Faith in action

A look at the territory during the COVID-19 crisis

During unprecedented circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Salvationists in the Central Territory have put their faith into action, showing care and compassion, selflessly serving their communities, trusting in God and sharing their hope in Christ.

“In the midst of these uncertain days, God is giving us the opportunity to reach out to others with a living hope,” said Territorial Commander Commissioner Brad Bailey in a video message of reassurance with his wife, Commissioner Heidi Bailey, to Salvationists.

At Territorial Headquarters a Territorial Coronavirus Response Team, led by Lt. Colonel Paul Smith, assistant chief secretary, was established to review information, share updates and resources, and assist in the dissemination of important information and guidelines.

To help prevent spread of the disease, travel has been suspended and events have been canceled. Units have implemented rigorous sanitation measures and social distancing protocols and have altered ways in which work occurs, service is given and connections are maintained. For instance, officers and employees at territorial and divisional headquarters have worked remotely to support ministry except having essential skeleton staff onsite when needed.

They have also introduced new means of service like a hotline set up by the Kansas and Western Missouri Divisional Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., that sends calls to the phones of 10 trained EDS emotional and spiritual care chaplains who encourage, pray with and refer callers to Salvation Army services.

At the College for Officer Training, staff, cadets, officers and their families have been primarily sheltering in their apartments but are not stagnant. Learning has continued via video conference and small groups for classes, while social media provides for ongoing communication and fellowship.

Earlier as concerns regarding the spread of the virus and its impact were only beginning, the Biblical Education Tour continued to Israel. Major Cherri Hobbitts, territorial officer resource development secretary, and Rob DeGeorge worked with the tour company, Educational Opportunities, to keep 74 officer and soldier delegates safe while maximizing their days. Though prevented from visiting Bethlehem and Jericho which were closed to non-nationals, they were able to substitute other important sites. There were tense moments at the tour’s conclusion as travel arrangements were dropped by the airline.

“As we prayed in faith, Educational Opportunities worked tirelessly with the airlines to arrange new tickets so that everyone returned as anticipated to the United States,” said Major Cherri. “We certainly testify to the continual presence of the Lord in our journeys.”

Upon return, delegates underwent screening and then all were asked to quarantine for 14 days.

At O’Hare International Airport Metropolitan Division Emergency Disaster Services (EDS) for seven weeks has provided thousands of snacks and bottled water to passengers undergoing screening by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The City of Chicago designated The Salvation Army as the lead agency for mass care, including feeding and social services. The Metropolitan Division’s comprehensive service plan includes a readiness to provide food to individuals considered among the most vulnerable in quarantine, supporting first responders with food and bottled water, distributing food boxes from 15 food pantries, establishing an 800-number for emotional and spiritual care, and offering assistance such as funds to offset cost of rent and utilities due to lost wages.

“The health and safety of the people we serve is our top priority. We are here to provide hope and help to our neighbors in Chicagoland during this uncertain time,” said Commissioner Barry Swanson, Metropolitan divisional commander.

At the Chicago, Ill., Freedom Center there’s a new normal as they follow protocols they’ve practiced for just such a time. Inside the center staff and residents follow procedures set by the CDC and local health professionals, the lounge is closed, meal times have been staggered and visitation by guests has been suspended. Outside the center, staff and volunteers continue to assist the homeless daily with increased food service, and The Salvation Army is working with the city and others to provide sani- tizers and washing stations for the homeless to access.

“We are prepared and taking precautions and acting as responsibly as possible,” said Major Nancy Powers. “But this is our time to shine, to show Jesus’ love to a fearful, hurting world.”

Continued on page 5

Hodders to lead U.S.

Commissioners Kenneth G. and Jelene K. Hodder, Western territorial leaders since 2017, have been appointed as National Commander and National President of Women’s Ministries, respectively, as of July 1, 2020.

They bring to their new roles a wealth of experience not only in the U.S. but abroad. Commissioned in 1988, the Hodders have served in corps, at the School for Officers Training and divisional headquarters appointments in

Continued on page 2
**Central Connection**

by Captain Michael Hanton
Territorial Youth Secretary

We seek to be a Salvation Army committed to and engaged with youth of all ages, intentionally seeking to capture their hearts, engage their passion and unlock their potential. An Army marked by open communication, genuine encouragement, mutual respect, redemptive trust and empowering opportunity.

—TERRITORIAL MISSION IMPERATIVE, YOUTH FOCUS

A year ago I was sitting in the final day-long session at the Arrows Leadership conference that focused on how to share the gospel. Challenging us to think critically about how to clearly communicate, the instructor asked, “How has the gospel affected you today?”

