



Central Connection

The Salvation Army / USA Central Territory
News and Views from the Midwest

"We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future." Eph. 4:3,4 (NLT)

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A mobile lifeline in St. Louis

by Jamie McGeechan

To combat the escalating overdose epidemic in St. Louis, The Salvation Army has introduced a state-of-

the-art mobile treatment center to provide addiction and recovery support throughout the Greater St. Louis area.

The goal of the Midtown Mobile

Treatment Center is to remove barriers to treatment by taking services to remote parts of the community, especially areas that have high overdose rates, such as North St. Louis City and County and Jefferson County. Showcasing the commitment to turn the tide on addiction, it is emblazoned with the motto, "Hope and Healing are on the Move."

"The mobile unit is a beacon of hope, bringing life-saving services directly to those most affected by addiction. By reaching individuals wherever they are, we break down barriers to access, providing immediate support and fostering a path to recovery," said Major Adam Moore, St. Louis area commander. "This approach offers a lifeline to those in the throes of addiction and facilitates positive change throughout the region."

According to Kim Beck, Midtown Service and Treatment Center executive director, funding from the Missouri Department of Mental Health's



Kim Beck (l) with Tamara Nicholson, St. Louis County coordinated entry manager.

Division of Behavioral Health played a pivotal role in bringing the initiative to fruition.

"We started to talk about this project many years ago to have a mobile treatment center that can serve people wherever they are; that day is now here. Our partnerships with the Missouri Department of Mental Health and Affinia Healthcare allow us to help wherever the need is," said Kim, underscoring the collective effort that made this initiative possible.

At the mobile unit's dedication earlier this year, members of the public had an opportunity to tour it, as well as the Midtown Service and Treatment Center and gain insight into the comprehensive services offered.

During the ribbon cutting, Mid-
Continued on page 2



At ribbon cutting (l to r): Territorial Social Services Secretary Maribeth Swanson, Midland Divisional Social Services Director Gary Busieck, St. Louis Associate Area Commander Major Deannie Moore, Midland Divisional Commander Major Robert Mueller, St. Louis Area Commander Major Adam Moore, Midtown Treatment and Service Center Executive Director Kim Beck, St. Louis Advisory Board Chair Dirk Elspeman and Metro East Regional Executive Officer of the Missouri Department of Mental Health Kim Feaman.

Let the games begin

This month the Northern Division is holding the latest in a series of new regional Salvation Army Gamers Assembly (SAGA) events at the Duluth, Minn., Corps.

An earlier SAGA event took place in January at the Left Click Lounge in Minneapolis. Another is planned for August at North Dakota State University's Esports Lab in Fargo, N.D.

The video-game events are designed for teens through young adults (ages 13-29), according to Captain Ross Anderson, Northern divisional youth secretary.

"Kids are using these virtual platforms to make friendships. We try to reach that community and bring it into a corps environment. There we have Salvationists, kids on the fringe, and those outside of The Salvation Army who can meet and mingle. We have an officer do devotions; we have a time of prayer. We encourage participation in camping, as well as being connected to a corps," said Captain Ross.

Mason Colestock, youth outreach coordinator for the Northern Division, said competitions for Nintendo's Super Smash Brothers game series and the Fortnite game platform have been added. The top two finalists for each region will qualify to compete at the gaming camp finals, February 21-23, 2025, at Northwoods Camp in Finlayson, Minn.

"A lot of people like the

competition, especially in Fortnite," Mason said. "Bringing the competitive aspect has made people more excited to come to these events. We encourage them to bring their friends. At the last event, we had 5-10 new people who don't go to a corps."

Captain Josh Polanco, general secretary for the Northern Division, shared a devotional at the start of the January SAGA event.

"The Salvation Army providing these types of events is a win-win," Captain Josh said. "We invite people out of their isolation and bring them together. We eat together, interact, connect different corps and connect youth leaders. There is a time of fellowship, we share a devotional, and then we let them play. They are getting what they like, and we are encouraging community."



Gamers gather for one of the Northern Division's new events.

"It's nice to see corps people and non-corps people sharing the same interest and getting a little bit of the gospel," Mason added. "We want to bring people together who have the shared interest in gaming and also fulfill our mission to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ."

The SAGA events are just new and creative ways of reaching people, according to Captain Josh.

"William Booth was an innovator. He tried all sorts of different things that might have been cutting edge with the sole purpose of reaching a generation," he said. "These events are bringing people in the door."



Captain Josh Polanco shares a devotional.

Photos by Adrian Tatum

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The Power of Pentecost

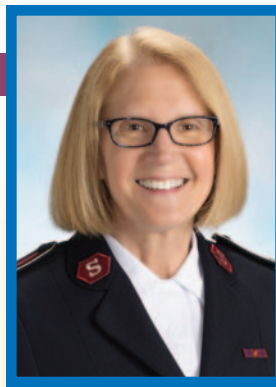
by Lt. Colonel Collette Webster
Assistant Territorial Secretary for Program

Jesus has been crucified, raised from the dead and has appeared to his disciples many times, proving to them that He is alive. It's been 40 days since His resurrection, and in another 10 days something miraculous and powerful is going to happen. When we encounter the first couple of chapters of Acts we see just what that something—or Someone—is. Get your Bibles out, and read it for yourself. It is exciting, and there is much to discover and apply.

In Acts 1 Jesus is with his disciples. He gives them instructions to stay in Jerusalem. He tells them to

"wait for the gift my Father promised" (1:4). Jesus tells them that when the gift of the Holy Spirit comes, they will receive power and will be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (1:8).

So, the disciples stay in Jerusalem, and Acts 1:14 tells us that while they were waiting, "they all joined together constantly in prayer." I imagine they ate together, shared with each other and were of one mind praying and waiting for what was to come. Then it happened. The day arrived. Fifty days after the resurrection while they were all in the same room, their senses were awakened,



and the Holy Spirit descended on them.

First, they *heard* "a sound like the blowing of a violent wind" (2:2). Then they *felt* the wind as it blew through the room where they were staying. And then they *saw* "tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them" (2:3). Can you imagine it? Were they afraid? Was it chaotic? Did they hide? Or did they stand bravely and confidently?

I don't know the answers, but I do know they were changed. Once the Holy Spirit descended on them, miraculous and powerful things began to happen in and through

them. They spoke in other languages to spread the Gospel. There were miraculous healings, not only of body, but also of mind and soul. The Bible tells us repeatedly that as the apostles witnessed to that "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (2:47).

That same power is available to you and me as we live for Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit is waiting to descend on you. Wait in prayer. Wait in agreement with others. Wait in obedience. Expect Him to work, expect Him to answer and expect Him to do miraculous things in and through you for the sake of His Kingdom.

Pentecost is celebrated on the Christian calendar 50 days after Easter. This year it's May 19.

