University 2020: Come to learn, depart to lead

by Ruth Rowland

Music and gospel arts leaders, corps officers and worship leaders throughout the territory gathered for two days of practical instruction at the Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in South Bend, Ind., this winter. University 2020 was an equipping conference in response to the Central Territory’s goal of Live Music in Worship in Every Corps by 2020.

Led by the territorial music and gospel arts department, the event was packed with sessions designed to expand skills and inspire leadership in worship, including music (instrumental, choral, praise band, guitar, keyboard), drama, dance and media. At Friday evening’s keynote, Bandmaster William Himes introduced an all-star cast of facilitators, which included Pastor Steve DeNeef and Dr. Emily Virmillya from College Wesleyan Church, Marion, Ind.; John Lam, Canadian Staff; Cathie Koehnen, Central Ontario Youth Chorus; and guitarist Jimmy Cox, Oklahoma and Arkansas divisional youth worship director.

Romans 12:1-2, he reminded participants the purpose of worship is to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

“Never in history have we had better worship but worse ethics among congregations,” he said. “Worship must provide opportunity for spiritual formation, enabling us to ‘test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.’” Having received the challenge, participants were off to participate in the first of four breakout sessions.

University 2020 also relied on leadership resources in the territory, drawing on the expertise of Peggy Thomas (worship resources), Meghan Pioress, Charol McDonald and Evie Pobley (children’s music), Zane Koehler (percussion), Kelly Saldiera (dance), Matt Rowland (media) and William Himes (keyboard and worship curriculum). The Bill Booth Theater Company addressed effective use of drama in worship, while The Singing Company identified and illustrated best practices for praise bands.

In addition, the Eastern Michigan (EMI) Divisional Band and Chicago Kroc Singing Company served as demonstration groups as delegates observed principles put into action. Delegates were invited to participate in choral and instrumental reading sessions in which each group read through 15 pieces of music.

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Never the Same Again

by General Linda Bond

Several years ago, when attending a Sunday morning worship service at a Salvation Army corps (church), I heard one of our leaders preach. It was not a typical sermon, in fact it seemed too simple, especially for this seasoned preacher. But his first language was not English so I suppose for this English-speaking congregation, he had to play it safe and not try to be too theological, using words that he was unfamiliar with. He simply told stories about Jesus. It may not have been a sermon that won a best preacher’s award but it was one that moved me to tears and remains an unforgettable experience.

Such stories not only make for powerful sermon material but are at the heart of Christian music. The Salvation Army like most of the Christian churches loves to sing what it believes. Stories about Jesus, put to music, are forever etched in our memories. As we sing them we are called again and again to reflect on him, his life, death, resurrection and what this all means to us today.

One line of an Easter song keeps playing in my mind: “Alone on the road, oppressed by my load, Jesus himself drew near and walked with me.” This line captures the event recorded in Luke’s Gospel (Luke 24) and it also speaks powerfully to us today. The story is of two followers of Jesus returning home after his crucifixion, with their hopes dashed. The horror of the crucifixion was enough to shatter anyone, but when it happened to one you loved, one who was innocent, not only innocent but absolutely perfect in your eyes, then how could you put it all together? Their grief was compounded by the fact that they had believed Jesus was their Messiah, the hope for their world. The light for which they had waited for so long was now snuffed out. Everything was darkness and despair. They were overcome and overwhelmed, blinded by this ghastly and unexpected reversal.

Perhaps for many reading this article, this Christian story does not make sense: God loved us so much that he sent his Son to earth. Jesus comes in flesh as the babe in the manger, lives an exemplary life, healing, teaching, performing miracles. Then he dies the criminal’s death, takes our sin upon him and breaks its power by his sacrifice. Through him a relationship is restored with God and through him we can know forgiveness, freedom and life to the full. And maybe the biggest stretch is this belief that he...
Whose business are you minding?

by Colonel Merle Heatwole
Chief Secretary

Most of us have had someone tell us “Mind your own business.” We usually get this type of response when we ask a personal question that the other person does not want to answer. I usually hear this phrase from my wife every year around Christmas when I ask about the charges that have appeared on our VISA bill. But seriously, have you ever thought about whose business we should be minding?

In Luke 2:49 (NKJV) Jesus said to his parents when they came looking for him in the temple, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

Jesus understood that His life had a mission which was more important than His own desires or even those of His parents. In Luke 4:18-19 (NIV), Jesus describes this mission: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

If you are like me, we often spend way too much time minding our own business and not enough time minding God’s. We get caught up in worrying about our personal cares and forget to see the big picture of what God wants to accomplish through us for His purposes. Recently, I was challenged by a speaker to think about something that breaks my heart to the point that I can no longer sit idly by and allow it. It could be extreme poverty in many parts of the world, the lack of food and basic necessities of many within our own communities, the gun violence throughout our country, or those who are dying spiritually because they have not shared the gospel with them.