A classmate’s response resonated with many of us. “Sharing the gospel isn’t limited to a script or a process but is reflected in an overflow of our own hearts.”

I paused and considered how over the course of my life God has been drawing me closer and developing me to lead others to Him.

Recently, I was part of a work group that met at territorial head-quarters to discuss the youth focus of the Territorial Mission Imperative. In this strategy meeting we discussed how youth leaders and youth in the Central Territory can play a vital role in our mission of “More people, more like Jesus.”

Looking at Jesus’ ministry and how He recognized the different stages people were in and worked to develop them, we determined that in order to be successful in reaching the youth of our Army we must emphasize the need for intentional and relational discipleship. We must:

1. Identify and train capable youth leaders by providing intentional training options to corps based on the needs of their leaders, corps and community.
2. Identify opportunities and empower youth to take on leadership roles in their corps.
3. Shift divisional and territorial roles from programming to resourcing for corps.

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**Training youth—and their leaders**

With the territory’s Mission Imperative “More people, more like Jesus” at the forefront, two divisions look to the future and focus on investing in leadership training.

**Engaging the next generation**

“Every kid needs someone to see them like Jesus sees them.”

With these words author, film maker and leadership coach Ryan Leak challenged 125 Eastern Michigan Division [EMI] youth leaders to refocus their ministry on building relationships rather than on programming in order to make the greatest difference in the lives of children and youth.

According to Ryan, it doesn’t take a lot of money, a large new facility or even the most recent technology to engage in meaningful ministry. Open communication, genuine encouragement, mutual respect, redemptive trust and empowering opportunity, however, make a difference, and they all have one thing in common—they are personal.

At their recent youth leader weekend, current and prospective leaders were energized and equipped to engage the next generation. With biblical teaching, they reexamined the truth that programs and ministries are vehicles to present the gospel and engage young people in the process of discipleship.

“Youth leaders are the Territorial Mission Imperative,” said Captain Jonathan Cooper, divisional youth and candidates’ secretary. “We are excited for the future of the Army and know our best days are ahead of us if we can continue to focus on Jesus, who showed us the true nature of ministry—personal, discipling relationship.”

**Training young as leaders**

A track specifically designed for youth leading youth was the highlight of Indiana Division’s recent youth leader training. Focused on encouraging and inspiring young leaders, the track was led by Captain AJ Zimmerman, assistant territorial youth secretary.

“This track was intentionally placed to bring about a positive leadership experience, impact corps programming and inspire more youth to take on leadership roles,” said Captain Brianne Bowers, divisional youth secretary.

Corps throughout the division are developing youth as leaders and want to equip them for success. Many of these youth are active in programs such as corps cadets, character-building and soldier classes. The training showed them how to take what they have learned through their participation in these programs and use it to reinforce their leadership abilities.

Throughout the day youth were seen strengthening relationships, developing new skills and learning practical concepts they can put into practice in their leadership roles at their corps.

Training for adult youth leaders took a different approach, focusing on big topics that youth are facing today and how youth leaders can be prepared to talk about sexual identity, intercultural ministry, technology and mental health. These conversations opened doors to begin discovering how corps youth ministries can be more effective in each corps and community.

Guest Ryan Leak challenges Eastern Michigan Division’s youth leaders.

**Empower Corps to Effectively Disciple**

A disciple is a dedicated follower of Christ, and discipleship is the relationship built between two or more disciples so they grow in knowledge and faith. By clearly identifying and committing to the lifelong work of disciple-making in corps ministry, our territory will experience long-term growth, consistent leadership and transformational spiritual depth.

As disciples of Jesus we have been given the mandate to make disciples (Matthew 28:19), and we have been given the privilege of making Jesus known to our youth, families, communities and world. May we be so deeply affected by the gospel that our message is an outpouring of our hearts and our relationship with Christ.

**Continued from page 1**

the Western Territory. They have served twice in Africa, first as Chief Secretary and Territorial Leader for Women’s Ministries in the Kenya Territory and later as territorial leaders of the Kenya West Territory.

The Hodders also have served at International Headquarters in London, England, where Commissioner Kenneth held dual roles as International Secretary for Personnel and as Legal and Constitutional Adviser to the General, and Commissioner Jolene served as Associate International Secretary for Personnel.

They also were seconded to Atlanta, Ga., in 1997 for three years as Coordinators for the International Millennium Congress.

