Omaha Kroc celebrates five years of ministry

by John Wehre

The Omaha, Neb., Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center is celebrating five years of making its city a better place. Dedicated on November 6, 2009, and opened fully in January 2010, the center is on the exciting leading edge of Joan Kroc’s revolutionary vision to offer exceptional opportunities that would change lives. The center’s fifth anniversary presents an opportunity to assess progress, tell the center’s story and plan for even more success.

“As wonderful as the facility is, we know that what happens inside is what really matters,” said Major Cathy Thielke, officer for program development. “Programs are where our building’s potential and community need come together.”

She continued, “Programs are the prime connection point with partners like the Omaha Symphony, Nebraska Shakespeare, The Latino Center of the Midlands, Omaha Conservatory of Music, Boys Town, and The Josh Collingsworth Foundation.”

Omaha’s Kroc Center now runs the largest adult soccer league in the area and just launched the largest indoor youth league. Soccer is poised for more growth this spring when the weather warms and the new lights on the outdoor field are turned on. Healthy Home Project, an Omaha Kroc Center original, helps families integrate time together, healthier eating habits and exercise into their busy lives, while Camp Kroc, the summer student enrichment program, has given hundreds of children a safe place to learn and play, as well.

California Division, reinforced the focus with challenging devotional messages in each united session. Well-known for their songwriting throughout the Army world, samples of their stirring music were featured throughout the weekend.

From Friday evening through Saturday afternoon, 19 breakout sessions were offered in seven tracks: preaching/worship (Major Paul Moore, Peggy Thomas), drama (Joe Cadly, Marty Thomas, Bill Booth Theater Company), vocal (Meghan Pierson, Kaela McDougall), instrumental (Ben Kinzie, Peggy Thomas, Bill Himes, Zane Koehler, Marty Thomas), keyboard (Brett Tolcher, Bill Himes) praise band (Eric Himes, Erica Johnson, Major John Aren) and media (David Andrews and visual communications staff). The beginning brass session was enhanced with the help of several young players from the East Chicago, Ind., Corps who helped Ben Kinzie and Bill Himes as they demonstrated various teaching techniques.

“Breakout sessions seemed to be very well

Continued on page 2
Preaching through credible service
by Lt. Colonel Paul Smith
Territorial Secretary for Program

A famous quote attributed to St. Francis of Assisi has always challenged me. It goes: “Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words.” The principle is God’s message of love, reconciliation and transformation is most effectively communicated when it is clearly and easily seen in our actions. When we have opportunity to speak, our words aligning with our actions will carry a credibility and power often viewed as lacking in this post-modern age. This is the essence of James 2:14-18.

Our desire to consistently reflect a vital, Christ-centered life is one we cannot achieve on our own. It is far too easy to allow the stresses and distractions of life to pull our focus away from Jesus. When that happens, a careless word or sharp response can slip out, resulting in a disconnect between our faith and behavior. We have to depend daily on God’s grace, mercy and empowering of the Holy Spirit. We need regular periods of spiritual renewal.

Fortunately, we are in the middle of Lent. It is a time of reflection and spiritual renewal as we prepare to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. This year’s theme for our territory’s Lenten worship series is “Resurrection Life.” The series’ purpose is to “guide you into experiencing the gospel of Christ in its fullness.”

In the “Serve Vigorously” section of Creating a Shared Future, we are challenged to be “spiritually nourished, emotionally mature, relationally healthy and physically prepared for the demands of Kingdom-building work.” We will be empowered to provide credible, vigorous service in proportion to the fullness of Christ we are experiencing individually and corporately.

The use of the Lenten worship series in our Sunday services is just one of the tools available to help us be spiritually nourished. Right now, more than 4,300 people are reading through the New Testament by participating in the Boundless... The Whole World Reading challenge.

Additionally many people in corps, adult rehabilitation centers, divisional and territorial headquarters are joining each week with Salvationists around the world in Boundless... The Whole World Praying.

It is important to remember spiritual renewal is not just for our benefit. We are called to meet the needs of those who come into our sphere of influence, regardless of whether they are presently part of our corps or center family. Service naturally flowing from our relationship with Christ will “preach the gospel” powerfully and credibly.

I am encouraged and inspired to hear about examples of Kingdom-building service. If you want to share how you are modeling the gospel through service during Lent, please send it to me at USC_Programs@usc.salvationarmy.org so I can pass the idea along.

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More on the Lincoln, Neb., Corps’ Shield Fine Arts Academy
The Salvation Army in Argentina
Tens of thousands of Salvationists started the New Year by committing to read the entire New Testament in 2015. In the Central Territory alone more than 4,300 people are participating in the Boundless... The Whole World Reading challenge!

