always forgive and accept us no matter what we do.”

Instead, Joe learned the parable was about both sons, one of whom didn’t seem to do anything wrong...
The extent of hugs

by Colonel Janice Howard
Territorial Secretary for Women’s Ministries

I was filled with anticipation and excitement as I was on my way to see the perfect (I know that’s not proper English) grandson in the world, James Michael. As I caught sight of him, I couldn’t release the seatbelt fast enough to lunge from the car. With wide-open arms and quick steps we threw our arms around each other as if never to let go. “I love you, James,” I exclaimed. “I love you, Nana,” he responded. Oh, the power of his hug! Merriam-Webster defines hug as ‘to press tightly especially in the arms; to hold fast.’ That’s exactly what happened between this nana and grandson. The experience propelled me to think about the different types of hugs. Hugs differ in strength, duration, and communication. There are side hugs for casual greetings, which may send the message “don’t get too close;” a variety of hugs for acquaintances, friends and family members; and hugs between husbands and wives which are more intimate.

God has communicated His hugs to us through His Word and through His actions:

This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. (John 3:16, MSG)

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us. (1 John 3:1, NIV, 1984)

Wow! These are powerful, never-let-you-go intimate hugs from God our Father. When we bask in His hugs of love, we are filled to the point of overflowing and want to share those hugs. These hugs are generated outward from within the Church—our corps and adult rehabilitation centers. The Church’s hugs are to be wide and inclusive, firm and embracing. They are to be strong, long, and fully communicating the love of God. Let’s share God’s hugs of love with our families, with our communities, with our world. There are still people who need hugs from our loving God, and we represent His arms. So Church, fling your arms wide open and then squeeze firmly. It’s time for this nana to share a long, loving embrace with the most perfect grandson in the entire world. “James, I’m on my way!”

Taking over God’s way

For months Alex Velasquez had been living on the streets of Chicago. A former gang leader who’d been released from Cook County Jail, he had nothing left. He’d resorted to crawling under recently parked cars in a grocery store lot to warm up next to the exhaust pipes during a brutal Chicago winter. During the day he stood outside the store and panhandled, hoping to make enough to buy a hot meal.

“You don’t have to live this way, son,” a man said.

Alex was shocked. All day, every day, people passed him by not seeming to care whether he lived or died.

The man offered Alex a ride to the Chicago Harbor Light Center. Although he was thankful for a hot shower and a good meal, Alex didn’t expect to stay, but because of his history with drugs and alcohol he was accepted into the program.

“I was still proud,” he said. “I decided that whatever the hustle is in here, I’m going to take over.”

Instead, Alex was warmed by the way people at the center interacted with one another. He attended the chapel services, and it made a big impact on him to see people he knew from his life outside the center worshipping and singing in the choir.

“It got to the point that I had to go to the altar. I didn’t want to. I had to,” Alex explained.

Once he accepted Christ as his Savior, he began to see things differently. Alex made the decision to finish the program. In a way, he did take over the center—just not how he’d intended. The staff trusted him, and he worked hard not to relapse. Feeling he was called to officer, he finished his GED, got involved with the ministry at the Harbor Light and worked his way up to coordinating the kettle campaign as he prepared to apply to the College for Officer Training (CFOT).

Alex met Jennifer, then a second-year cadet, when he entered the CFOT. The two married a year later. During his second year, Alex completed his field training at Jennifer’s first appointment. He was commissioned in 2004 with the "Bridgebuilders’" session.

For the first few years of their officership, the Velasquez focused on developing their pastoral skills in corps ministry. Soon they were trained as adult rehabilitation center (ARC) administrators. They now serve as administrators of the Davenport, Iowa, ARC. Alex has continued his education, earning a bachelor’s degree in practical ministries and an executive MBA.

“Now there was no way I could have changed without God,” concluded Captain Alex. “No one can convince me that God isn’t real. I’m a whole different person now.”

God has communicated His hugs to us through His Word and through His actions.

Creative supporting POH

I sat down when Captain Brianne Bowers, corps officer at the North Platte, Neb., Corps wanted to get her women’s ministry members involved with Pathway of Hope (POH). She needed something that would not only provide a creative opportunity to support POH but also be ongoing to keep the women aware and involved.

The idea for creating binders chockfull of useful information, tips and resources to help POH clients achieve their goals was born. They would include separate tabs with sheets for budgeting, cleaning, scheduling and planning ahead, tracking medical needs, and meal planning and grocery shopping. Captain Brianne purchased the necessary items, and the group assembled the first binders for the case-workers to give to families, placing a prayer card signed by each of them into every binder.

At first the group put everything in the binders so they would be easy to access and ready to use. It was a great idea in theory, but they soon realized not everyone needed all of the tabs. To improve upon the concept, they now build standard elements such as calculators, pens and highlighters into the binders but leave the tab packets out so the case worker can assemble them with the families based upon their needs and goals.

“It is really awesome to see the families come in for their follow-up appointments with their binders,” concluded the captain, “and to hear from families that the binder and resources in the binder have been a great tool at keeping them organized as they move forward.”

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Captains Jennifer and Alex Velasquez with their daughter, Jacqueline.
with God all things are possible

the Freedom Center on Chicago’s west side in the Humboldt Park neighborhood serves as a beacon of light and hope to those impoverished, high-crime community and other areas of the city.