Commissioner Kenneth Hodder is a graduate of Harvard College (A.B. magna cum laude, 1980) and Harvard Law School (J.D., 1983). Commissioner Jolene Hodder holds a Bachelor of Science degree from California State University, Los Angeles (1982), and a Master’s of Religion from Trevecca Nazarene University (2018). They each served in their chosen professions before becoming officers.

Commissioner Jolene is the author of two books, Walking in White and A Bend in the Road.

They have one daughter, Jessica Eagerstrom, and recently experienced the privilege of becoming grandparents to their pride and joy, Everett Kenneth.

**Invest in Youth Leadership Development**

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Riches return to Central as program secretaries

Majors Jonathan and Barbara Rich, Area Commanders for the North Texas Area Command in Dallas/Fort Worth since 2015, have been appointed as Territorial Secretary for Program and Assistant Secretary for Program in the Central Territory, effective July 1, 2020. They will assume these responsibilities with the rank of Lt. Colonel.

Currently, the Riches oversee one of the largest U.S. commands, covering five counties including Dallas, Collin, Denton and Ellis Counties. Operations include 30 offices, more than 400 staff and a budget of $41 million. The command includes 15 community centers, four homeless shelters, two apartment buildings for senior citizens, two social service centers and two Christmas assistance centers.

Commissioned in 1987, Majors Jonathan and Barbara (Cheyne) Rich are each fifth-generation Salvation Army officers. After serving for 12 years in corps, divisional and territorial appointments in the Central Territory, they accepted a calling to a congregation in a Kansas City area church for 13 years. During that time, Jonathan was the Executive Pastor and Barbara volunteered at the church while working in development for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and then as an elementary school teacher. They both felt a strong calling to return to The Salvation Army as officers in the Southern Territory. Their appointment as Area Commanders in Memphis, Tenn., began in June of 2012.

Prior to entering officer training, Barbara graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and worked in development for The Salvation Army in Chicago. She also has pursued graduate education in the field of education and school administration. Jonathan graduated from Bucknell University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, had an internship on Wall Street and then worked as a CPA for Price Waterhouse in Chicago. He also has pursued graduate theological studies at Ashland Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Bethel Seminary.

They have two children, a married son, Andrew, who lives in the Kansas City area with his wife, Chelsea, and their one-year-old, Sloan Charlotte. Drew works with special needs children in a middle school setting. Their daughter, Allison, lives in Michigan and works for the nonprofit Paws with a Cause.

Leadership Changes in Central Territory

This summer, effective July 1, leadership changes will occur in four divisions.

Majors Marc and Karen Johnson will become Divisional Commander and Divisional Director of Women’s Ministries and Officer Development Secretary, respectively, for the Indiana Division.

Lt. Colonels Lonnieal and Patty Richardson will become Divisional Commander and Divisional Director of Women’s Ministries and Officer Development Secretary, respectively, for the Metropolitan Division.

Lt. Colonels Robtert and Collette Webster will become Divisional Commander and Divisional Director of Women’s Ministries and Officer Development Secretary, respectively, for the Midland Division with the rank of Lt. Colonel.

Lt. Colonels Dan and Dorene Jennings will become Divisional Commander and Divisional Director of Women’s Ministries, respectively, for the Northern Division.

Captains and youth secretary

$dors, a mentoring program designed to disciple, train and equip teen leaders for service in their corps and community, the Polusca have a growing sense of confidence and increased involvement among the participants. Currently, teens from eight corps can proclaim they are Youth Ambassadors.

With the recommendation of their corps officers, KWM youth, ages 13-17, are eligible to apply for entry into the program along with their chosen mentor. David Mowers, who oversees the program as the division’s teen and young adult specialyst, provides study materials for each ambassador and their mentor to discuss weekly for one year, at which time they may reapply.

As they are building a leadership skill set and receiving one-on-one spiritual guidance from a mentor, participants are encouraged to use what they learn to support programs at their corps and in their communities. Becoming a youth ambassador also provides broader opportunities for service, such as helping behind the scenes of events or organizing fundraisers.

“Youth involved in this program are learning that they have a place and a purpose in their corps, the division and their communities,” said Captain Norm Polusca, divisional youth and candidates’ secretary. “The principles they’re learning, like how to engage others and adapt to changing situations, benefit them both in the corps and in other environments.”

Earlier this year the ambassadors joined other youth from the division for a weekend kids’ councils and corps cadet retreat with the theme “Overflow” which focused on the promises of Psalm 23: God’s presence, provision, protection and promise of abundance. Along with united sessions, breakout groups were designed for ages 10-12, corps cadets and youth leaders, all with the emphasis of helping them become more like Jesus.