All on board

Just about everyone attending the Pekin, Ill., Corps signed up for the year-long Bible-reading challenge, as did another dozen or so people involved in the corps’ transitional-housing and scouting programs! Captains Rick and Kim Ray, corps officers, said they were pleasantly surprised so many people (57) signed up so quickly.

“We’re pleased but not surprised by our corps’ response to the challenge. Our people have a hunger for the Word and the things of God as evidenced by healthy attendance at adult Sunday school and midweek Bible studies,” he continued. “It’s a beautiful Bible, and the reading plan is well laid out and not overwhelming. We list the passages to be read during the upcoming week in the Sunday bulletin and then tie them into worship.

“It’s also been a positive link with the Boundless International Congress in London,” he added. “Although no one from Janesville can be there, participating in the reading plan keeps us part of what’s happening in the Army worldwide!”

Youth accept challenge

Although 273 people accepted the Bible-reading challenge at the Rockford Temple, Ill., Corps, the most notable commitment was made by the 21 corps cadets led by Bryant and Karen Erickson, said Majors Steven and Christine Merritt, corps officers.

“Although we’ve been blessed to be entrusted as the corps cadet leaders and regularly stress the importance of exploring God’s Word, we believe Barb Higgins, the corps’ Thursday-night teen Bible study leader, has had the greatest impact on our teens’ response to the Boundless challenge,” said Bryant. “Her passion for God’s Word, along with her work as the territorial youth development specialist for ages 14-17, has greatly influenced our youth.”

When the Boundless challenge was first announced, Barb not only encouraged the teens to sign up but their parents and corps prayer partners as well. “This approach to Bible study promotes intergenerational communication and mutual accountability, allowing participants from age 7 to 70 to freely discuss with each other what they learned that week in addition to peer sharing during our Thursday-night Bible study,” said Barb.

Unanimous response

The term “B’Gosh” no longer just applies to the well-known denim overalls produced in this Wisconsin city; it also describes the Oaklough Corps’ virtually unanimous response to the 2015 Boundless Bible-reading challenge!

In addition to encouraging individual Bible study, A/Captains Donald and Vicky Karl, corps officers, have integrated the weekly scripture readings into the corps’ Thursday-night Bible study and Sunday messages.

“Tuesday nights provide a weekly opportunity for people to ask questions, share insights and look deeper into scripture, a new endeavor for some,” said A/Captain Don. “And, Sunday messages encourage people to keep up-to-date with their commitment for better context so they can think, ‘Yeah, I remember reading that!’

‘Participants can also sense the excitement in the text messages my wife and I send out, such as The readings over the last three days have been incredible because...’ You have to ‘want them to want it,’ which happens when they start seeing the excitement and vitality of changed lives around the corps!” be concluded.

Boundary Joy to feature Hodders

The Boundless Joy Commissioning weekend will welcome special guests Commissioners Kenneth and Jolene Hodder. Featured most prominently on Saturday morning, they will bring an inspiring international perspective.

The Hodders serve as the Territorial Commander and Territorial President for Women’s Ministries in the Kenya West Territory, which is one of the largest and fastest growing territories in the world. The Hodders have responsibility for 438 corps, over 1,500 outposts, more than 125,000 senior soldiers and 124,000 junior soldiers. They also carry responsibility for more than 800 Salvation Army schools, which educate hundreds of thousands of children each year, as well as specialized institutions for the blind, deaf, and physically and mentally disabled.

In addition to their current appointments, they have served in a variety of corps, training, and headquarters appointments, including three years in the USA Southern Territory as coordinators for the International Millennial Congress.

Immediately prior to assuming their current roles, they were stationed at International Headquarters as International Secretary and Associate International Secretary for Personnel. Commissioner Kenneth Hodder also served as Legal and Constitutional Adviser to the General.

“My wife and I are honored to be part of this historic weekend in the USA Central Territory,” said Commissioner Kenneth Hodder. “The Salvation Army is not only thanking God for what He has accomplished in the past, but it is also prayerfully considering how it can better serve Him in the future. How Salvationists choose to work together as an international movement will be key to that conversation, and so we look forward to exchanging ideas, sharing visions and participating fully in what we know will be a marvelous celebration of possibilities.”
Team leaves lasting impact
by Major Violet Ezeh

It was wonderful to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Trinidad’s Port of Spain Central Corps building without having to worry about rain water running down the walls and streaming through the chapel thanks to the Central Territory and its people!

Most of the building had been repaired, cleaned and repainted by a Central territorial global mission team just in time for the start of our long-anticipated anniversary which featured Major Emmanuel Michaud, the Kansas City Bellefontaine, Mo., corps officer, as our special guest speaker.

Captain Dr. Felix and Major Violet Ezeh, Port of Spain Central corps officers, with their son, Matthew.