Jesus reminds us in John 9:4 (NIV) that “As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”

So, rather than minding our own business, let’s commit to minding God’s business: the business of sharing His love and hope of salvation with a dying world. As you join me in this commitment, together we can make a transformational difference in the lives of those around us.

Called for life

We will serve the Lord for the rest of our days” was the theme of Majors John and Judith McCarthy’s retirement service earlier this year. Their son, Kevin, led the meeting, and the ceremony was conducted by Majors Paul and Paula Fleeman, Western divisional leaders.

The celebration featured Celtic hymns, poignant vocal solos (one accompanied by a violinist), heart-felt tributes and a mandolin duet by Majors John McCarthy and Paul Fleeman. The McCarty’s have three other children, James, Joy and Katherine, and three grandchildren.

John and Judith met as students at Wennard College in Iowa. They married after graduation in 1968, and John was ordained as a minister in the Evangelical Methodist Church. He led congregations in Texas, Indiana and Kansas.

After much prayer, they began attending the Wichita Citadel, Kan., Corps in 1976. That fall they entered the College for Officer Training. In 1977, they served as cadet lieutenants in Columbia, Mo., and returned there after being commissioned in 1978 with the “Disciples of Jesus” session.


In 2007 the McCarty’s were appointed Marshalltown, Iowa, corps officers, the position from which they retired. Together they’ve faithfully served as officers for almost 35 years.
The right place, right time

by Collette Webster

Two children’s classes now meet each week. They have fun in our Kids Watch area where they play, enjoy a Bible lesson, sing songs and make crafts relating to the lesson. Relationships are being built, and children and families are benefitting from being a part of these groups.

Preparation move into the Kroc Center we wanted to change times. So about two months before moving we changed our worship time 10:00 a.m. with Sunday school following at 11:30 a.m. The very week we changed, two classes doubled in size. We found people were very willing to get up on Sunday morning for worship, but not as willing to get up for Sunday school. Yet, once they were in the building, they stayed.

Since moving into the Kroc Center our congregation has grown—and so has our Sunday school! Again, people come to worship and stay. The adult class continues to grow, not only in number, but in spiritual depth and caring for one another.

Since entering the center we also have a Salvation Army 101 class each week. This last year we enrolled six senior soldiers and one adherent from that class; most of them are new to The Salvation Army.

Another time in the year we held a Kroc Olympics getting families involved in having fun together with the help of the cadets. There are many other opportunities on Sundays where we are trying to bring families together to play, pray and worship. Our vision is to Encourage, Equip and Engage. We strive to encourage people in their daily walk with the Lord, equip them in that walk and then engage them in ministry and mission. Our prayer is to continue to grow and reach out to our community. With God leading us we know even greater things are to come.

New soldiers from The Salvation Army 101 class

New Members

October - December 2012

139 Senior Soldiers
78 Adherents
153 Junior Soldiers

Family Congress:

Big on Kids

Youth won’t want to miss this year’s Family Congress as award-winning Corporate Kids Events, a VIP childcare service, brings their custom entertaining and action-packed activities for children up to age 11.

The experienced childcare professionals create custom programs for each age group.

Themes can range from “How the West was Fun,” complete with bucking bronco rides, a gold hunt and cowboy bandanas, to “Beach Party Bonanza” including limbo, sea shell frame crafts and surfers photos.

Childcare will cover all the main meetings and officers’ councils. Registration is available on the territorial Congress website...

www.sacongress2013.org
Corps sparks growth

Twenty-four children met the front of the Elgin, Ill., Corps, trying their best not to wriggle or squirm during their big event: enrollment as junior soldiers by Commissioner Paul R. Seiler, territorial commander. Seven adults also were enrolled as senior soldiers, along with one adherent.

According to Captain Nancy Mead, corps officer, many of the children had come to this point in their lives through the corps’ Sparks Academy, which rotates children through character-building, music, devotional and recreational segments on Wednesday nights.

One family came to the corps through their daughters, who started attending the Sparks Academy and Sunday school after being invited by friends. When the girls’ step-father needed a job two years ago, he became a bellringer and began attending the corps. A few months later, his wife started attending. Now both are senior soldiers and using their spiritual gifts.

“The mother leads our gospel choir, and the step-father assists with maintenance. The food pantry and serves as the Safe from Harm chaperone in the van when children are being transported,” said Nancy.