The sprawling, attractive campus that opened in 2015 incorporates several existing services and programs—most notably the Chicago Harbor Light addiction treatment center, Mobile Feeding and Outreach (homeless services) and Pathway Forward (correctional aftercare)—and several new ones. Most importantly, the new facility allows for an expanded corps community center, reports Major Merrill Powers, administrator.

“The Harbor Light congregation had once been just our men and their families. Today we offer services to the Humboldt Park and Garfield Park neighborhoods and half the population lives below the poverty level,” said the major. “Now we have a growing corps which supports our men in recovery.” Major Nancy Powers, Freedom Center program development officer, is on the corps officer.

The Powers have conducted community prayer walks with corps members, several of whom have become soldiers and, Major Merrill has even prayed one-on-one with drug dealers. “Gang leaders have come to us seeking help for their moms and girlfriends, 20 new ladies from the community have claimed our women’s ministries group as their new home,” said the major. The corps also has been encouraged to see homeless children from the community coming to church, where they feel safe, loved and accepted.

Sunday mornings include a Celebrate Recovery program, followed by a worship service with gospel music from the Harbor Light Choir, testimonials and an inspiring message. After a fellowship lunch, the corps sponsors “Sunday Funday” to inspire community involvement through various classes and engaging activities.

During the week the corps hosts a Bible study, 12-step meetings, women’s ministries, men’s fellowship, corps cadets, Junior soldiers and practices for the Harbor Light Angels, a youth hip-hop dance team and the choir. The corps also conducts family events, community care ministries and serves a daily meal to hungry children from the neighborhood.

Every month a community outreach event is held for community members and families of those in treatment. Events have included carnivals, fias, movie or game nights, a Mother’s Day brunch, Father’s Day picnic, sobriety celebrations and even a pig roast luau [Major Merrill is renowned for his mastery of barbecue]. A health fair held every July provides more than 500 kids with school physicals, immunizations, dental and hearing exams and school supplies.

“The health fair also offers educational demonstrations, information tables and booths from other agencies offering services. We hold a fun fair with it and provide a barbecue chicken dinner for the whole family,” said Major Nancy. “To prevent senseless violence on Halloween, the corps also works with other community groups and opens its building for youth to enjoy treats, games, a meal and entertainment. Last year more than 600 children were safe in our building enjoying the party!” said Major Nancy. “I engage in transparent relationships with people to cultivate, celebrate and make evident Christ’s love for our community,” said Lt. Anil Kumar, Harbor Light outreach officer. “We not only impact the lives of people who come into our facility for programs or events, but we talk ‘church’ to the streets and share Christ’s authentic love and our mission with people.”

Major Nancy concluded, “The Harbor Light Corps lives out what we preach; our soldiers, adherents, and attenders are empowered by God to use their gifts to reach those who are hurting in our community for Him. We have a vision where our adults are legally employed, conflicts are solved without violence and parents are clean and sober raising healthy children who are developing physically, mentally and spiritually as their needs are being met. With God, all things are possible. He can make the difference, and as His people, we are available to be used for His purpose.”

whole world still mobilizing

the General has announced that The Whole World Mobilizing Campaign (TWWM) is continuing this year, and the mobilizing team is staying on to encourage the effort and to provide resources to Salvationists who continue to move beyond their corps buildings into the streets of the communities where they serve.

“We have such wonderful stories of transformation and change that have taken place in the lives of people because someone had the courage to tell them the Good News of the gospel,” said Commissioner Rosalie Peddle, world secretary for women’s ministries. “God continues to call us to be a vital part of His mission in the world.”

Two specific resources which will be of interest are a dedicated website and app.

TWWM website (www.mobilizing.salvationarmy.org) houses a “Mobilizing Blog” which continues to feature inspiring content from around the world by the mobilizing team and guest writers. The blog is being published semi-weekly.

Another resource is TWWM app, which is being made even more user friendly with faster connections and more fluid functionality. It features a platform to unite Salvationists in real time through God’s Word, prayer and daily devotions.

“I would encourage everyone to utilize the mobilizing app,” said Major Carol Wurz, assistant territorial secretary for adult mission advancement. “It’s a great way to share what’s happening in your community, prayer requests, ideas for mobilizing and encouragement.”

She concluded, “During 2017 the Central Territory walked thousands of miles spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. This was done in beautifully unique ways that brought compassion, kindness and an awareness of the Army’s mission throughout neighborhoods in our territory. As we continue this lifestyle into 2018, please be encouraged to go out into your community and seek out those who need a life-changing and loving touch from the Savior.”

my pillow founder partners in mission

Commissioners Brad and Heidi Bailey, Central territorial leaders, and Majors Randy and Charlene Fosbey, Adult Rehabilitation Center Command leaders, met with My Pillow founder Mike Lindell to discuss opportunities to partner in the mission to transform lives through the light of Christ. Lindell knows first-hand about the battle many people face when they walk through the doors of The Salvation Army seeking help with addiction. After beating his 25-year drug addiction and starting a multi-million dollar company from nothing, he has just one thing to say: “With God, all things are possible.”
Celebrating God’s boundless grace

Major Ruth Dalberg, a beloved retired former missionary who was instrumental in starting the corps’ Hispanic ministries by going door-to-door inviting Spanish-speaking neighbors to worship services, was presented with a beautiful award by Captain Roberto Davila. Also attending the weekend were Hispanic officers and soldiers from the Metropolitan Division who had a hand in the corps’ growth over the years through interdivisional connectedness and mutual support. Celebratory meals followed each Saturday event.