God has worked in wonderful ways through the Central Territory, not only in providing the means to refurbish our physical place of worship but in rejuvenating our spiritual temples through fellowship with the team as well as Major Emmanuel, who’s had a special relationship with the Ezeh family for many years. As the regional commander, he welcomed me to Antigua in 1995 when I first began serving overseas as a young officer. And, it was he who first involved Dr. Felix in Army ministry which led to him becoming an officer—and my husband!

During the week-long crusade, Major Emmanuel preached to a packed house at the corps each evening and led a Bible study during the day. He made a big impact on our community, as did the members of the global mission team. We were amazed at how many passersby came in off the street to watch the team transform the building. One lady was so impressed with the renovations, she asked to speak with Captain Dr. Felix Ezeh and then made a sizeable donation!

Encouraged by the teams’ energy, community people came forward to help, which provided many opportunities for the team to witness and invite them to the corps. We were very pleased to see new faces in the congregation as a result of the team’s invitations.

Team members lay a fresh coat of wax.

A tiny taste of hunger

On March 20-21 bring awareness to world hunger by hosting Project: FAST at your corps.

Through laughter, games, educational activities, prayer and Bible study, participants will learn about hunger-related needs. They’ll experience hunger for themselves as they fast for 24 hours.

The purpose is not only to bring awareness but to raise funds for hunger-related causes within The Salvation Army. The territorial world missions department is encouraging corps to invite everyone for a “break the fast” meal at the conclusion, which could be used as a fundraising activity.

Corps interested in participating should contact the territorial world missions department at www.centralmissions.org to receive a leader’s guide, activity and fundraising ideas and a sample schedule.

Aussies for good

Nineteen years ago South African-born Deon Oliver came to the United States to work as a camp counselor at Silver Lake Camp (now Northwoods) in the Northern Division. He returned home after the season but came back months later to work as a corps helper at the Minneapolis Parkview, Minn., Corps for a year prior to entering the College for Officer Training (CFOT) in Chicago. As a cadet, he was introduced by a relative to Michelle, an Australian officer who was serving in Vancouver, Canada.

Deon and Michelle were married in June 1999 and following Deon’s commissioning were appointed to the Iowa City, Iowa, Corps for four years, then the Springfield, Ill., Corps for three. Appointments followed at the CFOT and then as divisional youth secretaries in the Eastern Michigan Division.

Three years ago, Majors Deon and Michelle moved to Australia with their three children to serve a three-year term in Michelle’s home territory. Twelve months ago it was realized since neither Deon nor Michelle have citizenship in the United States, they would need to either return to the Central Territory at the conclusion of 2014 or remain in Australia, where Michelle is a citizen and Deon has permanent residency.

Following consultation and much prayer, Deon and Michelle decided to transfer to the Australian Eastern Territory. The main reasons were bility for their children and to have a longer stay in their current appointment as corps officers of the Stafford Corps in the South Queensland Division.

“We treasure our time in the United States and are thankful for the opportunities extended to us,” said Michelle. “We have a strong love for the people of the Central Territory. We have friends and memories that will always be dear to us.”

Deon added, “Just as the Kingdom of God is not bound by geographical limitations, we have always regarded ourselves as officers of the world. Our years of service in the United States and Canada have opened our eyes to ministry perspectives and Kingdom opportunities around the world. We are thankful to God who continues to order our steps and trust Him for our remaining years of service as Salvation Army officers.”

Women’s Ministries mission opportunity!

Women’s Ministries members interested in serving outside of the U.S. won’t want to miss the opportunity to apply for the “Women to Women” mission team to Uruguay, South America East Territory.

In partnership with the territorial world missions department, the women’s ministries department is organizing a team of eight to serve October 22 – 30, 2015. The personal cost to participants is $750. Spanish speaking skills are encouraged but not required. Apply by March 31.
Envoi Becky Barringer Roberson, administrator since 2012 of the corps located in “The Block of Hope” building which also contains a center for women and children plus low-income housing.

A fourth-generation Salvationist, the envoy personally attests to the necessity of hope.

“I know what it means to think your dreams will never come true and all hope is gone. But, I also know first-hand the joy of restoration, which God promises in Joel 2:25. He will pay back the years the locusts have eaten,” she said.

The Salvation Army Soul Sistas (SASS) is another joy of women’s ministries and provides plenty of sassy through their lip-synching to Motown hits while dressed in coordinated outfits. The group performs in venues from nursing homes to camps and other corps in the Indiana Division.

“We adapt secular songs into a devotional structure,” the envoy continued.

Devotional thoughts inspired by song lyrics include “You can’t hurry love, no you just have to wait,” yet we charge ahead and make choices that can tear us down. “Stop, in the name of love, before you break my heart,” but with God’s help, “I will survive!” And, finally “O happy day when Jesus washed my sins away” and the decision, “I will follow Him!” Carols are similarly adapted for a Christmas devotional.

“We were especially blessed during a nursing home visit when a young woman, completely paralyzed except for her face and voice, squealed with delight as she sang along with us. The smile on her face was priceless,” Envoy Becky concluded. “It’s just so rewarding to spread the joy of Jesus!”

The members of SASS present biblical truths through sassy performances!

Quilt reflects officer’s life

Ettering after 43 years of faithful service, Major Linda Ibbs incorporated her passion for quilting into her retirement celebration by having guests sign their names on cloth triangles so she could make a colorful keepsake!

The celebration service and luncheon (with quilt-themed décor) were held at the Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., Corps. The meeting was led by Lt. Colonel Charles Smith, while Lt. Colonel Ralph Bukievicz conducted the retirement ceremony. Major Steve Harper reminisced about their days at training college, and the Oakbrook Terrace Corps Band gave a rousing rendition of Major Ibbs’s favorite hymn, “And can it be.”

Commissioned as a lieutenant with the ‘Lightholders’ session in 1972 (completing her bachelor’s degree in Bible from Vennard College the same year), Linda was appointed to serve the next seven years in Booth Memorial Hospitals in St. Paul, Minn., and Detroit, Mich. She then served eight years in theatrical business services at territorial headquarters from 1979 until 2004, during which time she became deeply rooted at the Oakbrook Terrace Corps.

The major then served as a business officer in Green Bay, Wis., for two years until she was appointed the Marinette, Wis., corps officer in 2006. In 2008, she was appointed to Sioux Falls, S.D., as associate corps officer until her most recent appointment in 2011 to Metropolitan Divisional Headquarters where she served as community care ministries secretary, with the additional appointment of moral and ethical issues secretary.

The major then served as a business officer in Green Bay, Wis., for two years until she was appointed the Marinette, Wis., corps officer in 2006. In 2008, she was appointed to Sioux Falls, S.D., as associate corps officer until her most recent appointment in 2011 to Metropolitan Divisional Headquarters where she served as community care ministries secretary, with the additional appointment of moral and ethical issues secretary.

She looks forward to living near family in her new home and attending the Royal Oak, Mich., Corps.

Keeping hope alive

Faunia young to old are blooming with confidence and empowerment through the numerous outreach efforts and creative programming of women’s ministries at the Indianapolis Center City, Ind., Corps.

“We love having joy in Jesus! Following God should be exciting and full of abundance in grace, mercy and especially joy,” said Envoy Becky Barringer Roberson, administrator since 2012 of the corps located in “The Block of Hope” building which also contains a center for women and children plus low-income housing.

A fourth-generation Salvationist, the envoy personally attests to the necessity of hope.

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The members of SASS present biblical truths through sassy performances!

Big heart, warm feet

Maja Breininger is an inspiration. Not only did she start a sock donation drive that produced 436 pairs of socks, she distributed them personally. And she’s only 8.

This winter Maja gave the socks to hundreds of people eating breakfast at the St. Paul Citadel, Minn., Corps’ free breakfast which serves a hot meal to 200-300 people every weekday morning. When breakfast-goers heard the announcement that a little girl had brought them socks, the room erupted into applause. Some people had tears streaming down their face. Others shouted “God bless you!”

Initially overwhelmed by the line of people, Maja’s bashfulness subsided with the support of her parents, Sean and Allison Breininger, and the appreciative recipients. One after another, they shook Maja’s hand and hugged her.

“I think it’s beautiful,” said recipient Mike Thoen. “It’s great to be able to get a warm pair of socks. She’s got a good heart.” Others wrote thank you letters saying things like, “My heart was greatly strengthened from seeing you here at The Salvation Army this morning,” or “Had holey socks, now I have new warm ones. Thanks.”

Socks are a blessing to the homeless and the working poor. “A lot of these people are on their feet all day. They can’t afford to take the bus,” said Molly Schunemann, social services team leader at the corps. “The luxury of being able to put on a fresh, clean pair of socks is something they might not have.”

“I have never seen such a generous child,” she continued. “I have never seen someone so little do so much for another person.”

Maja was inspired after watching on YouTube the ever-popular Kid President, who posted a video inspiring other kids to gather socks for homeless people. She put on her Super Girl costume and made her own video asking people to donate socks. The family posted Maja’s video on Facebook. Soon, a steady stream of donations flowed in, and a family friend offered to match every gift Maja accumulated during an extended weekend last fall. She raised more than four times her goal.

Maja’s dad hopes her effort inspires others to get involved. He said, “I hope it gives a little spark to people.”
Just under 10 years ago, the world entered what has been coined the “Urban Millennium.” For the first time in history, over half of the world’s population lived in cities. As this trend continues, the need for missional leaders who are equipped to serve in urban settings also rises.

To meet this need the Midland Division has established the Urban Mission Center, a ministry located in an under-resourced neighborhood of St. Louis, Mo. It began several years ago with a few people in the city looking to create change in a neighborhood. In December 2013 we began the official process to establish the Urban Mission Center.