“Young people are not only our future, but our present,” said Capt. Xavier Montenegro, who led
Salvation Army connected and serving worldwide during pandemic

Flexibility and adaptation characterize how The Salvation Army is responding, meeting new-found needs while endeavoring to maintain its services to vulnerable people, often amending practices to meet stringent guidelines and legislation to curb the spread of coronavirus.

In line with prevailing World Health Organization advice and in compliance with instructions issued by national health agencies, scrupulous hygiene practices have been implemented worldwide along with extensive social distancing measures.

International Headquarters (IHQ) in London has been closed to the public and all but a small number of essential operational staff and a travel moratorium put in place, but staff continue to stay connected through technology and from their homes support the work in 131 countries.

Here are some of the many ways officers, soldiers, employees, volunteers and supporters are rolling up their sleeves to serve.

Europe
In Rome, Italy, where the city has been extensively locked down and all non-essential shops closed, The Salvation Army has been working with the municipal government to ensure food and other vital supplies can continue to be provided to the vulnerable groups it works with.

Since homeless people living on the streets of Stockholm, Sweden, are unable to adhere to the authorities’ instructions to “stay home,” The Salvation Army is stepping in to ensure those entering emergency housing can stay for a minimum of 14 days, the advised period for self-isolation.

Creativity is key to the response in Norway, Iceland and The Faeroes. Food is being served in the streets and left on the doorsteps of vulnerable and elderly people. A new phone service for concerned and isolated people has been established. Parents with toddlers have met with corps leaders for song through the House-party app to make isolation more bearable. Officers have walked the streets singing to isolated people on their balconies and have been undertaking vaccination by phone.

Due to supply chain problems, The Salvation Army in Belgium has asked supporters to use their sewing skills to make new facemasks with an approved design. Meanwhile, in Estonia, The Salvation Army’s rehabilitation center has amended its soup kitchen provision to provide nutritious meals outdoors while maintaining social distancing.

In the United Kingdom, a new drop-in café in Palfmouth, England, has opened to meet the needs of locals who are hungry, those still homeless, and those feeling isolated, concerned, anxious or fearul.

South Asia
The Salvation Army’s Mirpur Clinic in Bangladesh, which usually focuses on treating tuberculosis and leprosy, has geared up to support patients presenting with coronavirus symptoms. The Salvation Army plans to provide awareness material and a starter hygiene pack to around 2,500 people.

Evangeline Booth Hospital in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, run by the India Western Territory, has had one of its wards declared by the government as an isolation ward for coronavirus-infected patients who are being referred.

In the USA Western Territory there is an emphasis on home delivery to seniors in Anchorage, Alaska. In Los Angeles, The Salvation Army is working with the LA Unified School District to provide food to children so they get at least one square meal a day. From International News Releases as of March, 26, 2020 Visit salarmycentral.org or sar.my/covid19 for updates.

Johnson & Johnson collaborates with The Salvation Army in Korea to distribute 20,000 face masks and 4,000 emergency relief kits.

John & Johnon has collaborated with The Salvation Army in Mumbai critical to helping it to provide supplies to vulnerable people.

In some parts of Australia, The Salvation Army has been asked to deliver food parcels to people in quarantine. Following the short-noticenotice cancellation of the Australian Grand Prix, The Alliance Group donated food intended for the event to feed vulnerable people in Melbourne.

Teams in Hong Kong and Macau have been addressing COVID-19 since the outbreak began more than two months ago. Personnel have been visiting many families and giving out hand sanitizer, surgical masks and food to the vulnerable in their communities.

Africa
The Salvation Army in Congo (Brazzaville) has prepared a community awareness-raising program to increase people’s knowledge about COVID-19 and equip individuals with practical disease-prevention measures.

The Liberia and Sierra Leone Command has taken safety measures to help protect officers, employees, centers and schools and has planned an intervention strategy including social media, for awareness, prevention and care for the victims.

Americas and Caribbean
The Salvation Army in The Bahamas has provided the government with 70 pallets of supplies including hand sanitizer, examination gloves, face masks, hazmat suits, pain management medications and non-medical items like hygiene kits.

At Mexico’s busiest airport, Benito Juárez in Mexico City, emergency response teams have been distributing food and water to stranded passengers. The needs of refugees and other migrants also are being addressed with a public appeal to help ensure they aren’t negatively impacted by food shortages.

In the USA Eastern Territory in Greater New York, one of the worst-affected areas, teams have been distributing emergency supplies from a shipment of Mid-west Food Boxes and coordinating with partners and supply chain personnel regarding scaleable resource options.