Three of the new senior soldiers are sisters. Former junior soldiers, they’re very involved in corps and divisional youth activities. And, women’s ministries was the door through which another new senior soldier came into the corps; her children were enrolled as junior soldiers on the same day. Corps Sergeant-Major Mark Bender, who taught the adult recruits class, added, “It’s been a real blessing for me to see how God has brought a variety of people from totally different backgrounds together into His family.”

The Owosso dream team

The Owosso Citadel, Mich., Corps and the local Kiwanis club have a special partnership, which dates back more than 50 years.

“The Owosso Kiwanis club regularly supports us,” said Lt. Cassandra Grey, Owosso corps officer and Kiwanis member as well. “They often ask if there is anything we need, and if so, they’ll usually find a way to get it for us. They are amazing, hard workers and love The Salvation Army.”

The Kiwanis club weekly supplies and serves food for the corps’ Wednesday morning community kitchen outreach. Kiwanis member Ken Froehlich comes without fail every Wednesday. He calls himself the “dishwasher” and aims to brighten the day of everyone he meets.

In addition to regular weekly assistance, the Kiwanis members help with Owosso Citadel’s annual backpack community outreach. They donate and collect supplies and gather at the corps to help assemble the packages. Similarly they assist in collecting, packing and handing out gifts to area nursing homes, especially around holidays.

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During the Christmas season support from the Kiwanis club kicks into high gear. Each season they take a weekend and ring all day Friday and Saturday at four different locations. One Kiwanis member, Steve Flair, who has always been a big advocate of The Salvation Army and now sits on the advisory board, built a five-foot kettle to encourage giving. Additionally, all proceeds collected from their annual Kiwanis Village dinner are given to Owosso’s Christmas campaign.

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The Wheelsers win souls!

“Minutes to Win It!” and “Minute to Win It!” games devised by Majors Joseph and Lois Wheeler, territorial evangelists and spiritual formation secretaries. With spiritual lessons cleverly woven throughout each competition, the Wheelers conclude the games with a powerful devotional thought which has brought many to Christ: “Sometimes you only get a minute to make the right decision.” The games are just one component of the myriad of topical programs offered by the Wheelers, who’ve had another busy year crossing the territory on 41 engagements. They normally present weekend seminars or three-to-five-day preaching series.

At www.wwheelersministry.org.

New soldiers Albert Mason and Tonia Love.

Kiwanis volunteers stock backpacks for needy children which are distributed by the corps.

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Owosso Kiwanis president Rob Teich has been a part of the club for 35 years. Right now there are 63 members.

“We like working with The Salvation Army because we feel the values of the Army go hand-in-hand with Kiwanis,” said Rob. “Plus, they’re really great folks.”

Collin DeLong Jr. and Clovis Allen compete in a “Minute to Win It.”

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Continued from page 1

music in an hour!

Saturday morning DeNeff focused on the mission of worship to shape the culture of church so it’s hard not to grow. With the illustration of everyday objects, DeNeff talked about how having the right leadership remote control) and maintaining the proper climate (thermostat) is crucial to change.

Delegates then plunged into a morning and afternoon of breakout sessions, fellowship and the opportunity to shop for worship and music resources provided by Resource Connection.

Too quickly the final wrap-up session was at hand, which began with exciting music by the Chicago Kroc Singing Company, EMI band and The Singing Company. In his closing challenge, DeNeff identified three disciplines modeled by Jesus in Luke 6:12-19: solitude (prayer), community (disciples), ministry (preaching, healing). He said these must be balanced and occur in order. Delegates were urged to keep these disciplines as they sang with new insight, “Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee.”

Although most delegates were soon on the road to get home for Sunday services, many remained and joined a crowd from the South Bend area for an early evening community praise concert featuring the conference demonstration groups. Led by Tom Hanton, the EMI band’s thrilling finale of “Fire in the Blood” brought a standing ovation.

New face of SATERN

Described as the backbone of Salvation Army emergency disaster services communications by Kevin Ellers, territorial disaster services coordinator, SATERN (Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network) celebrates its 25th anniversary this year with a renewed recognition of its value in disaster response. Additionally, it celebrates the introduction of exciting new technologies and capabilities, plus a new commitment to cross-training SATERN members in emergency disaster services (EDS) criteria.

“The members of SATERN did a phenomenal job in Joplin, Mo., said Kevin of operators who served on the frontlines and in remote relay support positions during the response after a devastating EF-5 tornado—the deadliest in America since 1953—ripped through the region in May 2011. “Cell phone service was jammed or non-existent with cell towers and land-lines down and the power out,” he continued.

Ham radio powered by generators and operated by knowledgeable SATERN volunteers were intrinsic to conveying vital information to emergency responders during the disaster, as they have with many other disasters. Additionally, SATERN members were strategic in making new technologies available to the emergency services community as they occurred in order.

While the Johnson County EMA and the Missouri Broadcasters Association had no equipment available, the SATERN members began a campaign to replace the trailer used in Joplin with a large, state-of-the-art emergency communications vehicle. “There’s been a renewed interest in SATERN. The Kansas and Western Missouri Division recently purchased a large, state-of-the-art communications command vehicle to replace a simpler trailer. Several other divisions have also been exploring adding a communications unit to their fleets,” Kevin concluded.
Warren Peeler is an imposing man with a strong jaw, penetrating stare and shaved head—the sort you wouldn’t want to meet on a street at night—until his face is transformed by a big smile and booming laugh.

For too many years Warren was a homeless, hardcore substance abuser who would’ve done anything to get his next fix. Then a few years ago he experienced Christ’s transforming power through the ministry of The Salvation Army in Chicago, Ill.

Now Warren can’t do enough to give back and help others. As a canteen crew member for the Chicago Harbor Light’s mobile homeless feeding program, his smile, teasing humor and frequent encouraging words ring true with those who come for what is often their only meal of the day.

Harbor light facilities are located in six metropolitan areas within the territory: Chicago, Detroit, Mich., Indianapolis, Ind., Kansas City, Kan., Minneapolis, Minn., and St. Louis, Mo. The core of each is a fulltime residential treatment program addressing the physical, spiritual and psychological needs of those seeking to overcome addictions, embrace new lifestyles, achieve personal goals and return to society as productive citizens. Individually, the centers offer a variety of ancillary programs based on community needs and funding.

The Chicago Harbor Light is hailed as one of the largest residential recovery programs in the city. Its ministry extends into transitional housing and support services, a healthy corps and dynamic jobs program.

Captains Merrill and Nancy Powers, Chicago Harbor Light administrators since 2006, unabashedly proclaim their love and excitement for this ministry and its clients, dedicated employees, faithful volunteers and corps members. Their partners in ministry are Lts. Joel and Etta Johnson, who serve as chaplain and program officer, respectively.

Corps life at the harbor light is strong with an average Sunday attendance approaching 200 people. It’s become the church home not only for current and former residents and their families but families from the surrounding community.

The corps is one aspect that makes the harbor light approach unique. According to Merrill, a

healthy church life accounts for one of the three factors associated with recovery success; the other two factors are longer treatment stays and reuniting with family. “Our faith-based approach averages a 40 to 60 percent success rate at the one-year point, whereas secular recovery programs average under 20 percent,” Merrill added.

“We’re serious about discipleship,” he continued. The corps offers three levels of discipleship classes, along with Sunday school for children and adults, a full array of women’s ministries and youth activities, such as corps cadets, junior soldiers, a contemporary worship team and a hip-hop dance team—the Harbor Light Angels!

The mobile feeding program is a lifeline to the city’s homeless. Each day vehicles roam 22 regularly scheduled sites to serve bowls of hearty, nutritious soup, plus bread and a beverage, to more than 700 homeless men, women and children. Christine Henry, director of homeless services, said a mobile outreach unit serves five additional sites for several hours at a time and are aided by mobile teams of case-work professionals.

According to Richard Vargas, mobile outreach supervisor and mental health specialist, teams get to know people and forge relationships as they respectfully engage them in conversation. These trust relationships, built over time, lead to the client’s willingness to accept more holistic services from the caseworkers. In its first year of operation, this unit was able to take 635 people, including 31 families, off the streets.

“Potential residents in our treatment program must be detoxified before we can admit them,” said Captain Nancy. “That’s why we don’t offer a shelter here. It’s just too hard on those in recovery to be exposed to impaired people. But, we have numerous linkage agreements with local shelters if a person isn’t ready for treatment.”

Harborlighttransforms

A group session meets to discuss recovery issues.

The Harbor Light Angels dance team brings blessings to the corps!

Games and recreational activities stimulate brain cell growth during the recovery process.

Captains Merrill and Nancy Powers

Gregory provides a first-hand testimony to the harbor light’s effectiveness.
New residents join the general population after first completing the intake program. “It’s a time to rebuild their health and strength after detox so they can succeed with the rest of the intensive program,” Nancy explained.

Gregory is one such person. A crack baby who began using drugs and alcohol as a teen, Gregory dropped out of high school, then went on the run for three years after being accused of murder (charges were dropped). Soon after, however, he committed a robbery and was imprisoned for five years. That’s where he discovered crack cocaine.