After much preparation, the division held a weekend retreat to design the framework for the Urban Mission Center. We invited a group of 18 leaders from across the territory to join us in St. Louis to sit under the teaching of Canadian pastor and author Alan Roxburgh. He and his team from the Missional Network guided us as we identified three key components of the new initiative: innovation, learning communities, and dwelling.

Innovation is creativity in action and a necessity for the church of the Urban Millennium, which makes it an important component of our center. As we move forward with the Urban Mission Center, our goal is to create time and space to imagine, explore and think. Gathering for times of innovation eliminates distractions and reinforces the importance of our work. It brings together urban missioners to ask questions and wrestle with issues in creative ways.

Over the next year the center will develop five learning communities where leaders can investigate and initiate principles of innovation in the context of urban mission. We hope members of our learning communities will grow together in their understanding of urban ministry through learning experiments that cover a variety of issues specific to urban mission.

Throughout the year, we’ll be hosting weekend learning opportunities to consider concepts of urban mission. A few of the topics include urban youth and the leaders who love them, postures for missional community, and neighborhood asset mapping. These weekends will create space for our learning communities to gather and offer enrichment to anyone interested in learning more about urban ministry.

Our primary learning community is the Temple House Community. The Temple Houses, existed before the Urban Mission Center, and served as a catalyst for our initiative. Engaging in neighborhood transformation, young adults live, serve and worship together, committed to making a difference in the name of Jesus in the Benton Park West neighborhood. Those dwelling at the Temple Houses serve the neighborhood alongside local churches and social service organizations. The opportunities for transformation abound from neighborhood beautification and food pantries to community gardens and youth development.

The Temple House Community gathers on Sunday evenings to explore concepts of urban mission and intentional community. Over the course of a year, we’ve studied Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Life Together and used Thin Places: Six Postures for Creating and Practicing Missional Community by Jon Huckins and Rob Yackley to help shape our role in the neighborhood. This past fall we completed the Storyline curriculum, where we explored our personal roles in God’s story.
One practical way the Temple Houses engages with our community is through Temple Gardens, a collection of urban gardens in our neighborhood. While adding to the neighborhood’s beauty and character, the gardens also provide a tool for community development. The Urban Mission Center partners with the St. Louis Temple Corps to teach youth and their parents the basics of gardening, from starting seedlings to harvesting and preparing produce. A local non-profit comes regularly to teach families how to incorporate garden-fresh ingredients into their daily cooking routines.

The gardens bring neighbors together and create a safe place for building relationships. Being outside naturally lends itself to conversation in a relaxed and open environment. A neighbor might not be willing to spend time with you at church, but she just might be interested in helping in the garden!

With the hope of showing the joy that comes from being a good neighbor, members of the Temple House Community led young people on a neighborhood walk. We strolled through Benton Park West, stopping to highlight the good things around us. We discussed what it means to be a good neighbor in simple ways like keeping your yard tidy and planting flowers for people to enjoy. When we asked our explorers, a group of 10 little boys, what it means to be a good neighbor, answers included “training your dog to be nice,” and “saying hello to people you pass on the street.”

Our walk concluded in the Temple Gardens, where we learned about composting and raising chickens. It’s always surprising how many questions are asked regarding chickens, specifically the eggs. We’ve been asked more than once to crack an egg because a young person didn’t believe it was an actual egg that you could eat. Hannah, one of our sunbeams, decided to attempt hand-feeding the chickens some corn we had harvested. We heard the best thing from her that night: “It feels good to be brave!”

The Temple House Community reached outside of our local area to serve in Ferguson, Mo., for several months. We worked on canteens and listened to a hurting community. One of the highlights for our group was spending a Sunday afternoon painting murals across boarded-up windows, spreading messages of hope and love amidst the pain.

Looking back over the last year, we are certain God is up to something special not just in our St. Louis neighborhood but in The Salvation Army as a whole. We move forward with great anticipation.

For more information about the Urban Mission Center or to apply to Temple Houses, visit www.urbanmissioncenter.com
When drugs are central to the lives of your entire family since the day you were born, that’s your concept of what’s normal,” said Anthony Taylor. Today a correctional chaplain for the Kansas and Western Missouri Division, Tony was saved from such a life by God’s grace through the Army’s corrections ministries.

His parents and four siblings not only used but sold drugs. Tony began using at age 13 and joined the “family business” at 18. Although dealing drugs enabled them to move out of the projects in Kansas City, Mo., into a nice house in the suburbs, the consequences of their activities had ravaging effects on each of them, not the least being Tony’s mother serving 20 years in prison.

Labeled an “outlaw biker who didn’t play by the rules,” Tony described his life as a revolving door. “I was in and out of prisons, jails and rehabilitation centers so many times I can’t recall,” he said.