In the USA Southern Territory, with the temporary closure of Universal Studios in Orlando, Fla., perishable food has been donated and helped feeding those in need, particularly shelter residents and drop-in clients. The Salvation Army also is serving a free community dinner every weekday and has provided fresh produce to nearly 300 older adults.

Due to school closures in Japan, corps steps to provide midday meals for children in strategic locations.

In Uruguay Salvationists go house-to-house in the Patuel neighborhood to minimise social contact but reach the most families in need with food parcels donated by Burger King.

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Dutch military forces in northern Norway on Exercise Cold Response donated food to The Salvation Army in Tromsø, critical to helping it to provide supplies to vulnerable people.

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Millwaukee Brewers bullpen catcher Marcus Hanel, his wife, Jill, and son, Nathan, join the feeding effort at the Oak Creek, Wis., Corps.

People make appointments and back right up to the corps’ pantry door in O’Fallon, Mo.

Staff have been making wellbeing phone calls, even singing “Happy Birthday” to one of the few who was overjoyed. They are developing and uploading videos of the center’s programming, including entertainment, worship and education, to their Facebook page. “Caregivers we have talked to are so excited,” said NancyLee Dahlin, who also is looking at introducing a virtual support group for them.

In Peoria, Ill., EDS sought to involve their volunteers, many of whom are older, in meaningful service to their communities through prayer and community care call teams. Within 24 hours of an appeal, the number of prayer teams more than doubled, going from 5 to 12 and resulting in more than 150 people interceding from their homes on topics compiled daily from corps headquarters, families and individuals. In addition, EDS volunteers have made daily call checks, especially to older adults, checking to see if they are okay, sharing encouraging offers, and offering and referring them to the city’s 211 service for additional assistance.

Col. Sam Amick, Heartland divisional emergency services director, concluded: “We want to give a word of hope in this uncertain world.”

Report as of March 24, 2020
Regeneration seeks revival

by Eric Himes

Ever feel like something is missing from your spiritual life, in the Salvation Army or the Church in general? When was the last time you felt the presence of God or the moving of the Holy Spirit? Is there something more for us to experience and receive?

More than 400 young adults from across the Central Territory were asked these questions, and many of them found answers at this year’s Regeneration conference themed, “Revival,” with guests Michael Collins and Carole Voisey.

“Revival must start with yourself,” Michael Collins began. “God, You want humility, show us where we receive?”

More for us to experience and receive?

The Holy Spirit? Is there something missing from your spiritual life? More than 400 young adults from across the Central Territory were asked these questions, and many of them found answers at this year’s Regeneration conference themed, “Revival,” with guests Michael Collins and Carole Voisey.

“Refuel was a time for me to really consider prayer ministry,” said Geoffry Leedom, youth development coordinator at the Evanston, Ill., Corps. “Now it is my turn to say, ‘Come and see what God has for you.’”

In addition to united sessions, 10 workshops covered everything from camping and community outreach to in-depth Bible study and Godly Play®. In addition, there was a vacation Bible school swap meet where people shared ideas, resources and equipment, and an informal setting called The Gathering where delegates could network, fellowship and flesh out together the presentations, their own spiritual lives and how to apply a Chair Discipleship in their corps.

“Sometimes those in ministry can lose their focus on why they do things,” said Captain Rachel White, St. Louis Gateway Citadel, Mo., corps officer. “Refuel helped me realign my vision to build the Kingdom through discipleship.”

Refuel 2020 was a powerful experience for youth leaders of the Central Territory which led them to deepen their relationships with Christ and renew their commitment to discipleship.

Doug Holliday and Jay Fast from SonLife ministries gave an in-depth presentation of 4 Chair Discipleship which is based on the model of Jesus making disciples who then made disciples.

They encouraged delegates to truly engage in this paramount mission and use the very practical method moving people from the first chair where people are seeking to know more about Jesus to the fourth chair where they are making disciples themselves.

It captured the territory’s Mission Imperative of “More People, more like Jesus.” “Refuel was a time for me to realize that I am a product of someone else taking time to pour into my life and show me God’s love for me,” said Geoffrey Leedom, youth development coordinator at the Evanston, Ill., Corps. “Now it is my turn to say, ‘Come and see what God has for you.’”

In talking about the importance of the Holy Spirit to our Movement, Carol Voisey challenged, “You can’t give people something you don’t have.” She challenged delegates to seek the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit—a burning, passionate love of God—that would consume them so that their lives would draw others to Christ. Many young adults responded.

Worship was led by Osby Berry, a gospel singer who generated viral attention from singing Hillsong United’s “So Will I (100 Billion X),” hitting over 23 million views on YouTube. He was joined by an incredibly gifted and joyful band composed of members of his church in Cincinnati, Ohio, as well as Salvationists. This worship was a highlight of the conference with clapping, dancing and unity in the Spirit.