Sunday morning’s combined meeting with the Hispanic congregations from the Topeka Citadel, Kan., and Kansas City Westport Temple, Mo., corps brought another message from Commissioner Brad Bailey. “Volviendo a nuestras raíces” (Going back to Our Roots). He retraced the Army’s genesis and emphasized how God has equipped every one of His saints for ministry. With the origins of territorial Hispanic ministries now going back generations, the commissioner congratulated the corps on all it has achieved in God’s name and challenged them not to be satisfied but to continue to follow the Lord’s leading. He then invited the congregation to form a circle and sing “I have decided to follow Jesus.”

The vibrant ministries of the Blue Valley Corps attract 80 people for Sunday worship. Before the service, 40 people meet for prayer followed by Sunday school for all ages. The morning ends with a potluck lunch. During the week 40 youth attend character-building programs and at least 15 ladies attend each of the Spanish and English women’s ministries groups. Also offered during the week are Bible studies, English-as-a-second-language classes and a Monday night community feeding program. Every Friday the Dining Van visits a low-income housing site to conduct a worship service with a dozen people, and once a month a family movie night is hosted at the corps.

Saturday morning where Salvationists can begin their day with fresh air and exercise while raising funds for World Services (pre-registration required).

On both Friday and Saturday delegates can walk just a half block from the theater to the Wisconsin Center to enjoy the exhibit hall featuring Trade Central, the Central Territory Historical Museum and a variety of vendors. During registration, Salvationists can explore the ample offerings from Trade, including a new line of women’s uniform blouses. The museum area will feature a fun, photo-booth style “selfie station” and a fascinating exhibit on The Salvation Army’s involvement in World War I.

Childcare for children up to age 11 will be available during the Friday night, Saturday morning and Sunday morning sessions but requires pre-registration.

So register now, and we’ll see you in Milwaukee!
Learning in God's classroom: the Tetons

First dedicated Wilderness Leadership School session for Salvationists

by Jerrie Miller

Most adults have pool memories of nature play. Whether catching fireflies, finding the shapes in the clouds, splashing in mud puddles or “digging a hole to China,” playing outdoors was an important part of growing up. But as more time is spent by children locked safely indoors, there has been a paradigm shift. The days of going outdoors to explore and learn have been replaced with reality television and virtual gardens.

The Salvation Army Outdoors (TSAO) began as a way to bring together concerned adults who wanted to provide opportunities for children to experience the joys of discovering and learning through their encounters with nature. It soon was apparent that while many adults agreed this was an important goal, few possessed the confidence or skills to help children experience joy and wonder in the great outdoors.

Several Salvationists and friends met together to develop a sustainable initiative to expose, energize, and equip more adults to get kids back outdoors. As we began to talk about what we should include in a well-resourced program, a “God-thing” happened.

It is hard to believe eight years have passed since Jill Johnson and I set off on the adventure of a lifetime at Safari Club International’s American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) in Jackson Hole, Wyo. We learned about ecology by collecting bugs from a nearby stream to measure the health of the water system. We learned why plants grow on one side of the mountain, but the other side is bare. We studied wilderness survival, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and the interconnectedness of all things created within God’s gazillion-dollar classroom, the Tetons.

Thus began a journey that would provide intense training for more than 100 individuals over the next several years. Since that first year when we stepped out of our comfort zones, the Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF) annually has provided scholarships to bring Salvationists to AWLS. All return with a renewed passion for outdoor experiences and sharing what they’ve learned.

Still something has been missed. Since AWLS is a secular educators’ experience open to formal and non-formal educators from all areas and fields, there has not been an intentional tie-in to the spiritual connectedness of nature or practical application for putting to work what we learned when we got back home. While I remember clearly the lesson God taught me personally about building fences in my life while on a hike to look at the knock-down fences of the West, there was no formal lesson for applying that or time to discuss it with like-minded students.

This year SCIF will host a separate week exclusively for The Salvation Army where we will still be able to learn all the things taught during normal sessions, but there will be the freedom to reflect on what those lessons mean to a Christian educator and how to incorporate those lessons into character-building, camping and other Salvation Army programs.

If this sounds like the ideal way to spend a week, the dates for this year’s TSAO AWLS Educator Session will be August 26-September 1, 2018. This experience is geared for officers and lay leaders who work directly with kids and who want to expand and enhance their ability to take them outside to get up close with creation and our Creator.

Reflections from the field

Wondering if a week in the wilds of Wyoming is for you? An exclusive Salvation Army session of the American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) is coming right up, August 26-September 1, 2018! Here’s what fellow Centralistes are saying:

Deena Ford
Indiana
AWLS was incredible! The area is absolutely beautiful, and we learned a lot about conservation. I really enjoyed the water ecology classes because we are actually going to use some of that information at our camp this summer. I was also able to refresh my NASP (National Archery in the Schools Program) training while I was out there. Of course, the best part was meeting people from all over the country. At this point, I could go almost anywhere in the U.S. and know someone!

Wes Carter
Nebraska
It was a great learning experience! I really enjoyed studying ecology and conservation, two topics that I didn’t know much about. The staff is top-notch, and I really appreciated that they take the time to explain everything. The staff’s focus on safety was evident throughout which was my main goal in going. I wanted verification that our TSAO leaders attending AWLS are being taught the right way, and they are absolutely doing that. But probably the most important aspect of that week was that I made lasting friendships and memories I will cherish. It was an experience I will never forget.

Karla Salsbury
Western Michigan / Northern Indiana
The fellowship was incredible with Salvationists and non-Salvationists alike. We forged lasting friendships through interaction and shared experiences. I stepped out of my comfort zone to try new things—white water rafting! I discovered that I can do cool things—except fly fishing. I’m really terrible at that. What impacted me the most was experiencing God and His creation in such an up-close and personal way. The entire area is breathtakingly stunning. So worth it if you get the opportunity to experience it. Absolutely no regrets. I would go again in a heartbeat!

Lori Goeke
Kansas/Western Missouri
I learned there were so many things I was capable of doing that I had no idea I could do. While we “worked” as a group throughout the week, the most powerful time was the last night when we came back from a field trip to Jackson Hole and we all ran out to the field and laid down in the dark. We witnessed the universe like never before and felt as if we were truly a part of it. We could see all the constellations... It was incredible!
Yet still found himself on the outside looking in when his brother returned. "This parable isn’t just for those who know they’re lost; it’s also for those who don’t realize they’re lost," Joe continued.

Depending on the Holy Spirit’s leading for how he could share the truth of this parable in a storyline with a fresh perspective, Joe began drafting the script for A Long Way Off as his thesis for a master of arts degree in theater. Realizing his play needed some inspiring music to express the emotional depths of the storyline, Joe looked for potential collaborators. At the top of his list was Phil Laeger, who jumped at the opportunity since it is one of his favorite parables.

"Who doesn’t relate to the story of the prodigal?" asked Phil. "Any honest person taking inventory of their life probably realizes there’s been waste, betrayal, ignorance of one’s blessings and reckless ambition at the expense of others. As Joe and I explored different theologians’ takes on the parable, it just got deeper and deeper. Most of us have only skimmed the surface."

Joe and Phil started fleshing out the characters, settings and songs for the musical in August 2016. The process allowed them to empathize with the characters, imagining how each one might think, feel and respond as expressed in the songs. Joe described the creative process for himself as "left and right-brain gymnastics" as he and Phil plotted out the 15 scenes of the two-act play.

When the project moved into production phase, the creative team was expanded to include Sandra Cabrera, who brings years of professional experience to her role as stage manager, and Amber Hood, who serves as the production’s co-director and movement coach.

David Andrews, territorial visual communications director, will oversee the technical aspects of the production including set design, construction, lighting and sound. The setting will utilize a full-stage LED wall starting at floor level and supplemented with three-dimensional set elements and props on par with those utilized by professional theaters like Chicago’s Lyric Opera.

On the stage, A Long Way Off features some of the territory’s finest performing artists, including all current and a few former members of the Bill Booth Theater Company and the Creative Arts Service Team (CAST). The pit band, led by Phil Laeger on piano, is comprised of bass, drums and keyboard augmented by a live brass section and strings. Altogether, more than 50 artists are lending their talents to this exciting production.

The process allowed them to see the technical aspects of the production including set design, construction, lighting and sound. The setting will utilize a full-stage LED wall starting at floor level and supplemented with three-dimensional set elements and props on par with those utilized by professional theaters like Chicago’s Lyric Opera.

During the casting process, the creative team sought performers who could best portray the characters’ complexities and dimensions. For some cast members, this is their first endeavor on stage; for others, it is an opportunity to sharpen their skills.

Kayla Hedgren portrays Hannah, a young woman who leaves the community to search for wealth, who portrays Bennett Logan Brengle: Portrait of a Prophet as a young Samuel Logan Brengle in Salvation Army musical after performing in Spirit eight years ago and as a young Samuel Logan Brengle in Brengle: Portrait of a Prophet many years earlier, in which he also shared the stage with his future A Long Way Off co-star, Damon Winters. Supporting cast includes Captain Mark McCue who plays Rachel, the no-nonsense but kind leader of a comic trio of lovable vagrants played by Brian James, Jacob Wise and Richard Thalman.

Other members of the multi-generational cast fill a variety of other supporting and ensemble roles. Isabel Wurtz and Alexis Yacobucci, the youngest cast members, are just thrilled to be involved. "I wanted to push myself beyond my limits," said Isabel, who loves how all the characters have a story to tell. Alexis is happy the story takes place in this time period. "I hope it will be obvious what the story is trying to convey," she said.

"We’re all Hunters when we look in the mirror." Damon was eager to join the cast because of how this parable embodies the gospel. "It reveals our need to be fully seen and fully loved at the same time."

Luke Hursh plays Jacob, the father of Hannah and Hunter and the wealthiest land owner in the county. Rounding out the lead roles is Alan Tolcher who portrays Bennett Maclean, Jacob’s trusted foreman and Hannah’s fiancé. This will be Alan’s third appearance in a Salvation Army musical after performing in Spirit eight years ago and as a young Samuel Logan Brengle in Brengle: Portrait of a Prophet many years earlier, in which he also shared the stage with his future A Long Way Off co-star, Damon Winters.

Don’t miss this sure-to-be-unforgettable performance on Saturday night in the Milwaukee Theatre! Visit centralcommissioning.org to register.
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Southern Africa Territory

A Long Way Off
Musical
Focus on serving “Others”

Like many prairie communities, Aberdeen, S.D., was developed by railway companies. Ten years after Aberdeen was incorporated as a city in 1883, The Salvation Army “opened fire” and has continued to serve the region over the last 125 years.

Led by Majors Dale and Mary Hunt, the Aberdeen Corps has been looking forward to celebrating not only this significant year in its history but the many ministries it offers the region, which has been highly supportive of the corps.

With a population of more than 41,000, the Aberdeen area is the economic hub of northeast South Dakota and home to a state university and a Catholic college. In fact, nuns from the college are among the many volunteers who help pack sack lunches at the corps during the school year for its popular Feed the Kids program.

Volunteers also support a noon meal offered by the corps five days a week, along with the preparation of food boxes for seniors and families. Social service case management is offered four days a week, and the corps hopes to start offering Pathway of Hope this year.

“The Salvation Army literally needs an army of volunteers to keep our programs running efficiently,” said Major Mary. “Volunteers work in our office, pantry and thrift store, as well as in our meal and after-school programs and emergency disaster services (EDS). We could not do what we do without them.”

Local businesses, schools and media outlets have supported a variety of drives for seasonal and year-round assistance, including a back-to-school drive for new shoes and supplies.

This anniversary year will be celebrated by expressing appreciation to the community through many events from health fairs to a “Labor for your Neighbor” clean-up drive and will culminate in a National Salvation Army Week packed with surprises.

“Volunteers are the lifeblood of the corps,” said Major Dale. “Without them, there would be nothing to do. We are grateful for their support.”
Coaching skills, hearts and minds

Duluth’s award-winning Rookie Basketball Association

If you’re a sports enthusiast and have children, you probably search for the best athletic program available to provide them with the benefits of engaging in team play. If you live in Duluth, Minn., and have kids who love basketball, you would likely choose The Salvation Army’s Rookie Basketball Association (RBA).

RBA reaches hundreds of children and families each year. During the winter season, boys and girls in grades K-4 play together in a coed league of over 300 players on 33 teams coached by 68 adult volunteers.

Additional opportunities include a 180-player spring three-on-three tournament for all ages 3-6 that’s entirely player-coached and several three-day clinics for all ages during the summer.

Field trips to see local college and high school games help participants see future opportunities for them selves. A relationship with the high school brings their varsity boys and girls teams alongside to interact with RBA participants as they hone their skills during clinics.

After gathering momentum for over 30 years, the RBA was recognized in 2017 by the Junior National Basketball Association Jr. NBA as one of six outstanding youth basketball programs in the country. Along with national recognition, RBA also received training for their coaches from the Positive Coaching Alliance, an organization dedicated to creating a positive sports environment for young athletes, and a $1,000 Under Armour gift card to purchase new basketballs.

To support the application for such a high honor, parents, coaches, kids, community members and even the mayor of Duluth wrote letters highlighting the difference RBA makes in the community.

“The Rookie Basketball Association does so much more than teach basketball fundamentals,” one parent wrote. “This program changes lives.”

The RBA is without a doubt a leader and a great example of how youth sports should be conducted,” wrote the vice president of the Duluth Amateur Athletic Association.

Fulltime RBA Coordinator Kris Mallett plans and implements the tournament and other activities and works with coaches, parents, elementary schools and local government to keep everything running smoothly. With such a large number of teams and events, there are a dozen gyms around town where practices and games are held—a huge blessing since The Salvation Army’s gym alone will not accommodate them.

Each week, Kris sends encouraging emails to coaches and parents with updates, topics for team huddles and tips on post-game discussions. Coaches are trained to teach good sportsmanship, terms “marks of excellence,” which, according to Kris, are the Fruit of the Spirit explained in relation to sport.

“Love is a sacrifice for the benefit of someone else,” explained Kris. “So maybe instead of shooting a three-pointer, I make the decision to pass to someone who has a better shot. Instead of what I want, what’s best for the team.”

The focus is on development of players as people, not only as athletes. Coaches intentionally incorporate life lessons into basketball by focusing on variables the players can control regardless of a win or loss—sportsmanship, positive attitude and effort.

Kris concluded, “We’re not just coaching skills, but also the heart and mind.”

Discovering a new path

The road to officerhood was an unexpected turn on the life path Captains Bryan and Teri Ellison had planned for themselves. When they were commissioned in 2012 with the “Friends of Christ” session, they were still fairly new Salvationists.

In 2009 the Ellisons were a content little family. Bryan was assisting with a church plant in West Union, Iowa, while Teri stayed at home with their two young daughters. They each felt they were living as God desired, fulfilling their calling to serve Him in the church and in their home. Then Bryan applied for a youth leader position for The Salvation Army in Mason City, Iowa, and everything changed. Instead of hiring Bryan as a youth leader, Majors Chuck and Lori Wright encouraged the Ellisons to apply for the ministry discovery program.

Bryan immediately fell in love with The Salvation Army and was ready to join. He had been raised and worked in suburban churches, yet he was shocked by the vast marginalized population who need Christ. “The Salvation Army opened my eyes to a whole world of people who are in need,” he said. The Army’s mission drew him.

But Teri wasn’t sure. She was happy and fulfilled taking care of her family and home, and the idea of women in church leadership was foreign to her. But she remained open to the Lord’s leading. For every reason she had not to go down this path, the Lord had a response.

“The Lord got a hold of my heart,” she said, “He reminded me what it means to be a disciple.”

Within a week, her mind was made up. She would walk through the door God had opened for them. A month later, they moved to Mason City to begin their internship.

“There was so much to learn about The Salvation Army,” Teri recalled. “But we believed in the mission, and we really felt it’s what the early church taught.”

The family adjusted quickly to their new life. After 18 months in the ministry discovery program, they were headed to the College for Officer Training. Now, nearly nine years since first meeting the Army, they can’t imagine doing anything other than following this new path the Lord laid out for them.

Captains Ellison currently lead the Duluth, Minn., Corps.
Staff band and songsters join forces in Kansas City

by Jon Heaver

Making a greatly anticipated return to Kansas City after 10 years, the Chicago Staff Band (CSB) came to the city of fountains and barbecues for a weekend of regenerative work. Further enhancing the experience, the CSB was joined by the delightful Sydney Staff Songsters (SSS) from Australia.

The weekend began with a Saturday morning divisional music school at Three Trails Camp with the band and songsters providing instruction in the areas of band, vocal, theory and technique. Bandmaster Harold Burgmayer provided a workshop for local leaders on corps music leadership, using his new book, The Beat Goes On, as a source for continuing education in this field. Deputy Bandmaster Peggy Thomas provided a workshop on worship planning. The music school concluded with the finale performance where band students performed with the CSB and vocal students with the SSS.

On Saturday evening, the band and songsters joined forces for a concert at MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe, Kan. Before going on stage the musicians shared a devotional moment led by Kansas and Western Missouri Divisional Commander Major Philip Maxwell who hails from Sydney himself. In this sacred moment, the musicians lifted their voices in unified prayer with ‘At thy feet I bow adoring,’ then ensued a masterful—indeed worshipful—night of music.

Both groups featured some of their outstanding soloists. Principal euphonium Josh Turner showed his versatility with Chris Mallet’s Travelling Along—especially meaningful since Josh was inspired as a young musician at a CSB music school in Kansas City 20 years ago. Orial Rainman’s cornet solo When I Survey the Wondrous Cross was brought to life by principal tromboneist Brett Tolcher, who gave a nuanced, moving performance. Principal cornetist Beth Malovance and Peggy Thomas played Wilfred Heaton’s challenging and rarely heard classic cornet duet Wonderful Words. The band showed its power and stamina with Paul Sharman’s Inclusion, which proved a crowd pleaser.

The songsters brought spirited ministry with a diverse repertoire spanning from the contemporary arrangements of Cliff Duren to the hymnal strains of Eric Ball. Throughout the evening, they invited the audience to sing along. Among the soloists featured were husband and wife Ash and Brooke Sellers featuring back-to-back with ‘Let everything that has breath’ and ‘That’s the love broke through,’ which also featured the songsters’ adorable children singing along via video—a true highlight of the evening!

With Bandmaster Burgmayer inviting the congregation to stand and sing “Crown Him with Many Crowns” at the end of Kariotis and a stirring benediction of “How Great Thou Art,” corporate worship was abundant, as was a strong sense of the Lord’s presence.

On Sunday morning, the band and songsters joined the eight Metro Kansas City area corps for united worship, melded together by the spirit-filled words of Lt. Colonel Paul Smith, CSB executive officer, and ending with those present singing “Total Praise.” The Chicago Staff Band and the Sydney Staff Songsters made a significant investment in our young musicians but, more importantly, they brought a spirit of worship not to be forgotten.

Regeneration tackles self-discovery

by Abby Johnson

Each year hundreds of delegates from across the Central Territory gather together for Regeneration, a conference that seeks to engage, encourage and equip young adults in their faith.

This year’s theme was based off the popular book, The Road Back to You: An Enneagram Journey to Self-Discovery, by Ian Morgan Cron. Over the course of five sessions, Ian spoke about the enneagram (an ancient personality type system) and how it can be useful to believers. He advocated that knowledge of self is an important first step in learning how to love God and His people effectively. “You can’t love someone well if you don’t know them,” he said.

Ian encouraged delegates to ask two important questions as they engaged during the weekend: “Who am I?” and “Who am I?”. He reminded them, “You are more than your personality; you are a child of God.”

Delegates were asked to put their faith into action by raising funds to purchase library books for five schools in Guatemala that are run by The Salvation Army. A Regeneration markeplace on Saturday afternoon allowed vendors to sell handmade goods and other items. By the end of the weekend, $1,681.38 was raised, which will be matched by Central Territorial Headquarters for a total of $3,362.76!

As Regeneration came to a close on Sunday afternoon, young adults left encouraged to be their best through the strength of the Holy Spirit with all glory given to God the Father.

WUM DHQ shines bright

by Amy Burke

The Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Divisional Headquarters (DHQ) has been named one of the Milwaukee, Wis., area’s Best and Brightest Companies to work for in 2018 by the National Association for Business Resources (NABR).

Based in Wauwatosa, Wis., the headquarters is comprised of nine officers and 61 employees who oversee 26 corps community centers and 67 service extension units.

The award recognizes companies that deliver exceptional human resource practices and an impressive commitment to their employees. The DHQ was chosen for this award based on its communication practices, work-life balance, employee education, diversity recognition and retention.

“We live by our branding, ‘Doing the Most Good,’” said Major Steve Merritt, WUM divisional commander. “It is a great honor to be among so many companies selected for this award.”
major Andy Miller, Quincy, Ill., Kroc Center senior officer, greets anniversary kick-off guests.

Carol Jaudes performs “The Three Bonnets”

as Eastern territorial director of special events and arts ministries. She dazzled the audience with her one-woman show, “The Three Bonnets” in which she dramatically portrays three of the most significant women in Salvation Army history: Catherine Booth, Evangeline Booth and Eva Burrows.

Following the service a free-will offering luncheon was served in The Meadows of the Quincy Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center. Those attending enjoyed stories from former and current officers as well as music from Carol Jaudes and accompanist Karen Krinjak. According to Major Andy Miller, senior Kroc center officer, the event captured the essence of The Salvation Army.

“The perfect blend of the spirit and history of The Salvation Army,” Miller said. “The addition of 15 former officers sharing their stories and memories of The Salvation Army in Quincy made for a perfect kick-off to our 125th anniversary celebration.”

The anniversary year will feature various aspects of the Army in Quincy. “We look forward to highlighting our services,” said Patty Douglas, director of development. “Our plans include everything from service club meetings and a block party for those in our family services to participating in Quincy’s annual Dogwood Festival parade and an open-air service in Washington Park.”

International College for Officers

Captain Jamie Winkler, director of the Detroit Harbor Light System, has been selected to attend the 237th session of the International College for Officers in London, England, March 21-April 30, 2018.

May Prayer Calendar

My Prayer List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Bible Reading</th>
<th>Pray for The Salvation Army</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Tuesday</td>
<td>2 Samuel 5-8</td>
<td>Wayne-Westland, Mich., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Wednesday</td>
<td>Psalms 51-53</td>
<td>Sheboygan, Ind., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Thursday</td>
<td>Job 35-36</td>
<td>National Day of Prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Friday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 27-31</td>
<td>Rockford Temple, IL., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Saturday</td>
<td>Mark 15-16</td>
<td>St. Paul Eastside, Minn., Corps</td>
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<td>6 Sunday</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 4-5</td>
<td>Sioux City, Iowa, Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Monday</td>
<td>Exodus 21-24</td>
<td>South St. Marie, Mich., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Tuesday</td>
<td>2 Samuel 10-14</td>
<td>Superior, Wis., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Wednesday</td>
<td>Psalms 54-56</td>
<td>Sturgis, Mich., Corps</td>
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<td>10 Thursday</td>
<td>Job 37-38</td>
<td>Wyandotte Downriver, Mich., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Friday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 32-36</td>
<td>Terre Haute, Ind., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Saturday</td>
<td>Luke 1:2</td>
<td>St. Charles Tri-City, Ill., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Sunday</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 6-8</td>
<td>Springfield, Mo., Corps</td>
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<td>14 Monday</td>
<td>Exodus 25-28</td>
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<td>15 Tuesday</td>
<td>2 Samuel 15-19</td>
<td>Caribbean Territory</td>
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<td>16 Wednesday</td>
<td>Psalms 57-59</td>
<td>Sioux Falls, S.D., Corps</td>
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<td>17 Thursday</td>
<td>Job 39-40</td>
<td>South Bend, Ind., Kroc Center</td>
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<td>18 Friday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 37-41</td>
<td>Waukesha, Wis., Corps</td>
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<td>20 Sunday</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 9-10</td>
<td>Vincennes, Ind., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Monday</td>
<td>Exodus 29-32</td>
<td>Warsaw, Ind., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Tuesday</td>
<td>2 Samuel 20-24</td>
<td>Captain Christopher Marques (Japan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Wednesday</td>
<td>Psalms 60-62</td>
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<td>24 Thursday</td>
<td>Job 41-42</td>
<td>Williston, N.D., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 Friday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 42-46</td>
<td>Waterloo, S.D., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Saturday</td>
<td>Luke 5:6</td>
<td>Warsaw, Wis., Corps</td>
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<td>27 Sunday</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 11-13</td>
<td>Detroit, Mich., Harbor Light Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Monday</td>
<td>Exodus 33-36</td>
<td>Warsaw, Ind., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Tuesday</td>
<td>1 Kings 1-4</td>
<td>Chicago, Ill., Harbor Light Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Wednesday</td>
<td>Psalms 63-65</td>
<td>Wilmot, Minn., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Thursday</td>
<td>Proverbs 1</td>
<td>Traverse City, Mich., Corps</td>
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Go to www.salarmycentral.org
If you follow the prayer calendar during the year, you will have read through the Bible!