He was shot on four different occasions and estimates he spent at least 12 years “incarcerated, on probation, or on the run.”

Near the end of his last prison sentence, Tony, by then 32, was visited by Ernest Jones, Kansas and Western Missouri divisional correctional services director. Upon hearing the gospel for the first time, Tony gave his life to Christ.

“I couldn’t believe [Jesus] could forgive me for all I’d done and love me unconditionally,” said Tony. Soon after he was paroled and placed in a correctional work release program.

“One day a burly biker dude walked into the facility,” recalled Tony. “I first thought, ‘What’s his scam?’ only to discover the biker was in love with Jesus and a member of the Christian Motorcycle Association.” He became Tony’s mentor.

As part of the program, Tony worked at a steel recycling company. Five years later he became plant manager. The company’s owners have given him free rein to hire ex-offenders [90 percent of employees], provide skills training and mentoring services, then ask them to leave for better-paying jobs so the “people recycling” process can continue. Since Tony, now 50, began working there, the company has grown dramatically.

Tony started “giving back” almost immediately after leaving prison by ministering to incarcerated adults and youth. He started attending the Olathe, Kan., Corps, married his high-school sweetheart, Marta, and had a son, Sam, now 10. They are actively involved at the corps.

Eleven years ago Tony joined divisional correctional services as a part-time chaplain. He’s so grateful to be able to help multiply God’s Kingdom through both his full- and part-time occupations. With the goal of “saving one, building one and sending one,” Tony gets particular satisfaction in making known the message of God. He cannot feel comfortable with sin, the filth of the world, and desires in me a clean heart.

May each of us be clean in word and thought and deed, praying as David, “Create in me a clean heart, O Lord.”
The Go shen Corps’ annual Pancake Day has been a huge draw for 51 years. They collect donations and distribute these items to those in need in Roosevelt Park in Detroit the fourth Saturday of each month. The corps seniors program attracts enrollment at 125th anniversary last fall, the corps has developed ministries to meet the needs of its unique environment. The major believes one of the corps’ best features is its social services staff. “They genuinely care about those in need who come in for assistance, and they’ve developed a ministry with the ex-offenders who participate in the Elkhart County work release program. We also see them on Sunday mornings for both worship and Sunday school,” Major Allen added.

The corps seniors program attracts enrollment of seven new junior soldiers and has saluted two Honor Junior Soldiers and a General’s Guard, as well as a second-place winner in the latest Young Salvationist creative arts contest! “Whether it’s through youth activities, Bible studies or other programs and ministries, the corps hopes to reach more people for God’s Kingdom,” Major Allen concluded. “And, the more people who come to us as a place of refuge, the more opportunities we’ll have to preach the gospel—sometimes even using words!”

Rural corps makes impression

Not many people can blame being stuck behind a horse and buggy as an excuse for being late to church, but those attending the Goshen, Ind., Corps certainly could!

“We’re in a rural part of Indiana with a heavy Amish and Mennonite population,” said Major Allen Hanton, corps officer. “But, we’re looked up to as the community’s leader in human services as well as being part of its religious society. And, community support is generous, providing most of the resources we need to fulfill our mission.” Churches, clubs and other organizations even pitch in annually to help run the corps’ Pancake Day, which in its 51st year served more than 2,400 people!

With lightning speed, Super Ewan, Inc., became a 501c3 non-profit in May and said he wanted to dress up homeless in Detroit, Mich., she was on board.

When seven-year-old Mt. Clemens, Mich., Corps explorer Ewan Drum came to his mom last May and said he wanted to dress up like a superhero and take food to the homeless in Detroit, Mich., she was on board.

With lightning speed, Super Ewan, Inc., became a 501c3 non-profit in August. It provides food, clothing and other basic necessities to the homeless. They collect donations and distribute these items to those in need in Roosevelt Park in Detroit the fourth Saturday of each month.

Pamela Wilkins came to The Salvation Army Winnebago County, Ill., Social Service Center for food assistance. She had visited previously, but this time case worker Nancy Rodriguez noticed sadness in her countenance and asked Pam if there was anything else she could do.

“She poured out her heart to me,” recalled Nancy about the conversation. “She said she was a single grandma taking care of her four grandchildren. Her daughter had a fatal brain tumor and could no longer care for herself or her kids. It had gotten so bad Pam was about to be evicted.”

Almost immediately Nancy thought of the Pathway of Hope approach for Pam who was ready to make changes in her life. Together they set the goals of Pam finding employment, stabilizing her housing situation, finding extracurricular activities for her grandchildren and returning to church since she felt her faith was an important part of the journey.

Thanks to a resume service provided by a graduate of The Salvation Army’s Women’s Restorative Program in Winnebago County, Pam had a resume that helped with her certification and experience as a nurse’s aide. Pam and Nancy sent out resumes and prayed regularly for a job. Pam also attended a program that helped to rebuild her confidence as a professional. Within a month Nancy received a call from the driver of an elderly couple who had just lost their caretaker. The job was a great fit.

Pam ended up needing only one month of rental assistance since she found a job so quickly. Now she has stable housing, has drastically reduced government dependence and is saving to purchase a house. With these goals met through Pathway of Hope, Pam’s grandchildren were set up with the Boys and Girls Club, and they all went back to church. Pam has gotten more involved and has started serving in the church kitchen.

‘Her commitment to being open and honest, dedication to the plan and trust in God is what made Pam’s journey a success,’ said Nancy.
A champion for singing company

Charol McDonald is a life-long Salvationist who enthusiastically says teaching the Royal Oak, Mich., Corps’ singing company is the highlight of her week. She has led the group since 1990. “What do I like best? Everything!” she said. “I love the enthusiasm of the children, the smiles each week, the quiet kids and the ones who aren’t! I love having a kid who never wanted a solo or speaking role tell me, ‘This year I want a part; I love encouraging the kids to do their best.’”

In addition to a passion for children’s ministries, Charol has a degree in elementary education, participates in the Royal Oak Corps Senior Band and Songsters, is the young people’s sergeant-major and works as the Eastern Michigan divisional director of children’s ministries and Safe from Harm coordinator.

“I remember being too young to be part of the singing company, sitting in the back of the rehearsal room, waiting for my brothers and singing along,” said Charol. “I think I knew the songs better than they did! It was my introduction to music and helped mold me into the person and musician I am today.”

With a roster 43 strong, the singing company is just about as eager as Charol. All of them participate in other corps activities. “This has drawn several families into the corps over the years,” said Charol.

Under the leadership of Charol and assistants Beth Dauer and Amy Soffran, the youth not only have fun in singing company, they’re learning a lot about music. During weekly rehearsals each child is given music to hold whether they can read it or not. New members start off with a buddy. Normally by the second or third month, the buddies aren’t necessary.

Charol has had several kids who later became active in school and community theater. She’s also seen many of her members grow into musicians and soldiers. “Charol was always good at encouraging me to see how fun music could be,” Abby Johnson, soldier and Salvation Army employee, recalled. “And more than having fun, she showed me music is a way to glorify God and share His message with people who need to hear it.”

One of a kind

England native Andrew Wainwright, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan divisional music director (DMD), is one of a kind. He lived on three continents, composed enough brass band music to fill eight CDs, including the processional for his wedding this June, edits and designs the SA Bandsman (the Army’s only official banding publication), and even designed the mascot for his favorite English Premier League soccer team (although he’d call it football).

The child of officers, Andrew was born in England but spent his first nine years in Africa. In 2001, after serving at a summer music camp in Texas, he started to think about moving to the U.S., and several years later God opened the door. Andrew applied for the job online, only to discover he would be reunited with Majors Steve and Morag Yoder, who had become the Shield Fine Arts Academy Brass A with Sadie Spicer, Peter and Matthew Haslett

Andrew plays euphonium in the Chicago Staff Band.

“Having an influence on young people’s lives and seeing the difference it can make to them and their ministry is what is most important to me,” he said.

Andrew’s ultimate passion is composing brass music. “From a young age I had an urge to compose and a fascination with the way notes on a page translate into sound,” Andrew said. “I find joy in knowing you can inspire people to draw closer to God through music.”

His interest was solidified when he met Lt. Colonel Robert Redhead, International Staff Bandmaster at the time. A journey followed of studying at university and composing for numerous bands including the internationally renowned Virtuosi GUS Band, for which he is now Composer in Residence.

Two years ago he released a brass music CD called Christmas Fantasia that includes 12 tracks, two of which feature the vocals of Faryl Smith, who appeared on Britain’s Got Talent. He also has composed music for three concerts played by an all-star band of musicians from around Europe to benefit The Salvation Army Chikanaka Hospital and the Army’s John Laing Clinic in Zambia.

Harmony in Lincoln

Peter Haslett’s journey to becoming the Lincoln, Neb., Corps music director started last year with a message on Facebook. Captain Rachel Stoudier, Heartland divisional youth secretary, knew Peter’s talent and encouraged him to apply.

“I put it before the Lord, and everything started falling into place,” said Peter, who with his wife, Suzy, has four children. “God worked it out from the initial interview with the [Majors James and Angie] Penningtons [Lincoln corps officers] to visiting the area.” Peter ended up accepting the position.

Peter’s passion for music and love for ministry developed at the Rockford Temple, Ill., Corps, where he was involved with every music activity and camp opportunity offered. “By the time I got to high school, CMU [Central Music Institute] was the highlight of my year. My dad worked at the corps, and I would stop by every day to either practice the piano or write songs.” Later Peter majored in music at Wichita State University.