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People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16, NIV)

by Lisa Jordan

These are my favorite youth ministry verses! Kids were important to Jesus. They need to be important to us.

Eighty-five percent of people who make a decision for Christ do it by age 13. Childhood and adolescence are critical times for spiritual formation. New research shows almost 80 percent of young adults walk away from the Lord because their faith has been a set of behaviors and not really a relationship with Jesus. When they fail in a behavior—which they will—they give up on their faith.

It’s my mission to create an environment that helps our teens be the other 20 percent. Proverbs 22:6 (NIV) says, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.” I love the concept of training. It involves teaching, but also what it looks like to follow Jesus. It’s relational and experiential. It’s discipleship.

I’ve had the privilege of being part of youth ministry since I was in high school. I loved helping with children’s ministries and working at day camp. As an older teen I was encouraged by Chris Shay to serve alongside her in our teen ministry. She modeled strong leadership and built an intentional discipling relationship with me. Her love for God’s Word laid the foundation for our programming.

As the Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., Corps’ (OBT) first youth ministries coordinator, Chris established the goal for our youth ministry that by age 18 teens are saved, discipled Salvationists. Her successor, Viki Payton, led our team to develop a mission statement to support that. It reads: “The purpose of OBT’s Youth Ministry is to join together to seek and glorify God, grow to be obedient followers of Christ, proclaim the gospel, demonstrate God’s love and discover our role in the body of Christ.”

I have the great joy to build on their legacies of loving kids, serving families and empowering leaders.

by Jesse Luhn

About three years ago, God placed a calling on my life. He blessed me with a hunger for His Word and a desire to know Him deeper. That hunger and desire led to tenacious study of the life of Jesus and a voracious consumption of theology. During this time, God revealed the calling He had for me: to make disciples.

However, there was one problem—I had never been discipled. I had been in Bible studies and attended Sunday school, but I was never discipled. Before I could even think about making disciples, I needed to become one. As God’s plan for my life became clearer, I was blessed to find wise men who graciously discipled me. They showed me discipleship isn’t a curriculum. It isn’t a program. It isn’t about getting coffee once a week. Discipleship is about a relationship.

Those men invited me into their lives, just like Jesus invited His disciples to “come and see” (John 1:38). It was through those men that the Holy Spirit equipped me to go and make disciples as Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:19).

As I continue to be discipled, God has given me the awesome responsibility of discipling the young people of Oak Creek, Wis., Corps where I serve as the youth development coordinator. It isn’t always easy, but God has been good to me. It has been amazing to witness God’s beauty as young people accept Christ for the first time. I have seen the Holy Spirit stirring in the hearts of kids, drawing them in closer to God. I have walked alongside teens as they figure out what it means to follow Christ. I am so incredibly grateful God has chosen to use me to change the lives of the young people around me, and I am eager to see what He will do next.

by Melissa Bledsoe

Never would I have imagined I’d be working with youth, specifically teens, but God is all-knowing and this is what He had planned for me. I’ve been the youth development and outreach specialist at the Chicago Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center for five years now.

Most of the youth we serve in the West Pullman neighborhood on the far south side of Chicago have seen a lot: gun violence, fights, abduction. You name it, they’ve seen it. However, one thing most of them haven’t seen is what having a relationship with Christ looks like.

When I first arrived at the Chicago Kroc Center, I was unsure what the spiritual needs of the youth members looked like, but I was determined to introduce them to Jesus Christ. Through programs and staying late with the kids, I was able to get a glimpse of what was missing. The Kroc Center held a teen Bible study every Wednesday during Family Night, and it was there where the small group of youth was able to fully express their needs. It was simple; Jesus. These teens needed to encounter our Lord and Savior because He heals all wounds.

Taking this simple activity to a deeper level and growing it to almost triple the number of participants, it has been amazing to see the spiritual development of our youth. From some actually leading Bible study, to others being encouraged to get a part-time job at the Kroc Center to others coming to worship service on Sunday, they are growing in their faith.

God is definitely on the move here at the Chicago Kroc Center, and I am honored to be a part of this transformation. I have never felt so fulfilled and am grateful God has placed me here for such a time as this.

by Lisa Jordan

These are my favorite youth ministry verses! Kids were important to Jesus. They need to be important to us.

Eighty-five percent of people who make a decision for Christ do it by age 13. Childhood and adolescence are critical times for spiritual formation. New research shows almost 80 percent of young adults walk away from the Lord because their faith has been a set of behaviors and not really a relationship with Jesus. When they fail in a behavior—which they will—they give up on their faith.

It’s my mission to create an environment that helps our teens be the other 20 percent. Proverbs 22:6 (NIV) says, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.” I love the concept of training. It involves teaching, but also what it looks like to follow Jesus. It’s relational and experiential. It’s discipleship.

I’ve had the privilege of being part of youth ministry since I was in high school. I loved helping with children’s ministries and working at day camp. As an older teen I was encouraged by Chris Shay to serve alongside her in our teen ministry. She modeled strong leadership and built an intentional discipling relationship with me. Her love for God’s Word laid the foundation for our programming.

As the Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., Corps’ (OBT) first youth ministries coordinator, Chris established the goal for our youth ministry that by age 18 teens are saved, discipled Salvationists. Her successor, Viki Payton, led our team to develop a mission statement to support that. It reads: “The purpose of OBT’s Youth Ministry is to join together to seek and glorify God, grow to be obedient followers of Christ, proclaim the gospel, demonstrate God’s love and discover our role in the body of Christ.”

I have the great joy to build on their legacies of loving kids, serving families and empowering leaders.
It is not always easy. "It has become our most challenging work. Often, we drop the lesson and just listen to what is going on in their lives," the major said. "We believe keeping discussion and lessons relational is paramount in the development of today’s youth and feel the unmet needs of the youth should always drive program."

The Rochester Corps offers an array of music and performing arts classes to complement the leadership development programs. According to the major, these instructional classes help youth discover their hidden passions and talents. In addition, they regularly participate in Sunday worship and are involved in service projects that range from cleaning storage rooms to ringing bells at Christmas kettles to visiting nursing homes.

Corps cadets is one of our favorite ministries," said Major Rochelle McClintock, Omaha Citadel corps officer. "This small group of young people are leaders in our corps, in their homes and in their schools. Corps cadets gives me an opportunity to spend more one-on-one time with my young people and to see their spiritual growth and challenge them to think about difficult topics that are relevant to their lives."

The major said they especially appreciate the BOLD curriculum that helps them tackle issues and allows flexibility in scheduling.

"It gives us as adult leaders a vehicle to talk about the hard stuff, to ask the hard questions and to challenge us all to base our thoughts, actions and reactions on the Word of God," said the major.

They are also grateful for the $1,000 per year toward college that graduate corps cadets can earn from the territory.

As they graduate and head to college, they realize what a difference that can make for them," the major concluded. Thank you to the Central Territory for making this investment in our kids."
Together under the umbrella

Through the 64th Annual United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, scheduled to convene in March at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, was cancelled due to concerns about the Coronavirus, The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission (ISJC) moved ahead with its parallel events.

Central Territory delegates—Captain Katherine Clausell, territorial social justice and urban mission secretary, and Carla Wiedemeier, soldier at the Lakewood Temple, Minn., Corps (two of the 20 Salvationists internationally chosen to attend)—were still able to participate in the ISJC events highlighting the Girl Child and Women in Power and Decision Making.

With the theme Together under the Umbrella, stories of redemption and transformation were shared via movement, song and testimony. Countless brightly colored umbrellas were suspended from the ceiling of the auditorium in the ISJC building as a metaphor for the protection and work for justice for women and girls and in honor of the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference for Women, where over 31,000 women from across the globe gathered to diligently work to develop goals for equality, development and peace.

Colonel Janet Munn, director of the ISJC, opened the event by eloquently explaining the significance of umbrellas of Justice. “Umbrellas can be viewed as both ‘protection’ and ‘empowerment’ for women,” she said.

The colonel went on to share when viewed upright, “umbrellas not only provide protection and covering for us from storms, but they are also a reminder of the urgency of protecting others from storms of injustice.” However, when held upside down, she said open umbrellas can collect and gather elements of nature critical for sustaining life, such as rainwater or grain. In addition, upside umbrellas aid in the collection of needed resources that may be used to strengthen and empower women.

Carla Wiedemeier and three other women courageously shared their stories which challenged, inspired and left listeners with a sense of hope for women and girls.

“What a blessing to stand in witness to the bravery of women around the world who dare to seek justice and gender parity,” said Majore Katherine.

Through these ISJC events, The Salvation Army reaffirmed its commitment to unite with others around the globe to protect and work for justice for women and girls.

Visit the ISJC website (salvation-army.org/isjc) for more information and to view a global call to prayer by General Brian Peddle.
Discovering girl guards

For the last two years young women at the Norridge Citadel, Ill., Corps have been on a journey to discover more about themselves, life and God. They're members of a new girl guard troop.

The guard troop reflects multiple generations of women working and learning together.

Their intrepid leaders, Commissioner Sue Swanson and Kelly Tolcher, have enlisted a cadre of godly women from the corps to share their knowledge, wisdom and faith. Each has a specific skill set that blesses the young women in the program. A seamstress sews on emblems. Another acts as chaplain to guide them in spiritual formation. Someone else who is good with sales takes on fundraising, while a computer whiz maintains precise records. There are guests who teach the emblems. The girl guard troop reflects multiple generations of women working and learning together.

Through this the leaders pray that their ministry helps troop members to grow into strong, confident individuals who know Christ, experiencing the difference He can make in their lives.

The troop has covered a wide range of topics: sports, careers, health, arts and crafts, drama, Christmas ministry. They now hold an annual cupcake sale that helps fund their classes and activities but also gives them the opportunity to give to World Services/Self-Denial.

“It has been a blessing to see the girls earning emblems which are proudly displayed on their sashes,” said Commissioner Sue. The sashes are presented, each girl receives a specific Bible verse pinned to the back of her sash and carries it over her heart each time she wears it.

According to Commissioner Sue, the individual guards have grown as the troop has systematically studied the book of John. Some have come to faith in Christ.

“These young women are up for any challenge,” the commissioner concluded. “They are creative. They are kind to each other. They are workers. They are precious.”
**Adam and Amanda Hines**
Both first-generation Salvationists
Mason City, Iowa, Corps • Western Division
Captains Kenyon and Melissa Sivels, corps officers

**Spiritual Gifts**
Adam: Leadership ◆ Evangelism ◆ Teaching
Amanda: Discernment ◆ Serving ◆ Teaching

**Ministry Passion or Experience**
Both: Children/Youth ◆ Preaching/Teaching

**Spiritual mentors**
Adam: Deane Adams
Amanda: Rita Graham

**Daniel Champlin**
First-generation Salvationist
St. Louis Temple, Mo., Corps • Midland Division
Lt. Grant and Captain Jaclyn Holloway, corps officers

**Spiritual Gifts**
Discernment ◆ Serving ◆ Evangelism

**Ministry Passion or Experience**
Preaching ◆ Teaching

**Spiritual mentors**
Bill Morris ◆ Chris Nelson

**June Prayer Calendar**

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<td>Chicago Central, Ill., ARC*</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Thursday Exodus 37-40</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!

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An Evening of Music

Chicago Staff Band performs with the Boone High School Concert Band

by Lt. James M. Beardsley

For the Boone, Iowa community, especially the 72 members of the Boone High School Concert Band, the visit of the Chicago Staff Band (CSB) in late February will long be remembered.

The CSB’s visit included performing a miniconcert for 65 band students from the Boone Middle School and leading worship at the Grace Community Church to their full congregation, but the highlight of the visit was a Saturday evening concert, An Evening of Music, which featured the CSB and the Boone High School Concert Band.

A year and a half in the making, the concert was well attended by more than 400 members of the community, giving students and their parents a new appreciation of The Salvation Army and strengthening its relationship in Boone.

The concert, directed by Mr. Chris Truckenmiller, began the concert with Frank Ticheli’s Simple Gifts, Movement 4 and Randall Standridge’s composition “Whiplash,” which showed off their versatility and skill.

Following the concert band’s offer of the CSB took center stage and performed an awe-inspiring one-hour set with a wide variety of pieces from Marcus Venables’ “In A Home Wonder” to Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake, arranged by CSB member Joshua Turner, to Dr. Harold Burgmayer’s arrangement “Can You Dig It?” featuring four popular tunes of the rock band Chicago. Their numbers featured solosists Marc Smith, Major John Aron, Brett Tolcher and A/Captain Paul Bower.

Then the two bands combined to perform Andrew Macketh’s “Dance Like David” and Ray Steadman-Allan’s march ‘Southdown.’ The finale featured Richard Wagner’s Elsa’s Procession to the Cathedral.

According to Harold, the CSB was glad to travel to the great state of Iowa, home of the ‘Music Man’ and “Seventy-Six Trombones,” where banding is highly valued. “It was special to hear Salvation Army pieces, like ‘Southdown’ and ‘Dance Like David,’ played by a high school band,” he said.

The Boone High School Band is so grateful that we got the opportunity to play with the CSB,” said Chris. “They were inspiring and so fun and easy to work with. Our students enjoyed getting to know the members over dinner and had a truly special concert that night. We will remember this for a long time and hope we can do another one soon.”

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