PIM=Partners in Mission

PRAYER CENTRAL

May 2018

Carol Jaudes performs “The Three Bonnets.”

Current and former officers who’ve served in Quincy, Ill., at the 125th anniversary kick-off weekend.

International College for Officers

by Carolyn Carpenter

In December 1892 four men and two women arrived at the northwest corner of Washington Park in Quincy, Ill. They began to sing and play instruments, piquing the interest of nearby residents and drawing a crowd. Soon, a prayer service began. At its conclusion, people followed the Salvationists to their newly rented headquarters. Shortly thereafter, The Salvation Army was officially established in Quincy on January 21, 1893.

The Salvation Army in Quincy kicked off a year-long celebration of its 125th anniversary with a service welcoming members, the public and former officers. Attendees were treated to a stunning performance by Salvationist Carol Jaudes, a Broadway veteran who now serves

We look forward to highlighting our services,” said Patty Douglas, director of development. “Our plans include everything from service club meetings and a block party for those in our family services to participating in Quincy’s annual Dogwood Festival parade and an open-air service in Washington Park.”

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PIM=Partners in Mission
Summer is just around the corner!

Camp is the perfect place to live out your faith as a counselor, lifeguard, kitchen crew member or another member of the staff. Here’s the contact information you’ll need.

- **Eastern Michigan Division**
  - Camp Michigan
  - Captain Matt O’Neil
  - www.midalwaysouth.org

- **Midland Division**
  - Camp Mihaska
  - Captain Matt O’Neil
  - www.midalwaysouth.org

- **Northern Division**
  - Northwoods Camp
  - Captain Michael Cho
  - www.northernyouth.org

- **Western Michigan/Northern Indiana Division**
  - Army Lake Camp
  - Captain Matt O’Neil
  - www.armylakecamp.org

- **Wisconsin/Upper Michigan Division**
  - Army Lake Camp
  - Captain Matt O’Neil
  - www.armylakecamp.org

- **Western Division**
  - Gene Eppley Camp
  - Kim Herivel-Walter
  - www.campgeneeppley.org

- **Eastern Michigan Division**
  - Echo Grove Camp
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Refueled by the Good News

by Captain Mary Kim

Almost 220 delegates, including 43 corps officers and their corps youth leaders, braved the February cold of Wisconsin to attend Refuel: A Gathering of Youth Leaders at Wonderland Camp. With the theme of Good News, our objective to teach, equip and inspire youth leaders to teach, equip and inspire their youth to share the Gospel was achieved through Bible teaching, worship, times of prayer, networking lunches, fellowship and 15 workshops.

Guest speakers Greg Stier from Dare 2 Share Ministries and Majors Lynn and Osei Stewart from the Southern California Division reminded us as Christ followers we have the ultimate good news in the person of Jesus Christ and are called to share that good news with everyone in our sphere of influence. On Valentine’s Day, Linda Himes spoke on the covenant love of God as laid out through the Old and New Testaments.

Outside Worship, led by Phil Laeger, Marty Mikles and Anna Street, brought us to the throne of God in united sessions, as well as in morning prayers where we were reminded prayer fuels everything and we need to be in constant prayer for others to come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Fun times of fellowship were enjoyed in the evenings through game night, a trip to Jump America and a divisional lip sync battle night where the territory’s creativity and talent were on full display.

The Refuel conference culminated with a preview of the musical A Long Way Off based on the parable of the prodigal son and gave us a flavor of what is to come Saturday evening of commissioning weekend. Refuel reminded us of the good news that just as the father in the parable ran to greet his son upon his return, God is constantly moving toward us with open arms of love.

Promoted to Glory

Captain Fred Wakefield

Captain Fred Wakefield, 78, was promoted to Glory on January 27, 2018. He was a gentle giant. Though Fred stood head and shoulders above his peers and possessed a brilliant intellect, he was never condescending. Instead, he mirrored the kindness and compassion of Jesus and, like early Army pioneers, was sold out to the cause of Christ.

Fred was born in Lorain, Ohio, to Frederick Wakefield and Bernadette Fausi on November 19, 1939, and when he grew up attended Yale University where he earned a bachelor’s in philosophy and a master’s in English. He later attended Northwestern University where he earned a master’s in journalism. He brought the same intensity and diligence to studying God’s Word throughout his life as his academic studies. He worked as a news editor for WGN Radio in Chicago before becoming an officer.

He married A/Captain Joyce Cooper on January 30, 1993, and they served as corps officers in Sedalia, Mo., Mattoon, Ill., and Chillicothe, Mo. After retiring in 2006, Fred served on the service extension board in Rolla, Mo., and on a prison ministry team in Licking, Mo. At the time of his promotion to Glory, he was a soldier at the Nashville Citadel Corps in Madison, Tenn.

He leaves behind his loving wife of 25 years; children, Gregory and Mare Elizabeth; step-children, Richard Cooper, Jolinda Cooper, Terrill Sutphin and Lt. Wendy Parsons; sister, Molly Milner and 11 grandchildren.