His arrival in June 2014 at the Lincoln Corps has transformed its music ministry, which now includes a praise band and brass band. “This has greatly enhanced our worship experience,” reported Major James Pennington. “We also have more people wanting to get involved, and we’re meeting the territorial challenge of Live Music in Worship in Every Corps by 2020.”

Perhaps Peter’s biggest responsibility is managing the Shield Fine Arts Academy music programs for corps and at-risk youth. It began in February 2014, and when Peter arrived he was tasked with expanding it. In addition to brass band and guitar classes, Peter has added a junior brass band program, percussion class and Tuneful Toddlers, which is modeled after cherubs but also includes basic musical instructional instruction. Peter reports these tots often steal the show at their recitals.

“What’s most exciting about the Shield Fine Arts Academy is seeing growth, even weekly, in the kids I teach,” said Peter. “They were raw when I started, and now they can play a whole note or half note, are starting to read music, and are getting the hang of music theory.”

Andrew with his fiancé Laura Brookshank.

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Andrew with his fiancé Laura Brookshank.
First-ever North American Songwriters Forum

by Eric Himes

The Salvation Army must always be singing new songs whilst it continues to win new victories. Old songs will not do where there is plenty of new life." This declaration by William Booth in 1883 was a timely challenge this year for the first-ever Salvation Army North American Songwriters Forum.

Twenty-four delegates chosen from the four U.S. territories gathered in Atlanta, Ga., for four days of intense worship, study and songwriting instruction at the inaugural event. The Central Territory was represented by Matt Aho, Sam Arias, Shane Byrns, Alberto Carrion, David Hudgens, John Stewart, William Himes and me.

“Our goal is to encourage, teach and affirm the next generation of Salvationist songwriters," said Bernie Byrns, assistant Southern territorial music secretary. "We intend to ‘pour into’ every one of these gifted songwriters during our time together.”

Dr. Ronald Holz set the tone when he gave a comprehensive historical account of Salvation Army songwriting. Delegates learned they were in good company with names like Booth, Slater, Cox, Orsborn, Baird, Webb, Giovans, Larsson, Himes, Laeger and Mikles, luminaries all whose works were “contemporary” in their day. Dr. Holz concluded his presentation with a rousing affirmation: “To the degree that each of you allows our Lord’s Spirit to guide you as you write, as you improve your skill and craft, you will be successful in whatever part of the songwriting vineyard you find yourself. We are all in His hands in this sacred duty.”

Major Lisa Smith, chaplain for the event, spoke about the importance of covenant and the confidence believers have in Christ. She reminded delegates of the responsibility they have to give worshippers a language for faith. “You can sing things to people that they won’t let you say to them,” she said. “Your music about Jesus will reach ears that my sermons about Him won’t.”

Keeping the size of the forum intimate was intentional as it allowed delegates to participate in one-on-one sessions with experienced songwriters. Select delegates also were given the opportunity for a song to be performed while receiving constructive feedback from the entire forum in real time. The rest of the skill-building took place each day in multiple breakout sessions on topics ranging from “breathing new life into traditional songs” to “cross-cultural songwriting.” Each evening concluded with a demonstration of the power of song, including a testimony hymn-sing and a concert from transMission who performed “We Believe,” a collection of songs inspired by Salvation Army doctrines. William Himes, Central territorial music and gospel arts secretary, concluded the teaching sessions with a presentation about the power of words. “The words you choose are very important,” he said. “People are counting on us to come through today’s message for today’s people.”

---Mustard Seeds---

If you follow the prayer calendar during the year, you will have read through the Bible! Go to www.salarmycentral.org
"He was an active, athletic and well-liked youth, who heard his calling to officership as a teenager. After attending Butler University, he entered officer training and was commissioned in 1955 with the "Soul-Winners" session. In 1957 he married Eleanor Dixon, and after several corps appointments the Norrises returned to Zambia in 1965. They returned to the U.S. five years later serving mostly in divisional headquarters appointments, including as divisional leaders of Western Michigan and Northern Indiana. They returned to Zambia in 1986, where the colonel became the first territorial commander of the Zambia and Malawi Territory. Their final assignment in Africa was as territorial leaders of the Ghana and Liberia Territory. After the Norrises returned to the U.S., the colonel served as program secretary in the Central Territory until their retirement in 1998.

Among the many highlights of Colonel William's career was serving on two High Councils. In retirement he continued to work on special assignment, including a stint as territorial commander in Ghana, a volunteer with emergency disaster services and the corps sergeant-major at the Rockford Temple, Ill., Corps. Colonel William is remembered as a gentle, loving family man, soul winner, problem-solver and prayer warrior with a heart for Africa. He is survived by his wife, Eleanor; children, Ellen (Todd) Bear and Steven (Kristi); five grandchildren and one great-grandson.