New mobile lifeline Continued from page 1



land Divisional Commander Major Robert Mueller extended sincere thanks to the Missouri Department of Mental Health for their financial support. He acknowledged the tireless efforts of Gary Busiek, divisional director of social services, and the staff at Midtown Service and Treatment Center.

"Health is a basic human need, and The Salvation Army is an organization where people can access the services and support they need," he said. "Unfortunately, ac-



Midland Divisional Commander Major Robert Mueller with Major Adam Moore, St. Louis area commander

cess to vital services is difficult for many people, especially our unsheltered neighbors. The Midtown Mobile Treatment Center will provide services to anyone in need. We pray for those who will be treated, and we look forward to helping everyone who needs our help in the community."

The Midtown Mobile Treatment Center is a testament to what can be achieved when compassion meets action. It represents a pivotal step toward addressing the health needs of St. Louis' most vulnerable, especially the unsheltered, by ensuring that no one is beyond reach.

Soup's on



Some of the more than 300 happy guests at Soup Day.

Twenty-two soups in all. Would you like split pea or loaded baked potato? Perhaps dill pickle or Hungarian cauliflower? More than 300 members of the Wyandotte, Mich., community gobbled up delicious hot and hearty fare at Soup Day earlier this year. It was the long-anticipated return of a beloved fundraising tradition for the corps that had been tabled during the pandemic.

The corps took in about \$2,700 in proceeds which will benefit its food pantry and meal-share program, said Lt. Audrey Sutter, who leads at the Downriver Corps with her husband, Lt. Shawn Sutter. It was held at The Grecian Center banquet hall which graciously donated space for the event.

"Everyone who participated in Soup Day loved being a part of it," she said. "So many people came out to support us."

For admission, guests could sample generous cups of all varieties.

The scrumptious soup was prepared by local businesses including Rhapsody, Famous Dave's and the Jo-Brighton Skills Center, a higher-education center for special-needs students who prepared a dessert-style soup filled with strawberries, chocolate and whipped cream.

"That dessert soup went fast," said Lt. Audrey.

Guests voted for their favorite soup. The winner? It was a tie between the TV Diner's lobster bisque



Lt. Audrey Sutter with local personality "Ballot Betty"

and the Big Bear Lodge's white chicken chili.

Lt. Shawn said he is full of gratitude for the community's support.

"This is the first time my wife and I have experienced Soup Day, and it was a fantastic event," he said, having been appointed to the Downriver Corps in July 2021. "We had several people who want to plan and organize it next year."

Lt. Audrey added, "People were so glad it was back and so thankful we could be doing this together. They were digging into soup and enjoying themselves. We are thankful for the volunteers, our volunteer coordinator, our staff and, of course, the Lord. In everything we do we want to serve Him."

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Dwelling with God

by Natalie Shiels

Graduation, college, moving out, branching out, internships, relationships, finding jobs, finding your identity in Christ—all while learning to live on your own. For young adults, life is busy and often chaotic.

Regeneration 2024 was the perfect respite. Captains Willow and Darell Houseton and Captains Jen and Josh Polanco showed us how to dwell with God intentionally in our everyday lives. Worship was led by The Band Jaren, incredible musicians who are based in Nashville, Tenn.

"Life is worship, and worship is life," Captain Willow declared in the Friday night keynote.

Taking us through John 1:9-16, she challenged us each intentionally to set aside time throughout the day to seek the Lord. She encouraged us to think about what it means to "know and move in the Spirit while existing in a broken world." After the meeting, we enjoyed a silent disco with two DJs and a photo booth.

In the Saturday morning session, Captain Jen urged us to step away from things that keep us busy and instead sit with God. While acknowledging corporate worship is great and outreach is impactful, she emphasized the need to spend personal "hidden away" time listening to God.

"We, as The Salvation Army, function well as believers who are doing things and reading the Word, but many of us don't know how to just be," she said.



Captain Darell Houseton

In the afternoon, Captains Chrissie and Enrique Coreano introduced a model for discipleship groups through an app called Discipleship Bands. It focuses on holding one another accountable for our faith walks, checking in with honesty and kindness.

That evening, after a wonderful time of worship led by The Band Jaren, Captain Josh walked us through Matthew 6:5-10, describing what it means to pray with humility.



"It is not about you; it is about God," he said. "It is about coming to God when you need Him."

Captain Josh shared how submitting humbly to God's will directed his life. This was followed by a call for young adults to show their submission to God's will. We were led in



Peggy McGee

a hymn sing by the Territorial Worship Collective. Through powerful testimonies and songs, the Holy Spirit moved during this service which lasted until after midnight.

On Sunday morning, Captain Darell talked about burnout and "managing business" versus working with what God has in store for us. He read through Ezekiel 47:1-12, explaining how unimportant tasks tend to pile up faster and faster, but the things from God will produce fruit.

"Someone's assignment for you," Captain Darell said, "is not God's call for you. He does not call



you to be burned out. He will give you everything you need to complete the task."

We also heard from Peggy McGee, territorial youth leadership and development director, who planned this incredible weekend. She pushed delegates to respond to God's call, whether to be an officer or something else He lays on our hearts.

"You are all called to move," she insisted, "so do it." Peggy's words led to a stirring time of submission and conversations throughout the chapel.

In a young adult's season of change, chaos and confusion, this weekend provided not only a respite but inspiration

and solid instruction from loving Christian leaders. I believe young adults in the territory are fired up to create change, both in the Church and in the world, by spending more time one-on-one with God to better hear His voice and then more effectively reach others.



The Band Jaren

Photos by Katelyn Church



Focusing on 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Captain Jen encouraged us to find how we each dwell best. A perfect transition, workshops allowed many options to explore how we hear God from looking at artwork to creating it.



Leadership Changes

The following leadership changes in the Central Territory have been announced on behalf of Territorial Commander Commissioner Evie Diaz and will take effect June 26, 2024.



Major Johanna Pook has been appointed as Secretary for Program with the rank of Lt. Colonel and **Major John Pook** as Assistant Chief Secretary with the rank of Lt. Colonel.



Major Catherine Mount has been appointed as Training Principal, and **Major Peter Mount** as Assistant Training Principal for Personnel, with responsibility for Spiritual Life and Campus Life.

Leading on the dance floor

Let them praise His name in the dance: let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp. Psalm 149:3 (NKJV)

Sitting still has never been one of Sarah Jarbou's favorite things to do. "I've always had an active background with dancing and movement. I just enjoy it and have found a love for it," Sarah said.

The 20-year-old began dancing at a young age, taking ballet along with gymnastics. In girl guards she had a unit in praise dancing. Sarah recently took up ballet again at the University of Michigan-Flint, where she is a sophomore, studying to be a nurse.

Sarah has attended the Flint Citadel, Mich., Corps with her parents, sister Samantha, 18, and brother Sebastian, 17, for 13 years.

Last summer, she became a leader for the dance group at the Great Lakes Division (GLD) Music and Gospel Arts Camp. Her sister Samantha assisted as a co-leader. Sarah will teach again at the camp this summer.

She also took over the praise dance classes on Wednesday evenings at her corps. And she was asked by Christopher Ward, GLD senior director of music and gospel arts, to teach during the monthly music days.

"Having Sarah take this on has been a real blessing," added Jessica Pascoe, West Region music director in GLD. "We had interest in dance in the division, but no one to lead it. She's enabled another ministry."

"Dancing is my passion," Sarah said. "When I dance, I like to feel the lyrics

and express my emotion... Every time I dance, I say a prayer and ask God to help me bring a message to people with my dancing."

The range of styles she teaches is broad, ranging from ballet to jazz to classical.

"I teach whatever I see that fits the song lyrics. You would be surprised at how the movement in your body changes with the lyrics of the songs," Sarah said.

She does stress one movement in particular to all of her students.

Dancing is a creative way for anyone to connect with God, she explained.

"Not everyone can sing or play an instrument. Dancing is something for everyone—for anyone who wants to spread God's Word," said Sarah.

Christopher says that seeing Sarah's progression from student to leader is uplifting.

"It's good to see kids that have come through your programs now taking an interest in leadership and being given opportunities and stepping into leadership roles," he said. "Sarah is a beautiful person, really in tune with things spiritually. You can tell that by watching the dances she puts together."

Sarah says because of her faith, she never really dances alone: "I feel like it is just me and God."



Sarah Jarbou (center) works on a praise dance routine with others at the Flint Citadel, Mich., Corps.



*A column on holiness
by Dr. Bill and
Rev. Diane Ury*

Be a curiosity

by Rev. Diane Ury
National Ambassador for Holiness

In February 2023 I drove to Asbury University so I could volunteer to help in any way during God's gracious Outpouring. I was placed in Hughes Auditorium to pray at the altar with people who were longing for God.

That experience touched my heart deeply in a surprising way. I recognized my 20-year-old self in the faces of those who were streaming in from around the world. You see, decades earlier when I first entered Hughes Auditorium, I was secretly despondent of ever becoming a Christian. On the outside I was a "success." Inwardly I was dry as death. Eventually, I knelt at that altar not knowing what was supposed to happen there. Over months I had watched hundreds of kids my age kneel, meet God, surrender, weep and rise with hope in their faces and voices. Whatever that was, it drew me and allured me with hope. Maybe my desires could be filled?

When I transferred to Asbury College in 1980, the only person I knew was my older brother. I didn't even know Jesus. But I had a despairing longing to know God. I was sinking in the mire of sin. And I had so many intellectual difficulties that no matter how hard I tried to leap with faith, I stuck to the earth. I lived daily in a heavy fog that wouldn't lift, within and without.

But the first thing that broke through that darkness was Salvation Army students at Asbury. You see, I was placed on second Glide dormitory in the midst of about 20 Sallies. I was so intrigued by how much fun they were, always laughing and goofing off, and they seemed to know God, whom I did not know,



but wanted to. More than that, I couldn't comprehend why they were so kind to me. They always wanted me to hang out with them. For three years they

never stopped inviting me to their corps and retreats. They actually truly loved me. Never in my life had I encountered people filled with love of that nature. Their love was a continual draw upon my broken, empty heart.

Interestingly, God gave me outright permission to trust in their faith, while I was having such a difficult time finding my own. Their curious lives led me into the arms of the One who soon became my Life.

People of every age, no matter how "all-together" their life appears, are longing for Jesus. Those in your neighborhood, school or work, in the bleachers, at the check-out counter, and in your corps are watching your love for one another—and for them. "Why do they love like that?"

Salvationists always have been a curiosity. That's always been our MO, the way we've brought people to experience Jesus. The way you abound in love—that's a powerful way to give hope.

Jesus prayed, "I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as You love Me." (John 17:23 NLT)

Everyday conversations about God

by Major Marc Johnson

It's easy to discuss our passions. For instance, our favorite sports team or hobby. So, why does it seem so hard to talk about our relationship with God? During 2023, God burdened my heart to seek a way to get soldiers talking about God—witnessing—in their everyday conversations. As a result, we launched our "God Conversations" initiative in the Indiana Division last August, with a goal of 10,000 conversations in one year.

What is a God Conversation? It's intentionally looking for opportunities to talk about God with the people in your everyday life. It might be while shopping at the hardware store, waiting in line to buy groceries, picking up your prescription—basically anywhere you are with other people.

There are a few, simple steps to a

God Conversation.*

Be Kind. Go out of your way to be nice to the people who are around you. That often starts a dialogue.

Be Curious. Ask good questions. Many people are happy to share their lives.

Be Present. Give them your full attention. Listen not only to what they say but to the meaning and emotion behind their words.

Be Brave. When the conversation gives an opportunity to talk about God, naturally introduce your thought and then follow where it leads, if anywhere. If not, thank God for the opportunity to plant a seed for the person to think about God.

Talking about God with others doesn't require a degree in theology. It's simply sharing about the most important relationship in your life.

God Conversations tie in seamlessly with our divisional vision of helping everyone we encounter take the next step on their spiritual journey. Every Sunday soldiers and attendees are encouraged to fill out short report slips about the conversations they've had. Some put a Goldfish cracker in a large, clear container to represent each conversation.

As of February 15, 2024, only five months after launching the initiative, we have had 6,961 reported God Conversations!

We look forward to celebrating how God has used these at our Pilgrimage in July. I pray there will be people at it who have accepted Jesus



Gary Smith of the LaPorte, Ind., Corps records his God Conversations that week during Sunday school class.

as their Savior because of our God Conversations.

*Some steps adapted from the book *42 Seconds: The Jesus Model for Everyday Interactions* by Carl Medeari

Proclaiming the goodness of God

In the North & Central Illinois (NCI) Division, two new musical groups are reaching people with the gospel through their vocal ministry. The NCI Gospel Choir with its rich, exuberant praise and Hispanic Voices with its beautiful harmonies and joyful expression each bring unique sounds, styles and perspectives to their ministry.

Peter Kim, divisional music director, said that restarting the Gospel Choir, which had existed decades earlier, and creating Hispanic Voices provides an avenue for diverse groups to worship and minister together.

"The revival of the Gospel Choir served to reintroduce uplifting expressions of praise to the division," he said. "The desire for a platform to express and sing in Spanish led to the creation of Hispanic Voices; our aim is to unite the diverse traditions and heritages within the Hispanic community."

The Gospel Choir made its debut during commissioning weekend 2023 to an enthusiastic response. Director Envoy Theo Coleman is encouraged by the group's ongoing engagements and opportunities to minister with the gospel sound.

"The mission is to spread the love of Jesus to not only The Salvation Army but to all the communities it reaches," said Envoy Theo. "The harvest of the Army is in a lot of



communities that love gospel music. We are able to sing the style that those urban communities enjoy."

Over the past year, the choir has performed at corps and divisional events. "This was something that was prayed for and wanted for a long time, just to have that gospel representation on the divisional level. It speaks to equality and the diversity of the Army," he said.

native language. Directed by Major Dan Faundez, Hispanic Voices has performed at corps, divisional and



territorial events, including the ONE Conference last year.

"Hispanic Voices is really a group

that attempts to unite people, not only by singing in our own language, but to connect with people with a message that points to God," said the major.

Aside from the joy of performing for the Lord, leaders and participants have expressed the deep sense of fellowship, connection and unity they feel as members of these groups. Times of devotion, reflection and prayer are central to each group's rehearsals, deepening their bond through Christ.

"I love being united. I love being together, eating together, singing together," said Major Nivia Paredes, a member of Hispanic Voices. "It is good for our corps to see us and members of other corps coming together."

Echoing her sentiments, Brigitte Ferguson, who sings in the Gospel Choir, said, "I see it bringing cultures together. God is taking away division for one purpose—to glorify Him. It's a blessing to me to have this community, fellowship and ministry with other corps."



The NCI Gospel Choir debuts during Commissioning weekend 2023.

The formation of Hispanic Voices highlights Hispanic expressions of worship, encouraging the largest cultural group in the division by providing opportunities for Hispanic Salvationists to be part of or enjoy performances in their



NCI Hispanic Voices lead praise at the One Conference last year.

This Kind of Fruit

by Commissioner Evie Diaz
Territorial Commander

Jesus told the rich young ruler, "Only God is good." (Luke 18:19, CEV) If only God is good, how can we then be good and do good? Goodness starts, as with all fruit, by God's Spirit working in us. Ephesians 5:8b-9 (NIV) says: "Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)."

As we walk in God's light, the Holy Spirit will produce in us the fruit of goodness. Goodness that is defined by pure motives and consistently right living. Goodness that is sacrificial and acted out by faith. Goodness that can only be shown when the Spirit is active in our lives.

In the Great Lakes Division there is a man who came to The Salvation Army through the Harbor Light and is motivated by the goodness

of God he has experienced. He is a soldier who helps others by using his construction skills and serves the church with those same skills. He has a desire to see others be sober and know God's grace and goodness in their lives.

The corps leadership team in Manitowoc, Wis., shares God's goodness by creating a family atmosphere among those who gather for worship and other corps activities. They are motivated by their love for God and His people.

Will you allow the Holy Spirit to produce goodness that looks like this:

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you



can, as long as ever you can. (quote often attributed to John Wesley)

Allow God's goodness to flow out of you and "do good to all." Galatians 6:10a (NKJV) You can do good by serving others, listening to those in distress, and sacrificially giving your time and resources. Do good not for yourself but out of pure motives, sharing God's goodness with others.

We have this promise that when we allow Jesus to be Lord and the Holy Spirit to be present and at work in us: "Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life." Psalm 23:6a (NIV)

Share how you are experiencing and expressing God's goodness in your community. Visit salarmycentral.org or email bearingfruit@usc.salvationarmy.org

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

Centered in Christ

by JR Boatwright

At a young age, I was "bitten" by the music bug. I grew up attending a Baptist church with three gospel choirs, a youth choir, and a praise and worship team—and I participated in all of them! I seized every opportunity to sing and play an instrument.

I found I could participate in music every day by being in the music programs in middle school, including the orchestra and



band, and added them to what I did at church. By high school, music was part of my DNA.



Supporting the kettle season with live music at places like Union Station

Introduced to The Salvation Army at 16, I was immediately attracted to it because of all of the music: senior band, songsters, divisional youth and senior bands...even assisting with the youth band at my corps in Lakeland, Fla. It was at the corps that I asked Jesus to be my Savior and Lord.

After undergraduate and graduate school, I spent 17 years teaching music in Florida public schools. I showed my faith by how I ran my classroom. Kindness and respect were modeled. Students knew I cared about them and supported them by how I treated them.

In 2022 I became the music and gospel arts director for the Midland Division, a position tailor-made for me. I'm not

only able to teach and share my passion for music, but I am able to verbally share Jesus with everyone. We each are part of God's redemptive plan to bring others into a saving knowledge of Christ. God uses the gift and love of music He's given me for this purpose. I am blessed to serve in The Salvation



JR and other Salvationists at the Mattoon, Ill., Corps' kettle kickoff.



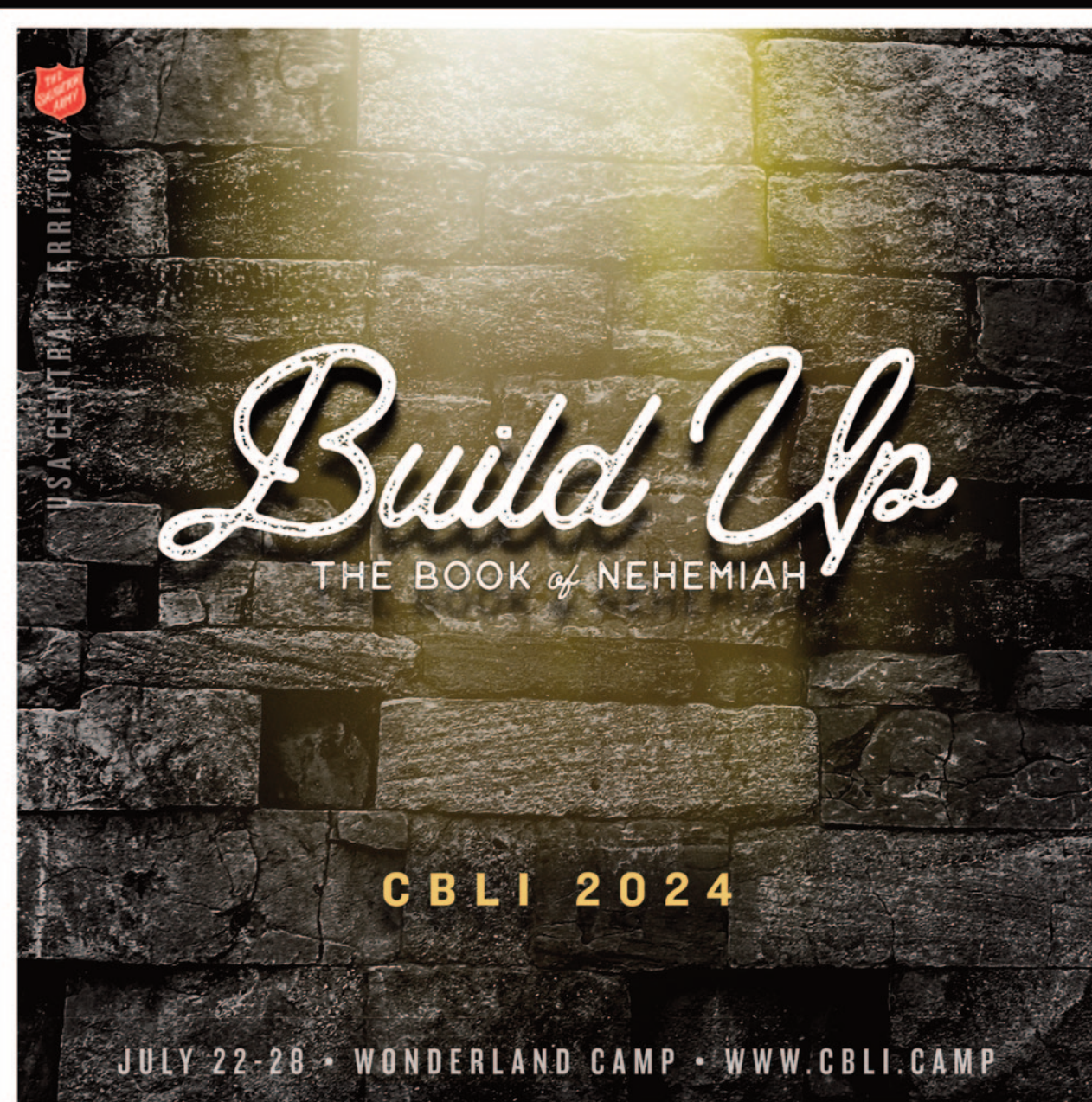
Two Midland campers took 2nd place in Temple Band and 3rd place in William Booth Chorale at CMI.

Army and grateful for what God has accomplished through me in our division.

In my first year, we started two regional music schools, and one young person from our division participated in territorial youth music groups. In 2023, seven music schools became operational! Ten young people participated in Resonate and Central Music Institute (CMI), and four were part of the territorial music groups.

This year and moving forward, our division will start a regional music school concept that will encourage even more people to participate. We look forward to equipping and sending more young people to Resonate and CMI and increasing participation in territorial groups.

It's amazing what has been accomplished in just two years. But none of it would have been possible without the Holy Spirit leading and empowering us. Christ is at the center of all of our music programs in the Midland Division, and I believe He's blessed our efforts because of it.



Finding buried treasure

Students don't seem to mind doing homework for Linda Himes' Precept Bible study classes.

Linda, now retired territorial Christian education director, has taught the class every week for 22 years at Central Territorial Headquarters (THQ).

"Students do their homework because they find they are digging into the treasure of Scripture," Linda said. "Once they get into it, they can't stop. Just about every week someone in class has that moment where they say, 'This is amazing!' That 'spark' is why I am still teaching."

Her students are Salvationists, both soldiers and officers, but also employees and others. Classes average about 25 students per week. Linda teaches in-person for most of the year, but from January through March, while she and her husband, well-known musician William Himes, reside in Florida, she uses Zoom.



Mary Chase studies during a Precept class.

"Zoom allows me to go wherever I need to go. I don't have to miss a class," she said.

Classes are held at noon on Wednesdays in the THQ boardroom but because of technology now incor-

porate people throughout the nation, indeed the world.

The expansion correlates with Acts 1:8.

"While studying the book of Acts, we keep coming back to Acts 1:8 that says, 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' We have seen this class mirror that verse, as we started at THQ and moved into our local neighborhoods, to surrounding states and now to other countries. Jerusalem to the ends of the earth."

The Precept method of study is designed to slow down readers so they can observe more of what the Bible says, Linda explained. Students use symbols and colors to mark pages, looking for things like names, repetitive words or spans of time.

They look at the "who, what, when, where and why" and apply it to Scripture. "Precept allows you to look more deeply at text," Linda said. "And then you want to keep going. It's not just reading anymore. Students will say, 'Oh, I never saw that before.'"

Linda was introduced to The Salvation Army as a teenager by one of her high school teachers. By her early 20s, she was living in the Detroit area and teaching Sunday school at the Dearborn Heights Citadel, Mich., Corps.

"I liked my church family. I felt like I had a home," she said. "But I knew there was something missing. I was unsettled."

After attending Central Bible Leadership Institute (CBLI) in 1984, she had a revelation.

"From that moment my life changed," Linda recalled. "Once I was saved, I developed a hunger for the Word. When I read it, it was alive. I wanted more and more."

Back then she began a Bible study for teens in the home of David and Darlene Harvey (now Lt. colonels), when David was the youth director at the Dearborn Heights Corps.

Linda was going through a spiritual struggle though, wondering if she should become an officer, when she met Kay Arthur, the founder of Precept, at a Sunday school conference.

"I told Kay, 'When I hear you teach, it makes me want to study,'" Linda recalled.



Larissa Ferguson prepares for the next class.

Kay suggested that Linda work for Precept Ministries.

And two years later, in the late 1980s, Linda found herself working at Precept Ministries in Chattanooga, Tenn.

"There, they taught me how to do inductive Bible study and how to lead people," she said. "But my heart was with The Salvation Army. My calling was with the Army."



Major Greg Voeller and Wesley Carter discuss the class material.



Linda and Bill Himes

An invitation from Lt. Colonel Clarence Harvey, then Eastern Michigan divisional commander, brought Linda back to the Army and back to Detroit as Christian education director.

"I saw God opening a door. Now I had a platform and a ministry," Linda said.

In the early 1990s, she became Christian education director at THQ.

"God continued to open doors for me," she said. "I had promised Him when I moved from Tennessee, 'If You open a door, God, I will go through it.' I have watched Him opening doors all of these years. I have never had to call anyone."

Linda feels that teaching is her mission.

"I know without a doubt that God has called me to teach," she said. "I feel it is an honor, a privilege and a responsibility. I take it very seriously. I have told Him I will stay on this path. It gives me joy, helping my students see truth, make connections and get those 'Ah-ha' moments."

Ready to dig into God's Word?

If this article has piqued your interest about inductive Bible study, check out these resources:

- Join Linda's weekly Bible study group by emailing her at Linda.himes98@gmail.com
- View Linda Himes' taped Bible studies on YouTube
- Visit Precept.org for Bible study resources for all levels and ages
- Visit Yarrow.org or download the Yarrow App for Bible studies that fit your life (new Precept format)

COMMISSIONING 2024

THE SALVATION ARMY USA CENTRAL TERRITORY

Spirit LIVING

GALATIANS 5:22-23

ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING *Defenders of Justice*

8 & 9

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Cadets campaign in Mexico



by Cadet Bailey Sawka

Early in the year cadets wonder where they might go on Spring Campaigns. It's one of the last mysteries before the big day of appointments. This year was no different, except that some were asked for passport information. We began to question if we'd be going somewhere outside of the U.S. Indeed, one brigade was sent to Mexico.



The ministry of The Salvation Army in Mexico is vast. But in our six short days of ministry, I met people with a great work ethic, a deep-rooted passion for ministry, real sacrifice and, most importantly, a developed and rooted relationship with God.

The first leg of our ministry was in Puerto Vallarta with a feeding program for children. They come for a meal and then activities similar to vacation Bible school. We performed Jesus Theater, and the children's response was beautiful. Many not only understood the story but wanted God to change their lives. This was only our second day. God definitely wasn't done.

Our brigade then traveled to Mexico City where the Territorial Headquarters and College for Officer Training is located. We spent three days partnering with the cadets and sharing prayer and ministry. Each cadet has given up so much to be an officer, and while training is not easy, they were joyful and welcoming. I became close with Rosa—one of only three in her "Defenders of Justice" session—who encouraged us and was never without a smile. I still talk with her through Whatsapp, and our friendship is a blessing.



One of the most impactful campaign moments came after performing Jesus Theater for a teenage girls' program. The girls come from backgrounds that are often difficult. Their parents may have to work more than 12 hours a day and aren't able to see them except one day a week, or they may have been in a situation that was abusive. Regardless of circumstance, the ministry welcomes them and allows them to stay as long as they need. The officer says many girls choose to come to Sunday worship at the corps and continue to attend after they leave the program.

A member of our brigade shared about a time in her life when her family was hurting and she questioned God and was angry at Him. But God still loved her and never left her side. As she shared how God brought her to where she is now, I saw the girls' faces light up. They related to her story; they understood. They heard the unsaid part of the story that such anger is misplaced, that God sits with us through our pain, and He is faithful.

There is a beautiful song that sums up our Spring Campaign. It's called "Tu Fidelidad." Translated the lyrics say, "Your faithfulness is great. Your faithfulness is incomparable. No one is like you blessed Lord, great is your faithfulness."

The time in Mexico brought me closer to God and my fellow cadets. It developed in me a new passion and desire for ministry. God knew it was the encouragement I needed before being commissioned as an officer. God holds me close. He holds everyone we interacted with in Mexico close. And He holds you close. His faithfulness is great, and there is no one like Him. I thank the Lord for His work in my life and the lives of each member on this Spring Campaign, and the work He is doing in The Salvation Army in Mexico.



730... AND BEYOND



1,786 days and counting

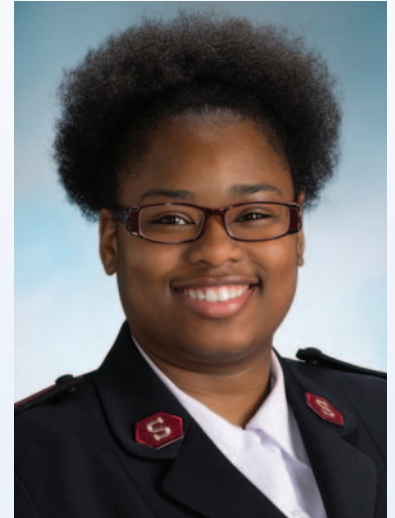
by Lt. Shanel Johnson

I have leaned into the prayer, "Lord wherever you need me and whatever you need me to do, I am willing." But last summer after spending four years at the Chicago, Ill., Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, that prayer was tested.

I received a new appointment to be the divisional youth secretary (DYS) in Kansas and Western Missouri. While filled with joy to work with young people and be involved in camping ministry, I was nervous about a new location, a new appointment and new responsibilities. It was my faith in the Lord and the experiences He has allowed me to have that gave me the confidence to enter into this new season with a holy boldness, knowing that God will continue to equip me, and He will not lead me astray.

As a new DYS, I arrived at Three Trails Camp in the middle of the summer. I had to roll up my sleeves and dive right in. My first two weeks were spent learning as much as I could about the camp, meeting the staff and officers, and getting to know the campers. It wasn't until the last week of camp that I finally felt more comfortable as we facilitated STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) Camp for 119 campers, ages 7 to 12.

While teaching them the beauty of STEAM, we were able to share



with them the love of Jesus and the gospel. We were blessed to collaborate with Commerce Bank, Security Bank, Evergy and a local high school science club to provide a wide variety of science and art projects that were educational, fun and engaging.

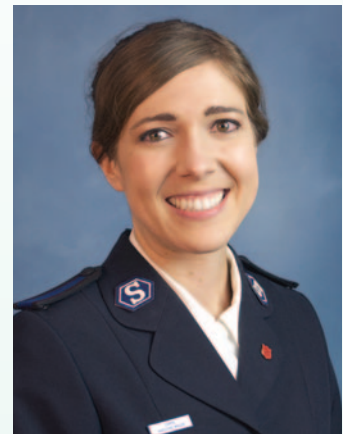
Each day older campers learned how to develop plans and create their own cardboard boat that was raced across the pool in a boat regatta on the final day of camp. It was encouraging to see so many kids working together to develop their ideas and their joy when they brought them to life.

So often science is viewed as an enemy of the church, but by teaching science and biblical truth side-by-side we were able to see the biggest blessing of the summer. Of the 358 campers, 219 gave their lives to Christ. I am blessed to be in this ministry and am in awe of how God reaches kids through camp.

KEEPERS OF THE Covenant

—JEREMIAH 31:33 2024–2026

Newly accepted candidate



Chelsey Steckbauer

First-generation Salvationist

Owosso, Mich., Corps ♦ Great Lakes Division

Lt. Justin Steckbauer, corps officer

Spiritual Gifts

Discernment ♦ Serving ♦ Giving

Ministry Passion or Experience

Missions ♦ Preaching / Teaching

Spiritual Mentor

Lauren Defouw ♦ Lt. Justin Steckbauer

Acting on faith

The Bill Booth Theater Company (BBTC) takes its name from the creative side of Salvation Army founder William Booth.

"William Booth had a creative, innovative spirit in his ministry," said Joe Caddy, territorial fine arts ministry director and the theater company's artistic director. "He made people stop and listen and think in a different way. I think the 'Bill' in our name is also a way to say this theater company is not so serious and highbrow, but still committed to the mission and ministry of The Salvation Army."



evenings at Central Territorial Headquarters, September through June. The troupe has devotions or a Bible study together before rehearsals. Sometimes games are played to facilitate acting technique exercises.

Cast members express faith in various methods onstage.

"We like to use humor, irreverence. We tell a story by becoming a story. We embody it. God is not just something to be understood, but a relationship to be experienced," Joe explained. "You can express His love and grace—things that are indescribable with words—with actions. If we are doing it right, it points beyond our talents. Someone sees it and sees that God is in us and is amongst us."

Angel Quirin is in her second season with BBTC.



Member Angel Quirin

"I grew up in the Army, and I struggled figuring out what my talents were. I dabbled in a lot of things," Angel said. "Now I have found something I am passionate about, and it can move people. Thank you, Lord, for that."

Along with acting, Angel has done a bit of writing for the group.

"Last year was the first time Joe had asked me if I would be interested in helping to write. I was nervous. Joe and I cowrote a skit called 'Power Suit.' It was a comedy touching on putting on the armor of God," Angel said.

As with many of their shows, "Power Suit" used comedy to get a message of faith across to the audience.

"Sometimes if we can laugh at something, we can bring down our guard... and think about how it connects with you," Joe said.



Pierce, Joe, Angel and Brie present a story of faith with a comical twist.

"We want to reach through that 'fourth wall' in theater terms, so the audience can take something with them. Theater and church intersect."

Pierce Cruz is in his fourth year with BBTC. Pierce, who attends services at the Chicago, Ill., Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, teaches art at the Chicago Midwest, Ill., Corps. He has used his artistic skills onstage, creating a painting during one BBTC performance.

"I need an outlet for the dramatic vibe I have," Pierce said. "It [BBTC] lets me get out of myself for a moment."

Pierce has particularly enjoyed when BBTC has traveled.

"It's been a great experience to travel and perform in places like California or St. Louis, seeing so many new things," he said.

Many people have approached Pierce after shows to comment on the actors and their stories of faith.

"They have told me that shows are 'amazing' and 'inspirational,' and that they understand our message," Pierce said.

In 2025, the company will produce a new musical—an adaptation of a British musical. Joe recently traveled to London to work on the script with the creative team of playwrights and songwriters. Auditions begin later this year and will be open to Salvationists who are actors or aspiring actors in the Central Territory. The show is scheduled to debut during the General's Congress in June 2025.

Brie Simmons, a university student who goes to the Ray and Joan Kroc

Corps Community Center in South Bend, Ind., is also in her second season with BBTC.

"I really appreciate the friendship," Brie said. "We are a really tight-knit group."

Living in Indiana, Brie drives a long distance for the Monday evening rehearsals at THQ, but she doesn't mind.



Brie Simmons and Joe Caddy perform a musical number at the Lakewood Temple, Minn., Corps.

"I have a passion for this group and for what we are doing," she said.

Audience members have spoken with Brie, sharing their thoughts on the stories told onstage.

"We performed at youth councils in the Indiana Division last spring," Brie recalled. "I am still hearing from people about how much they appreciated it."

Angel said she is thrilled to be part of a group where she can use both her faith in God and her talents.

"I feel blessed, to put it plainly," she said. "I feel like I am right where I am supposed to be."

Follow the BBTC on Facebook and Instagram. To invite them to perform at your corps or event, email uscmusic@usc.salvationarmy.org



Brie and Pierce team up for a performance.

Joe, an original member of the company that was formed in 2002, became its artistic director a year later and has served in that capacity ever since.

Currently, the group has four onstage performers and a media technician, Matt Erickson, who has been with BBTC since 2006, working behind the scenes and helping with sound and lighting.

While their performances are primarily in the Central Territory, their itinerary has taken them coast to coast from California to Florida, and on rare occasion overseas, like their trip to London for the Boundless Congress in 2015 and to Chile in the South America West Territory in 2019.

The company performs at large events like commissioning weekend. And one weekend each month, they head out to perform at a corps, a conference or other event, like youth councils.

"When it comes to corps and community, we love that. We want to do that," Joe said. "We look for how we can partner with them."

Rehearsals are on Monday



Rehearsing a skit for a recorded Lenten series



The cast at Commissioning 2023

To fill the world with music

Two teams with one mission on separate continents experience the joy of service and fellowship.

Liberia

Tom Hanton remembers the cheering, the dancing, the hugs. Students at a territorial music camp in Liberia had just been told they would receive 150 donated musical instruments from the Central Territory.

"It was an explosion of joy," Tom recalled.

Tom served as project manager for the Central Global Mission Team that taught at the camp with a theme of joy based in Acts 2:28. Sixty-eight students were enrolled on the first day. By the end of camp two weeks later, nearly 100 students—children and adults—were taking part.



The team makes an encouraging visit to the training college principal who was injured in an accident.

"They were so eager to learn it almost made me want to cry," said Captain James of students in his percussion and music theory class. "They were writing notes, taking down everything. We could not give them enough."

"Sometimes the power would go out, but that would not stop them. They listened, soaked it in and asked questions," said Captain Stephanie.

Fittingly, she and Captain Dana had both chosen songs and Bible lessons that focused on joy.



Captain Stephanie Hartley with Darlington, a songster leader and student at the camp

Captain Stephanie said she was especially overjoyed when after one Bible lesson 52 students accepted Christ as their Savior or re-committed their lives to Him.

The music camp was held on a Salvation Army compound that encompassed a corps, a medical clinic and a high school. Directly outside was a busy marketplace with pop-up shops and taxi-style bicycles. Team members recall palm trees, tropical plants and lots of dust as they taught under the blazing sun of Africa.

While the team had little downtime, they visited Providence Island,

a UNESCO World Heritage site, to learn about Liberia's history, and near the camp's conclusion joined all camp participants to swim at an oceanside resort.

A highlight of the trip was joining other Salvationists in a celebratory parade for the 35th anniversary of the Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Territory. Team members and camp students played as part of a massed band that marched with other soldiers and officers through the city streets.

"It was wonderful to be out there with fellow Salvationists," said Captain James. "sharing our witness in the way we love to do it—through music."

Captain Dana said the mission was a great success, adding, "God put together and sent the right team for the right time."

Brazil

Brazil is known for a vibrant culture that includes exciting music. But it wasn't the Bossa Nova or Samba that summoned a team from the Western Division. It was the sound of the gospel.

The team conducted the first territorial music camp in Rio Grande du Sul in 15 years—an opportunity so precious that to attend one girl cut and sold her hair to raise funds, and two sisters sold their pet. The longing for this experience was also seen in students' journeys to attend—many traveled up to 20 hours—and their complete engagement in learning.

"The attention, eagerness and work of the students was astounding. I've never seen anything like it," said Major Stephanie Sawka, who noted the students' enthusiasm didn't fade even during afternoon theory classes



Matt Walter teaches a brass class.

when temperatures soared past 100 degrees.

The location in the south of Brazil enabled many people to attend who couldn't if it had been held in Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo. Representing four divisions, 100 campers, in their teens through 60s, participated in band, choir, dance and guitar classes. Each day began with devotions and ended with fellowship that included music, games and sports.

One evening brought friendly competition between the USA and Brazil. The USA won the volleyball tournament, but not surprisingly the Brazilians dominated the soccer match. While there was great fun on the field, the team's favorite moments were spent each night as the Brazilian officers and soldiers organically gathered outside the canteen to sing, play guitar and drums, and dance, only dispersing when they were reminded another day was on the horizon.



The Santa Maria Corps praise team led by Captain Adao Nunes

"I was amazed by the joyful spirit and camaraderie at the camp," said team member Matt Walter. "You could just sense the Holy Spirit's presence."

Indeed, the trip and Brazilian Salvationists made a lasting impression on the entire team co-led by Captain Alex Yanez and Major Stephanie Sawka and including Major Geoffrey Crowell (chaplain), Amy Kruger-Cross, Donna and William

Continued on page 11



Team members march in a massed band in a parade celebrating the territory's 35th anniversary

Tom's lessons featured rhythm exercises, music notation and reading. His advanced theory class concentrated on rhythms, clapping and stomping.

"The people there are naturally musically gifted. They can hear harmonies. Our goal was to help them read music," said team member Captain Stephanie Hartley, who taught music theory and Bible lessons.

Team member Jon Heaver, who taught at a Boliva music camp in 2017, said teaching the Liberian Salvationists how to read music would help them perform with a good blend and balance.

"It's our hope they not only continue to do this, but that they teach more musicians," said Jon. "Once the container with 150 donated instruments arrives, the sky will be the limit!"

Jon taught advanced brass, as did Major John Aren, who played a large role in gathering and transporting the donated instruments.

Team members Captain Dana Cook (leader) and Julianna Dobney taught timbrels and handbells; Barbara Burtch and David Dahl taught beginner brass; Dawn Hedberg taught piano; and Captain James Beardsley taught percussion.



Team members Major John Aren and Jon Heaver with the camp's advanced brass class



The team in Brazil with some recipients of music given to the corps.

A New chapter

Captain Bersabe Vera became divisional commander of the Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands Division (part of the USA Eastern Territory) on April 1, 2024.

She is leading a division with a vibrant ministry. There are 11 corps, including a Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, comprehensive family/social and emergency disaster services, robust youth music and summer programs, and outreaches such as community care. These ministries are complemented by an adult rehabilitation center in San Juan.

Captain Bersabe hails from Mexico and came to the Central Territory in 1988 as a soldier to start the Hispanic ministry in the Kansas and Western Missouri Division (KWM). Since being commissioned in 2010, she has held a vast array of appointments throughout the Midwest including being a youth development and outreach officer at the Omaha Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, leading the Blue Island Corps, coordinating or directing Hispanic and intercultural ministries in several divisions, and being a divisional secretary in both the Northern and KWM divisions. Most recently, she was area commander for the newly-formed NW Indiana Command and last year became territorial intercultural ministries secretary.

"I am always giving 100 percent to everything I do when I get to a new appointment," the captain said recently in preparing for this new responsibility. "And I know that God is always going ahead of me, preparing the way."



Captain Bersabe also credits God for the people He has placed in her life who have shaped and molded her ministry and leadership by sharing their experiences, expertise and encouragement.

"I have always been part of a great team in every appointment," she said.

The captain is excited to immerse herself in a new culture and to be part of a new team in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and to learn from the people there, trusting that they will benefit from what she brings as well.

"I want us to grow together in the love of God, the work of the Army and the Kingdom of God," she said.

Though she is serving in another territory, Captain Bersabe says her ties to the Central remain strong, and she doesn't want to be forgotten. She asks when God brings her to your mind that you lift up a prayer, don't hesitate to send an email, and if ever you're in Puerto Rico to be sure to stop by and say a friendly "Hello."

To fill the world with music Continued

Berryman, Carolina Yanez, Matt Walter, Michael Sivels, and Marty Thomas of the territorial music and creative arts ministries department.

Some like Matt and Michael jumped headfirst into the culture. At the Santa Maria Corps to take on work projects before heading to the camp, they ventured a few blocks one morning hoping to find a gym for an early morning workout. Providentially, they struck up conversation with a staff member who used to attend the corps. Invited to the camp meetings, she not only came, but she and her family began attending the corps again!

Each team member found their niche at the camp where they made connections that were a blessing.

"I met a young man named Miguel who is a metal guitar player. We hit it off immediately as I'm a metal head," said unassuming Major Geoffrey. "He lives out his faith daily and that made a big impact on me."

At the end of the camp, three outstanding students were awarded airfare and scholarships to attend the Western music camp, Central Music Institute and Central Bible Leadership Institute. The team also presented computers, new music stands, a brass repair kit, printed music, and even a new baton to the divisional music director.

After his experience in Brazil, Marty concluded, "I always thought music was the one thing



Camper Moreno sports a Chicago Staff Band (CSB) shirt with CSB and team member Marty Thomas

that could unite people of different languages and cultures, but now I can attest that it is in fact the Spirit of God that unites believers."

The Salvation Army

PRAYER CENTRAL

USA Central Territory

June Prayer Calendar

My Prayer List	Day	Bible Reading	Pray for The Salvation Army
	1 Saturday	Jeremiah 47-52	Alton, Ill., Corps
	2 Sunday	Luke 7-8	Champaign, Ill., Corps
	3 Monday	Galatians 1-3	Bloomington, Ill., Corps
	4 Tuesday	Exodus 37-40	United Kingdom and Ireland
	5 Wednesday	1 Kings 5-9	Dekalb, Ill., Corps
	6 Thursday	Psalms 66-68	Anderson, Ind., Corps
	7 Friday	Proverbs 2-3	Aurora, Ill., Corps
	8 Saturday	Lamentations	Eldorado, Kan., Corps
	9 Sunday	Luke 9-10	Flint Citadel, Mich., Corps
	10 Monday	Galatians 4-6	India Eastern Territory
	11 Tuesday	Leviticus 1-3	Goshen, Ind., Corps
	12 Wednesday	1 Kings 10-13	Sioux Falls, S.D., Corps
	13 Thursday	Psalms 69-71	Battle Creek, Mich., Corps
	14 Friday	Proverbs 4	Kansas City Citadel, Kan., Corps
	15 Saturday	Ezekiel 1-6	Lakewood Temple, Minn., Corps
	16 Sunday	Luke 11-12	St. Clair County, Ill., Corps
	17 Monday	Ephesians 1-3	Indonesia Territory
	18 Tuesday	Leviticus 4-6	Burlington, Iowa, Corps
	19 Wednesday	1 Kings 14-18	Summer Ministry Opportunities
	20 Thursday	Psalms 72-74	Traverse City, Mich., Corps
	21 Friday	Proverbs 5-6	Pekin, Ill., 360 Life Center
	22 Saturday	Ezekiel 7-12	Austin, Minn., Corps
	23 Sunday	Luke 13-14	Richmond, Ind., 360 Life Center
	24 Monday	Ephesians 4-6	Sioux City, Iowa, Corps
	25 Tuesday	Leviticus 7-9	Southern Africa Territory
	26 Wednesday	1 Kings 19-20	St. Clair County, Ill., Corps
	27 Thursday	Psalms 75-77	Topeka Citadel, Kan., Corps
	28 Friday	Proverbs 7	Wausau, Wis., