A place at the table in Fargo, N.D.

by Craig Dirkes

There is a place at the table for everyone who comes to the Fargo, N.D., Corps, which serves a hot breakfast and lunch for 200 people every weekday.

They come from all walks of life. Many are experiencing homelessness. Others are older adults on fixed incomes, and some are young families struggling to make ends meet. All of them not only find sustenance but a warm and caring welcome.

“Everyday, we are blessed to meet the most basic of human needs, nutrition, both physically and spiritually,” said Major Abe Tamayo, Fargo corps officer. “Thank God for a caring community such as Fargo-Moorhead.”

**Jimmy**

Jimmy, 85, lives on a fixed income. He was born in the Fargo area but spent much of his life living in Arizona, Texas, Montana, and elsewhere. “Back then there was a song on the radio called ‘Go West Young Man,’ so I did,” he said.

During his life, Jimmy worked mostly blue-collar jobs in restaurants and hotels. He was also a traveling worker for Barnum & Bailey and other circuses. He tried enlisting in all four branches of the military but was denied.

He started attending worship services at the Fargo Corps in 2009. “Jimmy is now a soldier of the Fargo Corps, attending Sunday school and worship, men’s fellowship, always bring a laugh wherever he goes,” said the major. Jimmy has found family in the corps members and activities.

“The Army may have rejected me, but The Salvation Army didn’t,” Jimmy said with a laugh, adding that his faith has helped him stay sober since 1977.

Jimmy comes by the corps for a hot meal several times a week. Without the meal program, he would have a difficult time getting enough to eat.

Continued on page 4


Three principles to build a healthy men’s ministry

Men’s ministries is a vital component of building God’s Kingdom. Traditionally consisting of Bible study, prayer, service opportunities and activities around shared interests such as fishing, gaming or sports, men’s ministries have long been a way for men to connect.

Intent on providing opportunities for leaders to engage men more purposefully in growth, discipleship and accountability through fellowship, service and brotherhood, this year the territorial corps and community mission department introduced an expanded Salvation Army resource called *The Forge*.

“The Forge is one that conveys what happens when a blacksmith takes a bar of iron and uses heat and tools to shape it,” explained Phil. “We want men to be purified and for God to change and strengthen them the same way that heat and cooling strengthens the iron. We want men to become what God wants them to be.”

The Forge materials are designed to be used across all types of Salvation Army ministries, including in churches in reaching men with the gospel. The more we can create opportunities for men, the more we’re going to see Kingdom results and see spiritual growth among the men of our corps.”

Born out of Phil’s desire to better equip corps officers and leaders to include intentional spiritual development in ministry to men, *The Forge* was first rolled out in the Indiana Division in 2019, when Phil, then newly charged with leading men’s ministries, decided to develop materials after struggling to find resources to distribute in his division.

Inspired in part by the women’s ministries Embrace program format, *The Forge* focuses on a new theme and scripture each month and includes a short introductory video, group discussion questions and additional program ideas for leaders to utilize. The discussion questions encourage men to engage with openness and vulnerability, which leads to strong bonds of friendship and support, while the program and service ideas serve as starting points to engage and challenge men to give of their time and talents to the Lord.

“The idea of *The Forge* is one that conveys what happens when a blacksmith takes a bar of iron and uses heat and tools to shape it,” explained Phil. “We want men to be purified and for God to change and strengthen them the same way that heat and cooling strengthens the iron. We want men to become what God wants them to be.”

Continued on page 4
The Infinite Game

by Lt. Colonel Jonathan Rich
Territorial Secretary for Program

Faith and compassion drive her

Keila Morales has a mission in life: to help others as much as she can. A soldier at the Blue Island, Ill., Corps and freshman at Enory University, she is the latest recipient of the Paul and Kay Rader Scholarship.

Keila was first introduced to The Salvation Army when she was just 6 years old and her family started attending the corps. In addition to Sunday worship and corps activities, growing up she frequently participated in volunteer opportunities like helping in the food pantry, back to school drives and Christmas toy shop.

“Being involved at the corps really showed me how many people are in need and how important it is to help,” she said.

Keila says her faith and experiences have helped her determine the path she wants to take. A biology major on the pre-med track, she plans to become an oncologist. Having seen what cancer does when her uncle was diagnosed several years ago, she has compassion for families and individuals going through the difficult process of diagnosis and treatment.

“My faith makes me compassionate for those around me,” said Keila. “A lot of people are lost and need direction. Being able to share my faith with them is another way I can help.”

The Paul and Kay Rader Scholarship is awarded each year to outstanding minority young adult Salvationists who show commitment to their faith, education and service. Thanks to the Rader Scholarship, Keila was able to begin college with peace of mind knowing she could pay for tuition and all of the books and supplies she needed.

Keila concluded, “I come from a low-income family. The scholarship has meant a lot to me.”

Also receiving the scholarship this year are Alexia Brown (Kansas City, Mo.) and Hannah Kim (Chicago, Ill., Mayfair Community Church (Corps).

On the road to college? Need financial aid?

Rader Scholarships available

Qualified Central Territory senior soldier minority students entering or attending accredited Christian colleges may be eligible for the Rader Scholarship. Applicants must be attending and serving in a corps with an eye toward becoming a Salvation Army officer or serving as a local officer (a soldier in a leadership position) at their corps.

Contact your divisional youth secretary for requirements and an application. Endorsements must be obtained by your corps officer and then divisional youth secretary before being submitted for territorial review.

The deadline for endorsed applications to Territorial Headquarters for the 2023-2024 school year is May 15, 2023. So, don’t delay.

For more information, visit salarmycentral.org/ord/student-aid or contact your divisional youth secretary or Rob.DeGeorge@usc.salvationarmy.org
Sunday, June 11

8:00 am - 3:00 pm  Registration and Packet Distribution
8:15 am  Childcare for Pre-Registered Children**
(morning only / no afternoon childcare)
9:00 am  Commissioning and Ordination of the Reflectors of Holiness Session
1:00 pm  Service of Appointments*
3:00 pm  Reception for New Lieutenants and Unit Commanders+

All Events held at Miller High Life Theatre unless otherwise noted. Spanish, Laotian and Korean translation provided for general sessions. + By invitation only  * Delegate Credential/Ticket required
**Available with preregistration only  Schedule is Subject to Change

Get more information and register at www.sarejoice.org

Krocettes are cooking!

It’s a Wednesday night, and there is laughter and singing coming from the kitchen at the Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Chicago.

Wonderful smells waft from the ovens as large pans of mostaccioli, baked chicken or macaroni and cheese simmer. Corn on the cob bobbles in the boiling water on the stove.

The Krocettes, a group of women who have prepared dinner for youth in the Wednesday night Bible-study classes at Chicago’s Kroc Center for the last 10 years, are creating their weekly culinary magic.

“Ministry comes in all different forms. Food ministry seems to be our thing,” said Wandella Akins, one of the original Krocettes who began volunteering when the center first opened.

Three Bible-study classes run each Wednesday night for youth and young adults ranging in age from 5 to 20. The Krocettes deliver the hot meals on trays to the students.

“It has to be a healthy dinner, along with a dessert; maybe cookies or fruit or applesauce,” said Brenda Gordon, another original Krocette. “This may be the only meal the kids get that day, besides what they get at school. You are praying that this meal will hopefully be a blessing to them.”

Housekeeping and security staff members often get a dinner plate too. “We feed them all. You don’t want anyone leaving hungry,” Wandella said.

Major K. Kendall (KK) Mathews, senior Kroc officer at the center, is considered to be the Krocettes’ official taste-tester. “Yes, I am!” Major KK said, proudly confirming his taste-testing title. He calls what the Krocettes do a culinary arts celebration. “These ladies are full of joy,” he said. “Every Wednesday is a celebration. They take pride in what they do. Their meal is their mission.”

On some Wednesday nights, a local pizzeria delivers pizzas for the students’ dinner. The Krocettes supplement the pizzas with their healthy side-dishes.

Natasha Lewis is Brenda’s daughter. She has been a Krocette for about nine years.

“We all work so well together,” Natasha said fondly. “There is such a wonderful atmosphere in the kitchen. You can feel the spirit of everyone working together, feeling love. The best day for me is when we prepare the annual Thanksgiving meal.”

Lorraine Jones became a Krocette about three years ago. She and Brenda have known each other for more than 50 years, and they attended nursing school together. Now they find themselves side-by-side, wearing their matching Krocette aprons.

Lorraine loves serving the healthy fare to grateful recipients. “The kids come back and thank us for the meals,” she said. “There is appreciation from everyone.”

There are also some “junior” Krocettes who assist in the kitchen at times. These ladies include Brenda’s daughter, Yolanda Bragg, Brenda’s granddaughter Devoria Gordon, and her younger sister Patina Jackson.

“They have not been in the kitchen for as long as we have. So we are breaking them in,” Brenda said with some laughter.

Behind all of the light-hearted conversation, each Krocette knows the importance of what she does in that kitchen each week.

“Serving, it’s all about serving,” Natasha added. “It’s about getting up, going to church and cooking a meal for someone who may not have another meal that day.”

Faith and friendship

For Jack Hakala, a soldier at the Lakewood Temple, Minn., Corps, men’s ministries is a place for connection, friendship and building faith.

Jack met The Salvation Army when a neighbor invited him to church more than 20 years ago. That first Sunday, he felt welcomed and at home as he was greeted by the officers and members of the congregation. He’s been attending ever since.

“I went because my friend told me about having coffee and donuts during Sunday school,” Jack said. “I liked the worship service, so I kept going back.”

Not long after Jack’s first visit to the corps for Sunday services, Envoy Walter Peck, who leads men’s ministries, invited him to attend the Wednesday morning men’s fellowship. Jack gladly accepted. “Now I go over early every week to make the coffee,” he said.

According to Jack, the weekly fellowship with other men has been uplifting. He has formed strong bonds of friendship and built a network of support with several of the men who look out for one another. These friends recently helped Jack obtain hearing aids, assuring that Jack—who cannot read—retains that important sense for communication. Jack enjoys the teaching videos and discussion and continues to develop his faith by listening and interacting with the group.

“One of the things we are able to work on is helping Jack learn Scripture through hearing God’s Word,” said Lt. Adam Hines, corps officer. “It’s an opportunity to be reminded that we can teach God’s Word in different ways that reach people.”

Jack appreciates the intentionality and depth of the group which provide him a comfortable place to belong and grow in his faith.

“I’m quite sure I’m learning more about God,” he concluded. “It’s really nice to be here.”

United in Christ

“Men grow in faith and friendship through group discussion during men’s camp in the Kansas and Western Missouri Division. Corps, adult rehabilitation centers, harbor light centers, and even shelters, with the goal of connecting men with Christ and one another. The materials are adaptable so that they can be used alone, as a supplemental activity or as a first step toward building a new men’s ministry group.

“We see The Forge materials as a unifying tool that will connect men to one another and their corps, and one another,” said Capt. Tain Ross Anderson, Northern men’s ministries secretary. “There is also the potential for starting up new groups across the division, which is exciting.”

The development of the new materials and the enthusiastic response from officers and leaders highlights the importance of engaging men in the church and providing opportunities for growth through discipleship. Leaders of men’s ministries across the territory agree, this is a vital resource that will make a difference in families, corps and communities.

“When a man is being disciplined and accountable to other men in his group, and when he has men he knows he can go to who will pray for him and encourage him and lift him up, he’s a stronger soldier,” said Major Bob Gauthier, Midland divisional men’s ministries secretary.

“Our corps need ways to be inviting and to access monthy resources, including creating the introductory video and providing discussion questions and ideas for activities or service opportunities. Characters to be studied include Ne-hemiah, Joshua and Gideon, among others.

“I love the fact that officers from across the territory can contribute to a project that will be a great blessing to our men,” said Capt. Xavier Montenegro, men’s ministries secretary in the Kansas and Western Missouri Division. “The opportunity to hear from a diverse group of Salvationist voices is invaluable.”

Visit theforgeusa.org for more information and to access monthly resources.

The Forge

Continued from page 1
Growing up, Carrie Dixon relished spending time in the Missouri sunshine at Three Trails Camp in Kansas City.

“I have always loved camp,” she recalled. “It was a safe place, a place where I felt I could be myself. My first experience with The Salvation Army was though sunbeams and attending summer camp with my leaders.”

Today, Carrie and her husband Michael, who’ve been married for 23 years, run Three Trails Camp and Retreat Center—the place where they met as teens. Michael is the executive director, while Carrie is the assistant camp director. Three Trails serves children from Kansas and Western Missouri during the summer and is a retreat center from August through May. Even when camp is not in session, Carrie and Michael are busy all year, preparing for their campers.

“I think my experience at camp gives me an opportunity to watch how the guiding principles of [William Booth] are put to use,” Carrie said. “We are able to meet all of the physical needs of our campers, and then we can meet their spiritual needs. We do a lot of fun things, but the purpose of camp is for us to introduce campers to Christ and make sure they have an established relationship with Him.”

In addition to camp, Carrie is highly involved in her corps, working with youth and helping with special events. She serves as the divisional sergeant-major for the Kansas and Western Missouri Division and through this role is a member of the Territorial Soldiers’ Forum.

“I will represent our division and try to provide opportunities for our soldiers to have a voice in our territory. I will also be serving as a member-at-large on the forum’s executive committee. I am praying that God is in the middle of all the planning and implementation of the forum that is ahead.”

Faith in God is woven into every moment of Carrie’s life.

“I feel it’s important to live my faith out loud,” she said. “I try to make a point to always be aware of situations and to stop to offer blessing and pray with people.”

That strong faith has helped her throughout life, even with a heart-breaking loss.

“Many years ago, I was grieving the loss of a stillborn child. I had two children already, and I lost a baby and had to keep going,” Carrie recalled. “I was praying to God to take the hole in my heart and fill it up; let it go away so I could be whole again. I felt that God answered my prayer, saying, ‘I may never fill that hole. But I will let my light shine through it so that you can minister to others.’ There have been so many times in my life I have been able to see experiences like this impact my ministry for Christ.”

Carrie and Michael have three children, one in high school and two in college.

“I’m blessed to be actively involved in my kids’ lives. Some might say I am a professional soccer mom. I have been to lots of soccer games,” Carrie concluded with a chuckle.

Wearing a new uniform

Ricardo Cardenas had a choice to make. He could continue playing soccer on Sundays or attend worship services at the Kansas City Westport Temple, Mo., Corps where his wife Flor attended services each week.

Then he saw the guitar. The bass guitar in the corps’ praise band intrigued Ricardo. He wanted to learn how to play it. After speaking with the band director, Ricardo gave up playing soccer and joined the praise band.

But when summer rolled around the following year, Ricardo was back on the soccer field—and not at his corps.

“The director of the band said to me, ‘You have to decide if you’re going to stay here or play soccer,’ Ricardo recalled.

He made his decision soon after his mother passed away. It was a turning point for Ricardo.

“I surrendered to God,” he recalled. “And I decided to stick with the band and the corps. I changed my soccer uniform for a Salvation Army uniform, and it is great.”

He and Flor are now soldiers at the Kansas City Blue Valley, Mo., Corps, with daughters Alondra, 14, and Abigail, 9.

Ricardo and Flor were not Christians when they married at a courthouse in 2003. Then they started to attend the Westport Corps, where Flor accepted Christ; she became a soldier after Abigail’s birth.

In July 2018, Ricardo also decided to become a soldier but chose to surprise his wife. When Flor saw her husband march by in a soldier’s uniform to be enrolled, she shed tears of joy.

Also in 2018, they decided to renew their wedding vows, as Christians, at the corps.

Ricardo participates in numerous corps activities. Along with playing in the praise band, he works with teens, recently supervising a group of teenaged bell-ringers. He helps get meals to those in need, distributes holiday gifts and more.

As assistant divisional sergeant-major for the Kansas and Western Missouri Division, Ricardo is a member of the Territorial Soldiers’ Forum.

He says he was hesitant at first.

“I was kind of nervous, but God put everything together,” he said. “I think it is a very good idea, having this Soldiers’ Forum. If a soldier has something to say or a new idea or concern, they can come to us.”

Ricardo has worked in a warehouse every week for 20 years. He believes his colleagues have seen a positive change in him since he turned to God and joined The Salvation Army.

“I am more respectful and more kind now,” he said. “I know that my co-workers can tell that.”

He prays each day on his way to work and is grateful for the blessings his family continues to receive.

“I put everything to God once a day, and I know that He will take care of things,” he said. “God has been good to us.”

To learn more about the Territorial Soldiers’ Forum or find your representative, visit salaraymcentral.org.

Carrie Dixon

Carrie Dixon with her husband Michael and their daughter Mikaya, and sons Joshua and Stephen.
At the heart of the Salvation

by Carol Shoults

With the summer months rapidly approaching, divisions are gearing up camps for ministry experiences and unique outdoor opportunities. Salvation Army camps offer children and adults the opportunity to get into the great outdoors, leave behind ordinary routines of work and school, meet new friends and develop relationships, and enjoy dedicated time to learn more about God and His amazing creation.

Activities like swimming, archery, ziplining and boating in a Christ-centered community help youth establish a sense of independence and encourage acceptance. It allows for kids from different cultures and backgrounds to find a common place where they can share experiences together.

At music camp, instrumentalists and vocalists advance in their abilities and learn how to make music together at all proficiency levels. At youth character-building camps, young people discover new interests and skills.

But can a few days, a week or even several weeks at camp really make a significant change in a young person’s life?

From his vantage point, Matt Walter says it can. He first worked at a Salvation Army camp as a dishwasher in 1999, and that summer changed his life.

“I come from a low-income situation, and my home life could be chaotic at times. I was a very introverted individual with low self-esteem. As a 15-year-old, I believed that camp was a little taste of what heaven would be like,” said Matt, recalling how the camp staff was encouraging and loving.

He accepted Jesus as his Savior and came home from camp a new person.

“I was confident and extroverted, knowing that my worth was not found in what my peers thought about me but what my God thinks about me,” Matt said. “My experience at camp completely changed my life!”

He carried that first-hand knowledge of how camp can change lives with him and it informed his ministry for 17 years as youth director at the Omaha Citadel Corps where he often encouraged children and families to take advantage of camp opportunities.

With his recent job change to Western divisional music director, he is looking forward to summers as he leads music camp, traditionally one of the division’s largest and longest camps. Throughout his time with The Salvation Army, Matt has seen many lives impacted by camping ministry and many people come to know Jesus for the first time while at summer camp.

As a young girl who grew up attending The Salvation Army, Major Joyce Winters, a retired officer, had many opportunities to accept Christ as her personal Savior during the quarterly decision time in Sunday School. When the invitation was given to accept Jesus into her heart, she knelt at the altar almost every time. However, it wasn’t until she was 12 and at girl guard camp that Joyce began to understand more fully what that meant and that she needed to do something herself.

“Perhaps it was because the message was geared to my age group, but it was then that a real change came into my life,” recounted Major Joyce.

She knew she needed to dedicate her life to living for Christ, and for Joyce this meant becoming an officer in The Salvation Army, which became a lifelong passion.

Joyce and her husband, Walt, raised five children together, and all of them and their spouses are still active in ministry.

Camp also played a pivotal role in the faith of Joy Caro, a soldier at the Aurora, Ill., Corps and teacher for children with special needs.

Joy’s family—10 children in all—didn’t attend church until her older sister was invited by a classmate, the daughter of a Salvation Army officer, to come to the corps. With her parents’ blessing, she did. After a few years when Joy was around 2, her sister was allowed to take Joy with her.
Growing up in the corps, Joy participated in programs like sunbeams and accepted Christ as her Savior as a junior soldier. She went to character-building camps throughout her youth and loved it so much she then worked for several summers as a teenager on camp staff at Army Lake.

At Central Bible and Leadership Institute (CBLI), Joy rededicated her life to Christ and says that afterward she relied on the Holy Spirit to guide her life and make decisions like which college to attend and whom to marry.

"Going to camp gave me a new experience that I never would have had at home and helped me in my teen years to develop my relationship with Christ," recalled Joy. "It was a safe space—emotionally, physically, and spiritually—and this was the place where I started taking my relationship with Jesus seriously for the first time."

Growing up, Lt. Ken Jones never left a five-mile pocket in Detroit until he attended Echo Grove Camp at age 13. It opened a whole new world for him. And it wasn’t just about discovering nature or having access to the pool, it was about meeting people.

"It really broadened my outlook. I met so many different people from diverse backgrounds," he said. "But as we shared our stories, I began to realize what we had in common and that other people I’d never imagined struggled too."

Rather reserved at home and school, Ken felt that at camp he could be himself and who he wanted to become. He grew not only socially but spiritually.

"CBLI was the place I loved and looked to grow my faith," he reflected. "Citing small groups, being a camp counselor and learning from speakers and mentors whose faith ran deep. Those camping experiences gave me access to teachers and officers to hear from and to look up to."

Camp was also the backdrop for forming friendships. Some of these friends became as close as brothers and still play a vital role in Ken’s life today and he in theirs.

It was also during a CBLI night meeting where Ken was exposed to Summer Mission Teams, a concept that captured his imagination and catapulted him the very next summer onto a team to Hungary where God spoke to his heart about becoming a Salvation Army officer. He now leads the St. Clair County, Ill., Corps in the St. Louis Area Command with his wife, Captain Samantha Nolan-Jones.

Looking back, the lieutenant said, "Some people make an immediate impact on your life, and others like Jill Johnson or Jerrie Miller make an investment through camp, the huge significance of which you realize over time."

Originally from Chester, England, Captain Christopher White was introduced to The Salvation Army through camp.

"God used Wonderland Camp in Camp Lake, Wis., to completely alter the trajectory of my life!" he exclaimed. "My experience through Camp America in the early 2000s working as a camp counselor allowed me to spend almost 10 months at camp over three years. While every camp was impactful, God used Central Bible and Leadership Institute and Central Music Institute to draw me closer to the people of The Salvation Army, to get to know leaders from across the territory and musical guests from around the Army world."

He continued, "It was during these summers at camp that God spoke to me about His future plans for my life as a Salvation Army officer and encouraged me to get serious about my daily devotions. If I can fit morning devotions into my life as a camp counselor, I can fit them in anywhere! This is a discipline I have continued ever since."

The captain notes the youth camps especially drew him closer to the heartbeat of the Army as he worked with children primarily from inner-city Chicago.

Captain Christopher is now a divisional youth secretary and is excited that he gets to spend his summers back at camp, ministering to camp staff and campers.

Camp is where lifelong friendships are formed in an atmosphere of acceptance and love. It’s where lives are enriched, and some find their calling. Most importantly, Salvation Army camps are where people find Jesus.
989 days and counting

by LT. Matthew Winters

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35, NIV

This passage brought me into full-time ministry. Though a seemingly simple and easy command in words, it’s not something we as Christians are known for. God challenged me to get this right.

There was a period in my life where all I had was a system of beliefs. It was easy to fall back on them because I was in such close proximity to the good The Salvation Army was doing. I had faith without action. When I look back, I wonder if it was faith at all—that is until I heard these verses.

As I became increasingly aware of the grace and love I had received, I made important decisions. But when I heard these verses I try to lead in our ministry. We are in the middle of a pandemic and have to make such important decisions. But when we lead with love, the people we serve with are genuinely seeking God and want to know Him better, and we have seen God work in tremendous ways. Our vision is to cultivate an environment where people are loved as Christ first loved us. When someone who faces large bills, homelessness, hunger or loneliness walks through our doors, while we help meet those needs, the best gift we can give is the hope and love of Jesus. If we can get this right, our communities can change radically.

That’s what we’ve been privileged to witness here in Traverse City. Almost three years out from officer training, we are more on fire for the Lord and for the mission. It is not easy, but Kingdom work is a joy and a gift. May you find encouragement, joy and hope as you serve in your part of the Army.

Keith and Alexandra

Keith, 36, and Alexandra, 33, are a young family trying to get by. When they came to the Fargo Corps, they had a 6-month-old daughter, and Alexandra was pregnant with their second child. They had moved to Fargo last September.

“We want to make a life up here,” Alexandra said.

Five years ago, the couple moved to the Midwest from Louisiana so Keith could start a new job. They initially stopped by the corps to pick up some donated dog food but decided to stay when they noticed a free hot meal was being served. Having previously received help from The Salvation Army in Grand Forks, they were comforted to find a Salvation Army in their new hometown.

“It’s hard for our family to make it,” said Keith. “The Salvation Army has helped us a lot. We’re thankful for everything they’ve done for us.”

Fargo, N.D.

Continued from page 1

“It’s hard to get by on a fixed income. Food prices are sky-high,” he said. “The Salvation Army is so good to me.”

Brian

For Brian, the camaraderie he finds at the corps is just as important as the hot meals. He visits almost daily.

“This is a place where anybody can come,” the 61-year-old said. “These are my people.”

Brian has had a hard life. He experienced homelessness for about half of his life, starting at age 14.

After years working as a cab driver and day laborer, he now lives on modest disability benefits.

“I’ve never thrived—only survived,” said Brian, who moved to the Fargo area from Duluth, Minn., soon after the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Despite his difficult past, his faith remains strong. He attends a Bible study at the corps weekly.

“Brian has a good grasp of Scripture,” said Major Abe, “and has found a place to share his wealth of knowledge and receive alternative views and teaching. He creates value, adds to all exchanges at the corps.” The major added that the Fargo Corps is inviting and receptive.

“The Salvation Army helps the downtrodden,” Brian said. “They help the kind of people that everyone was mad at Christ for sitting with.”

International College for Officers Delegates

The following officers have been appointed to attend the International College for Officers (ICO) in London, England, through May of this year where they will join officers selected for this privilege from around the world.

ICO exists to further develop officers by nurturing personal holiness, corporate holiness, and spiritual leadership; fostering leader development and capacity building for current and future officer leaders; providing opportunities for officers to experience the internationalism of The Salvation Army; and encouraging a renewed sense of mission and purpose among officers.

Session 252
January 11 - February 20, 2023

Major Jolene Hull
Territorial Women’s Ministries Secretary
Territorial Headquarters

Captain Xavier Montenegro
Divisional Secretary
Kansas and Western Missouri Division

Session 253
March 22 - May 1, 2023

Major Stephanie Senn
Divisional Secretary for Program
North & Central Illinois Division

Scott and Allison Rodriguez

First-generation and Multigenerational Salvationists
Rockford Temple and Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., Corps
North & Central Illinois Division

Majors Angela and Monty Wandling, corps officers
Captains Christine and Barique Coreano, corps officers

Spiritual Gifts
Scott: Leadership • Giving • Serving
Allison: Leadership • Mercy • Teaching

Ministry Passion or Experience
Scott: Missions • Worship
Allison: Children/Youth • Missions • Worship

Spiritual mentors
Scott: Captain Xavier Montenegro
Allison: Chris Shy, Captain Amanda Keene
I
n 2018, I was able to serve in the Spain/Portugal Command for six weeks on a Summer Mission Team. That summer was life-changing and set into motion the unveiling of God’s plan for my life.

When our team left our first location of service in Portugal, our host, Major Pedro Das Neves, jokingly shared he had a vision of us returning to serve as officers. A few weeks later, our team was at a music camp in Spain where I accepted God’s calling on my life to serve as a Salvation Army officer.

Though Major Pedro’s remark was more than prophetic, God used that moment to open my heart to a unique ministry opportunity. Almost a year ago, Major Pedro requested an intern from the Central Territory to serve in the children’s home, nursing home and corps in Colares, Portugal.

After months of waiting for approvals, visa drama, a wedding, and a summer of service at Wonderland Camp in Wisconsin, my husband and I arrived in Colares just in time for a congress celebrating 50 years of The Salvation Army in Spain and Portugal.

The next three months were spent seeing the Army in a new context, learning a new language and making new friends. Our weekly schedule included home league at Marinél (the Army’s nursing home), games and dinner at Novo Mundo (the children’s home), cleaning the thrift store, and special projects like Angel Tree preparation or practical labor like organizing a shed or weeding a garden. We were also a part of the corps band and praise team while teaching beginner’s brass throughout the week. Some activities were less frequent such as youth club, women’s club, and timbrels.

In all of the life changes that took place between 2018 and 2022, I was constantly reminded of God’s faithfulness to me. While serving in Portugal, the Lord reminded me that we also are called to be faithful to Him.

Sometimes God asks us to do hard things, things that make us uncomfortable. Our major spoke about this struggle to be faithful in his sermon on Romans 8:5-17. Often our walk of faith is a battle between the Spirit and the flesh. In my life, inclinations from the Spirit are almost always more uncomfortable than what my human nature desires. However, verse 6 reminds us “the mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.” Between those two paths, I choose life and peace.

While our plan was to stay in Portugal for just under a year, God had other plans. We did not receive our visas to stay past 90 days, so we returned to Chicago for the Christmas season where we supported various corps throughout the demanding holiday season of kettles, Angel Tree, and all things Christmas.

In January, we embarked on a new journey to continue our internship in San Isidro, Costa Rica, where The Salvation Army has a corps and home for men.

While there has been so much change in this season, these transitions are not new to God. We know that every person we meet, every corps we attend, every ministry opportunity brings with it wisdom that will equip us for the work God has prepared in advance for us to do.

**God unveils plan**
by Allison Rodriguez

General Brian Peddle prays over the new session of cadets in the Spain/Portugal Command.

Many delegates from Colares greet the General and Commissioner Rosalie Peddle.

For World Services promotional materials, visit centralmissions.org

Allison and her new friend, Joana

For the first time, Spain and Portugal form a united timbrel brigade which was a highlight of the Congress.

The Colares Corps women’s fellowship celebrates the birthday of one of the members.

The Colares Corps women’s fellowship celebrates the birthday of one of the members.
Going to camp as a little girl changed Jeanie Dobney’s life and set her young mind on a future career.

“I fell in love with camp ministry,” said Jeanie, now territorial camping and outdoor ministries director for the Central Territory. “I grew up knowing what I wanted to do. I wanted to give that experience back to other kids.

“There were so many big moments in my life that happened at camp,” Jeanie continued. “Every summer I looked forward to it. Climbing the rock wall, going on scavenger hunts... the pool. And there is just something about walking back from a campfire, listening to frogs and crickets, seeing the stars and hearing kids laugh.”

It was a kindergarten friend who invited Jeanie to attend sunbeams. Following her lead, Jeanie’s brothers joined the adventure corps. Before long, the whole family was attending the Royal Oak, Mich., Corps.

Jeanie majored in outdoor education at Central Michigan University, hoping it would open more doors in the public sector. “I wanted to see the public mindset and to reach more communities for the outdoors. You see God’s fingerprints everywhere you look. Creation speaks for itself,” Jeanie said.

She began her current role in April 2022. A few of her duties include working with organizations to help build a training system for camp leaders, ensuring camp programs meet safety standards, and working with leaders to help them pursue outdoor activities for their corps and communities.

“I am there to make sure we are helping kids and adults connect with the outdoors and connect with God in a new way,” Jeanie said. “With greatly reduced cost and scholarships, Salvation Army camps enable those with limited means to participate and especially provide the opportunity for healthy outdoor experiences. They allow people from all walks of life to learn and grow from one another.

“Our campers get to experience the waterfront, the pool, archery, high ropes challenge courses, nature hikes, pontoon rides and so much more. Having a chance to go and sleep under the stars is huge for some kids,” Jeanie said.

“Every chance we get we want to ask, ‘What does this show you about God’s love?’ It’s building a relationship from the first moment that camper is in our care to let them know they are safe, they are loved and they belong. We train our staff to be intentional with every interaction,” Jeanie said.

Children can change dramatically while attending camp, Jeanie noted. “We have seen campers who, when they first get off the bus, are in total shock and shy in a foreign environment. By the time they get back on the bus they are different kids. They don’t want to go home. They have friends they were able to connect with, and they can see a love from God they don’t want to let go of. And we let them know they don’t have to let go of that. God is still with them wherever they go.”
Top 10 Reasons to Work at Camp

by Jeanie Dobney

10. It’s fun! There’s something for everyone to have a good time.

9. You get paid and you don’t have to pay for food, lodging, or gas to get to work.

8. Learn new skills and get certifications that help you both professionally and personally.

7. Adventure in the Outdoors! Make memories and see what new things wait down the path. (And for a minute, escape from whatever nonsense is going on back home.)

6. It’s good for you! Chances are, you’ll be more active at a summer camp than at home or a campus job.

5. It’s really good for you! Spending time outdoors has been scientifically proven on multiple fronts to be good for your mental and emotional health.

4. Make new friends and build old friendships.

3. Live life with kids for a week! Help them feel safe and confident to try new things and know they are loved!

2. Share God’s love. So many people come together to make camp happen—giving a glimpse of what living for the Kingdom can look like.

1. You experience God’s love in a new way.

My Prayer List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Bible Reading</th>
<th>Pray for The Salvation Army</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Saturday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 4:6</td>
<td>O’Fallon, Mo., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sunday</td>
<td>Exodus 1-4</td>
<td>Oak Creek Centennial, Wls., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Monday</td>
<td>1 Samuel 16-20</td>
<td>Muscatine, Iowa, Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Tuesday</td>
<td>Psalms 39-41</td>
<td>Denmark &amp; Greenland Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Wednesday</td>
<td>Job 27-28</td>
<td>Southeast, Mich., ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Thursday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 7-11</td>
<td>Huntington, Ind., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Friday</td>
<td>Mark 7-8</td>
<td>Blue Island, III, Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Saturday</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 11-12</td>
<td>Loganport, Ind., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Sunday</td>
<td>Exodus 5-6</td>
<td>Indianapolis Area Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Monday</td>
<td>1 Samuel 21-25</td>
<td>Cicero Temple, Laramie, Mi., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Tuesday</td>
<td>Psalms 42-44</td>
<td>Madison, Ind., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Wednesday</td>
<td>Job 29-30</td>
<td>Bangladesh Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Thursday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 12-16</td>
<td>Jasper/Newton County, Mo., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Friday</td>
<td>Mark 9-10</td>
<td>St. Charles Tri City, IX, Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Saturday</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 13-14</td>
<td>Fort Dodge, Iowa, Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Sunday</td>
<td>Exodus 9-12</td>
<td>Fergus Falls, Minn., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Monday</td>
<td>1 Samuel 25-31</td>
<td>Porter County, Ind., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Tuesday</td>
<td>Psalms 45-47</td>
<td>Livingston County, Mich., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Wednesday</td>
<td>Job 31-32</td>
<td>Australia Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Thursday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 17-21</td>
<td>Racine, Wis., Corps</td>
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<td>21 Friday</td>
<td>Mark 11-12</td>
<td>Southwest Indiana Area Coordinator</td>
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<td>22 Saturday</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 15-16</td>
<td>Marinette, Wis., Corps</td>
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<td>23 Sunday</td>
<td>Exodus 13-16</td>
<td>Kansas City Blue Valley, Mo., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 Monday</td>
<td>2 Samuel 3-4</td>
<td>Kankakee, Ill., Corps</td>
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<td>25 Tuesday</td>
<td>Psalms 48-50</td>
<td>Farmington Hills, Mich., Corps</td>
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<td>26 Wednesday</td>
<td>Job 33-34</td>
<td>Chicago Michigan, IX, Corps</td>
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<td>27 Thursday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 22-26</td>
<td>Angola Command</td>
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<td>28 Friday</td>
<td>Mark 13-14</td>
<td>Peoria Citadel, Ill., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Saturday</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 1-3</td>
<td>Fargo, N.D., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Sunday</td>
<td>Exodus 17-20</td>
<td>Local officers</td>
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Go to www.salarmycentral.org
If you follow the prayer calendar during the year, you will have read through the Bible!
by Jon Heaver

Salvation Army music directors from across North America came together for professional development and networking at the second-ever National Divisional Music Directors Conference in Atlanta, Ga.

Divisional music directors (DMDs), assistant DMDs and territorial music staff joined in united sessions led by guest instructors, including worship leader Randy Bonfield and Philip Harper, conductor of the top-ranked brass band in the world, the Cory Band.

Midland DMD JR Boatright (left) and Midland's ministry secretary Brett Takher share how DMDs can work with development departments to raise money.

Greg Tuck from National Headquarters shares how DMDs can work with development departments to raise money for music programs.

A wide range of workshops included topics like band and choral leadership, youth musical techniques, worship planning, rehearsal techniques, and teaching music with learning accommodations.

The Central Territory was well-represented by DMDs from six divisions and four members of the territorial music and creative arts ministries department.

Midland DMD JR Boatright leads a workshop.

Randy Bonfield leads the delegation in worship.

North & Central Illinois DMD Peter Kim joined forces with DMDs from Texas and New York to lead DMD 101 geared toward giving new music directors tools to launch their ministries.

Midland DMD JR Boatright teamed up with DMDs from California and Washington, D.C., to lead a workshop on teaching beginner musicians. JR participated in a workshop where he conducted a band composed of delegates and received coaching from Philip Harper—an invaluable experience!

Joc Caddy, who leads the Central’s Bill Booth Theater Company, presented an inspiring drama workshop. With Phil Laeger, Joc cowrote and staged the musical, A Long Way Off, which premiered at commissioning in 2018.

The Central’s visual communications department virtually gave a workshop on the basics of live streaming, a pertinent topic for many corps.

However, the conference’s main focus was leadership development in music and creative arts. Having attended, DMDs are better equipped to develop corps music leaders in their divisions which is at the heart of the Central Territory’s Equip 25/25 Initiative. Launched in 2021, the initiative seeks to create and develop 25 new music and arts leaders in each division by 2025.

Music and arts are essential for congregational worship. To ensure this, it’s essential to establish educational programs for youth that feed into youth bands, senior companies and youth choruses, which then feed into senior bands and songster brigades. Introducing programs is only the first step. It takes leaders in the corps to teach, inspire and equip.

When youth develop into mature musicians, they eventually become leaders, and the cycle continues from generation to generation.

Who will step up to teach? It starts with you. If you are a music and arts leader or want to become one, attend music leadership retreats in your division. If you are a corps officer, encourage your leaders to attend these events. Together, we can ensure the beast goes on.

The Salvation Army USA Central Territory

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Rising Stars 2023!

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Promoted to Glory

Mrs. Major Connie Rodriguez

Mrs. Major Connie Rodriguez was promoted to Glory on December 25, 2022. Affectionately known as “Abuelita,” Connie was a source of support and love not only for family and friends but those in need. She ardently prayed for people by name, and her gentleness and humor were a source of comfort.

Connie was born in Mexico City on December 8, 1925, to Martín Molina and Julia Abeytes. Later, she was lovingly adopted by Dina and Ricardo Perez, who made it possible for her to obtain a teaching degree.

In 1949, Connie entered officer training in Mexico and was commissioned in 1950. She married Lt. Angel Rodriguez on June 24, 1951, and they served in Mexico before transferring to the USA Western Territory in 1955 and becoming U.S. citizens. They continued their ministry as corps officers in the Central Territory until their retirement in 1988.

Connie was preceded in death by her husband, two grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. She is survived by her children, Raquel (Ronald) Adams, Abigail (Clyde) Newsome, Abigail (Carol) and Vashi (Mike) Gibson; 12 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; two step-grandchildren and two great step-grandchildren.

Major Bruce Tekautz

Major John Bruce Tekautz, 93, was promoted to Glory on January 10, 2023. Sharing the love of Jesus so others would accept Him as their personal Savior was Bruce’s life mission.

Bruce was born on his grandparent’s farm in Minnesota to Charles and Tressa Tekautz in Angora Township, St. Louis County, Minn., on September 21, 1929. He was the fourth of 15 children.

As a young man, he served in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. Afterward, in 1953 he entered the School for Officers’ Training where met Cecile Fay Finnel, whom he would marry on June 19, 1956.

They served together as officers for 40 years in North Dakota, Kansas, Michigan and at Territorial Headquarters. They retired from leading the Booth Manor in Minneapolis, Minn., in 1994.

Bruce possessed many talents, including being a wonderful cook and baker and an avid gardener.

Bruce was preceded in death by his wife, seven brothers and four sisters. He is survived by his sons, John (Teresa) and Major Donald (Captain Julie); brother Keith; sister Grace; four granddaughters; many nieces and nephews, and “daughter-in-love” Major Judy Tekautz.

When youth develop into mature musicians, they eventually become leaders, and the cycle continues from generation to generation.

Who will step up to teach? It starts with you. If you are a music and arts leader or want to become one, attend music leadership retreats in your division. If you are a corps officer, encourage your leaders to attend these events. Together, we can ensure the best goes on.