“I started dealing as soon as I got out and became my own best customer,” said Gregory, who was imprisoned again in 1991. “After my second release I tried over and over to clean myself up. Then I met Captain Alex Velasquez.” A graduate of the Chicago Harbor Light, Alex could relate to Gregory’s situation. “He gave me hope and suggested I come here,” Gregory concluded.

The extensive treatment program lasts 30 to 45 days and has a highly structured schedule. “Every minute of the day is accounted for,” said Nancy. “It’s the first time some of our younger clients have lived within boundaries.”

Professional counselors meet with residents one-on-one and in group therapy sessions, “always conveying the essential spiritual component,” said Nancy. Clients are helped to understand their personal addiction cycles, relapse prevention and responsible living, including managing stress, anger, time and money.

Client support can continue up to three years through half-way and “three-quarters-way” housing, which helps to cement the necessary lifestyle changes for abstinence and responsible living.

The harbor light’s transitional jobs program has received major accolades and financial support from the City of Chicago, which cites the center as its top provider of employment opportunities for the homeless, reported Victoria Kinchen, transitional jobs manager. The program prepares participants (from the harbor light and the community) to become the best potential job applicants and employees they can be.

Bernice Haynes, job developer and case manager, has recruited several major employers to partner with the program, including inner-city newcomer Walmart. As an extra incentive to employers, the program can subsidize the first eight weeks of a new employee’s salary and assign a caseworker to assist both parties.

The program also offers GED and remedial classes, computer and job training, plus such essentials as getting and keeping a job and appropriate dress, grooming and behavior. Caseworkers help participants with applications, email, interview skills and more.

Located just west of Chicago’s business center, the harbor light building (constructed in 1905) is showing its age. Increasing repair costs led to the purchase of a six-acre lot further west for the construction of a new facility within the next couple of years. “Proposed designs would reach out to the new community for involvement in the corps, tripling its outreach,” said Merrill.
It's been two years since the territorial youth department rolled out The Salvation Army Outdoors (TSAO) program, and already more than 140 leaders have been trained to help develop character, self-esteem and confidence in youth through outdoor learning and a deeper connection with God.

"TSAO has enhanced existing youth programming by adding new activities and updating outdoor curriculum," said Bruce McAlister, TSAO program and camp consultant. "Having more trained officers and leaders provides us with the opportunity to reach more children, teach them about the outdoors and get them outside."

According to Major Charlene Polsley, TSAO coordinator, during the training session leaders learn how to use and apply the TSAO curriculum, "Growing up WILD" and "Project Wild." Not only do leaders receive training from a professional educator with outdoor expertise, they take turns learning, teaching and applying a lesson from the Bible.

"We're always reinforcing how the lesson we're learning to teach applies to scripture," said Jerrie Miller, territorial youth development specialist. "Each leader teaches the rest of the class their activity and shares the Bible application; it's hands-on training."

Since the influx of solid TSAO leadership, the unique and exciting outdoor activities the program offers have taken off. For instance geocaching, which is like an electronic treasure hunt using a GPS to find a message or object hidden in the woods, has become so popular it's been the motivating factor behind a few Salvation Army outdoor clubs.

Youth also are participating in activities such as wilderness survival: learning how to survive in the woods by building a fire, finding food and water and obtaining suitable shelter; pioneering: building an outdoor kitchen using sticks and rope and archery.

Corps and divisions are implementing TSAO activities in seasonal programming, traditional camp activities and ongoing corps activities.

For instance O'Fallon, Mo., Corps Officers Captains Paul and AmyJo Ferguson held a TSAO vacation Bible school last summer. Their corps is attached to a family shelter which houses up to 14 kids at any given time. As summer approached Paul and AmyJo saw a need to get these children outside.

The TSAO vacation Bible school started each morning with an outdoor fieldtrip. The children went on five adventures from an outdoor scavenger hunt to creating a homemade water park to visiting a local park built for handicapped accessibility. "The kids loved it," said AmyJo. "They're still talking about it and want to go back. On the last day we needed to hire a bus because so many of the children invited their friends to join us!"

Hidden Falls Camp in the Indiana Division last summer ran a TSAO high adventure camp. Youth experienced hands-on learning from the "Project Wild" lesson book, as well as participated in hikes, the high ropes course and archery. Not only did the youth sleep in tents and cook over an open fire, they learned how to work as a team.

"The teamwork emphasized in the 'Project Wild' curriculum is very beneficial," said Deena Ford, Indiana divisional character-building director. "This type of camp takes kids out of their comfort zone and puts them in a position to depend on others."

"The main outcome we'd like to see is to build their [young people's] self-esteem," said Captain Jason Poff, corps officer. "A lot of these kids don't have good self-esteem; they don't have dreams or goals. They are exposed to life at such a young age. What we want to do is get outdoors and open their lives to different worlds, so they can discover that they can do things they didn't think they could."

In the coming months the territorial youth department expects TSAO to become a national Salvation Army initiative. "Our focus is on camp ministry and corps programming, and we want to continue to direct more of our resources toward that," said Major Gail Aho, territorial youth secretary. "We also want to begin a concerted effort to tackle childhood obesity, which is so prevalent in our society."
Felicia Meyer grew up in a typical middle-class family; her father worked fulltime and her mother stayed at home with Felicia and her three siblings. Although they weren’t religious, they were hard-working with good family values. At 18, Felicia moved to Rockford, Ill., where she ended up in an abusive relationship and started using drugs to escape the pain. “When I got out of the relationship, I had an addiction to cocaine,” Felicia said. Despite having two children, Felicia’s life spiraled out of control. She was in and out of jail and could not keep steady employment. She found herself facing a four-year prison term. There seemed no way out.

“I was in jail crying, and the only thing I could think of was to get down on my knees and pray: I’d never done that before,” said Felicia, who hadn’t yet opened the Bible given to her in jail. “From that moment on, it was like the person I had been left, and a whole new person moved in.”

The next morning at 6:00 a.m., the guard told Felicia she was going into treatment. She hadn’t signed up for it, but miraculously she had been treated. She hadn’t signed up for something, moved in.”

Felicia was reunited with her parents, siblings, nieces and nephews last Christmas.

Fer Archila translates Bible lessons into Spanish and coordinates volunteer lesson graders.

The Honorable Judge Rosemary Collins introduces Felicia at the Rockford, Ill., Salvation Army’s annual civic luncheon, where she shared her testimony.

One lesson, one life

“O ne lesson at a time; one life at a time,” is a favorite saying of Melody Rosa, longtime territorial Bible correspondence director. Spanish correspondence coordinator, Dinora Fernanda (Fer) Archila, echoes the sentiment: “Una lección a la vez, una vida a la vez!”

After being hired part-time in 2010, Fer’s position soon became fulltime in response to the growing demand for Spanish-language Bible study lessons from inmates. She translates documents and works with the nine Spanish-speaking volunteers who grade the Bible lessons received from more than 300 prisoners. More volunteers are needed to meet the growing demand.

A native of Guatemala, Fer came with her parents to the United States 10 years ago. With a degree in electrical engineering and head of her own company in Guatemala, Fer was well versed in professional practices and fluent in English before she arrived here. She worked in bilingual communications, including a stint at the Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., Corps, before joining Melody in a ministry that gelled with her passion for evangelism.

From a young age, Fer’s priority has been bringing people to Christ. “I became a Christian when I was around 10 years old,” she said. “People can only change through the power of God through His Word.”

For decades this ministry has enrolled inmates in correspondence Bible studies. Today basic and advanced courses are offered. Almost 20 years ago, the need for Spanish lessons began to grow. Melody recruited former missionary officers as volunteers, then hired retired officer, Major Ardena Faundez, for several years to work part-time translating and coordinat- ing volunteers.

Two long-time volunteers are Ricardo and Mary Ann Silva. They each have extensive experience in Hispanic ministries: Ricardo through prison outreach and Mary Ann through her degrees in Spanish and English as a Second Language (ESL).

“When inmates receive lessons and letters in their native tongue, they start trusting us because we know their culture,” said Ricardo. “Not content to wait until course applications arrive from prisoners, Fer checks a prison database each month for new inmate entries and sends letters to those with Hispanic names. The response averages more than 50 percent!”
What gifts and skills do you feel you bring to your current position?

I love to teach! I feel alive spiritually when preparing to teach others. Whenever I have taken the spiritual gifts inventory, teaching is at the top of the list. I also feel I have a good listening ear. I love God’s Word and practice the spiritual disciplines. I am energized by being with people; however, I’ve also learned how to balance that with alone time and taking time to process my thoughts and emotions.

Is there any such thing as an ideal candidate? If so, what does that look like?

It must be someone who loves God with intensity and has the desire to serve Him through the gifts they’ve been given. They must have a teachable, open spirit. The spirit of teachability is one that must be maintained throughout life. As officers, we must always want to learn more, continue to stretch ourselves to be the best Christian, and officer, we can be.

How did you receive your own call to officership?

I received a call to preach at age 12. I was attending a United Methodist camp when an older woman of the church said, “Hobbins, ever thought of being a preacher?” Even then I was teaching Bible study for younger children at camp and helping to run the evening programs. I became acquainted with The Salvation Army at Asbury College. As a senior, the Lord called me to be an officer during a chapel service.

How do you feel about being appointed the first woman principal in the Central?

It’s an appointment I always dreamed of but never thought I would have the opportunity to hold. I believe it shows territorial leadership is willing to match spiritual gifts and ministry strengths to individuals, regardless of their gender.

Do you feel being an officer today is different than when you went to training?

Society is much faster paced. We expect an instant answer to our questions; phone calls and emails. The needs of people seem to be greater, yet they seem to be buried deeper. It takes time to get to the real need. Sometimes people allow us that; sometimes they want an easy fix and are not ready or willing to work to get to the real need. There also seems to be a greater reluctance to discuss spiritual issues. It’s almost taboo. So, when we call people to live a God-focused life, many don’t have any concept what that means.

As cadets are ordained and commissioned, how can they keep their covenant to “live to win souls and make their salvation the first purpose of my life” central to their ministry?

We must attempt to look at every individual through the eyes of Christ. We must develop a love for the souls of people and must have the courage to challenge them for Christ. Whether it’s a person living on the streets or the advisory board chairman, each needs a personal relationship with Christ. Our testimony must be in our everyday living, but we also must be bold and ask how their soul is. We must again be reminded to take care of our own souls. I have to ask myself, “Where is God at work, and how can I join Him there?”

As principal, what will be your priority in training cadets?

The top priority has to be making sure cadets/officers are solid in their own faith. They must exercise a personal, dynamic relationship with God. They must be “Blood and Fire” officers who know God, themselves and their mission.

How would you describe your leadership style?

People and relationship-oriented. I want to serve alongside you, not in front of you. I want to help develop leaders. I can’t do it all, nor do I want to.

If someone is wondering if they are “officer material,” what do you say to them?

I would ask them if they love God with their whole heart. Are they willing to serve Him in whatever capacity He may ask—especially officership. Not everyone is called to be an officer. But if called, are you willing to serve with your whole heart?

So much is demanded of officers, how can you possibly prepare them for the responsibilities?

In 22 months it is impossible to fully train an officer to face every situation, but we hope to lay a foundation. We can equip them with basic tools, point them to the right person when they have questions on the field and encourage continuing education through the Salvation Army Continuing Education Program (SACEP) or other college work. Again, lifelong learning is of key importance. You always want to be adding new tools to your ministry tool kit. Don’t quit reading, stretching, learning. You must continue to develop your leadership skills.

Unprecedented appointment a perfect fit

Major Cherri Hobbins is the first woman principal at the Central Territory’s College for Officer Training (CFOT). Here Territorial Candidates’ Secretary Colonel Dawn Heatwole interviews her.

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Who have been the most influential people in your own officership?

I am an avid reader so many authors, like Henri Nouwen and A.W. Tozer, have influenced me. I had the blessing to sit under the teaching of Dallas Willard and Richard Foster in my master’s program. They are deep men of faith who lead humble, godly lives. The other person I have to mention is Colonel Bill Hartfoot, who is a humble leader with great compassion yet also able to be honest and handle difficult situations without making people feel demoralized.

How have your prior appointments and experiences prepared you to lead the college?

I’ve previously served twice at the college, with responsibilities including food services director, education officer, transportation, assistant property secretary, director of business and assistant training principal. This allowed me to see the college operations from many different views. I understand how the staff needs to work together as a team to make a good training experience for cadets. Also having been a general secretary in the Eastern Michigan and Northern divisions, I understand the administrative role and responsibility that comes with leadership.

What do you feel are the greatest challenges officers face today and for which you need to prepare cadets?

Learning how to balance ministry, family, self, spirit—life! Time management is key. We need to learn how to engage in important things first. We must have a relationship with Christ before we can lead our people in that journey. Everything flows out of this relationship. We must quit relying on ourselves and our own talents and abilities. When our time with Christ is cut out of a busy schedule, we begin to try to serve from an empty vessel. Then it is much easier for the world to creep in and take root. Our “soul care” has to be intentional.
Promoted to Glory

Mrs. Major Gladys Nonnweiler

Mrs. Major Gladys Nonnweiler was promoted to Glory on December 11, 2012. She was 88.

Born to Richard and Amanda Grunow and raised in Wisconsin, Gladys married her childhood sweetheart Norman Nonnweiler in July 1942. Their marriage was blessed with four children. After Norman returned from World War II, they entered training and were commissioned as part of the “Peacemakers” session in 1949.

They served as officers for more than 35 years including three corps appointments in Michigan and one in Wisconsin. In 1957 they were transferred into the men’s social adult rehabilitation center, where they had appointments in Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan.

After retiring in 1986 to Winter Haven, Fla., the Nonnweilers were called on temporarly to take up responsibilities at adult rehabilitation centers.

Norman was the great love of Gladys’ life, and last July they celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary.

Gladys was preceded in death by one son, Donald, and is survived by her husband, children, Majors Norman (Margaret), Helen (Bob) Mihelnik and Robert; six grandchilren and five great-grandchildren.

Detroit’s dynamic duo

by John Hale

With Robert Dickman as head attorney and his wife, Ellen, as executive director, The Salvation Army William Booth Legal Aid Clinic was founded in 1994 at Detroit’s Harbor Light to assist individuals seeking long-term recovery from drug abuse with legal issues that could inhibit their success. The duo resolved 176 legal problems that first year. The annual number grew to an astounding 2,653 in 2012—totaling 19,386 legal issues resolved since the clinic’s inception!

The legal aid clinic has been a stepping stone for over 145 lawyers working with clients on issues like custody and parenting time, child support, divorce, landlord tenant, criminal misdemeanors, credit issues and general advocacy.

As the demand for services provided by The Salvation Army in Detroit, including those of the William Booth Legal Aid Clinic, continues to grow, so does the need for funding. As the Dickmans head-ed into a well-deserved retirement in January. The Salvation Army celebrated the impact they’ve had in the lives of so many people by ask-ing the community to join in mak-ing a contribution to the William Booth Legal Aid Clinic Endowment Fund.

Amy Roemer, current William Booth Legal Aid Clinic director, said, “Robert Dickman was always a go-getter, a man with great ideas. He had dreams of help-ing those in need and those suffering from addiction, but he couldn’t do it alone. Ellen Dickman was an organizer and a doer. Together, Ellen and Robert knew they could accomplish anything. And together they did.”

Spreading the vision

More than 40 years ago a Salvation Army Men’s Industrial Home—a forerunner to today’s adult rehabilitation center (ARC) opened its doors in St. Louis. The year was 1932, and the country was deep in an economic depression. In recognition of the impact the St. Louis ARC has made on the city, Mayor Francis Slay proclaimed an official day in its honor and presented a beautiful proclamation document to its administrators, Majors K. Kendall (K.K.) and Katrina Mathews.

“The commemoration event received great media coverage, which is imperative to helping us spread the message,” said K.K. “People know about the Army from b ut far too many have never heard about our efforts to reach men in our community who are suffering from addictions. People need to know our mission and what they can do to help.”

The Mathews have formed strong relationships with community healthcare and civic organizations, plus a comprehensive after-care resource guide and mentoring program to help ensure smoother transitions for beneficiaries when they re-enter society.

They’ve also developed reciprocal relationships with area universities so beneficiaries can receive educational opportunities while students interact with a segment of the community that’s often misunderstood and forgotten.

“I believe education empowers,” said K.K. “We’re here to give these men a hand up, not a hand out. Just as Christ taught His disciples, we must be leaders of leaders.”

He continued, “The best ministry opportunities often come at the most unexpected times, such as during ping pong matches, in the weight room or over a meal. I try to be observant and use opportunities provided by the Holy Spirit.”

Area corps provide beneficiaries with an array of spiritually healthy experiences and service opportunities. The men have participated in community outreach, baseball games and even camping trips. And, they support the corps with food pantry supplies, Christmas gifts and performances by the men’s choir.

A God-sized hole

by Raven Steele, Sr.

St. Louis, Mo., ARC

My road to recovery began on a cold, rainy night in December 2010 when I was arrested for violence, drugs and weapons. Only through God’s miraculous grace was I offered a deal: 14 years in prison or four months in jail followed by parole if I entered the St. Louis, Mo., Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC).

In March 2011 a sheriff delivered me in shackles to the ARC. The changes in my life since that day have been phenomenal. My life story contains the same morbid details of many other addicts: inability to stop using drugs, crimes committed in order to remain chemically detached from life, the legal consequences, the alienation of family and friends and, finally, utter and complete isolation. In spite of a good childhood, I sought acceptance as a teen by joining a violent street gang. Imprisonment and death were just part of my “lifestyle,” even after nearly dying the second time I got shot.

I had no idea what to expect at the ARC, but it saved my life. I discovered my real problem was a “God-sized” hole in my heart that I tried to fill with everything else. Two years later, I’ve been successfully reintegrated into society as a responsible, productive individual with restored family relationships. I work here as the communications supervisor and serve as an example to the men that, with God’s empowerment, hard work and dedication, their lives can be turned around.

Eastern Michigan divisional leaders Colonels Dennis and Sharon Steisel celebrate the William Booth Legal Aid Clinic’s life-changing impact with Ellen and Robert Dickman upon their retirement.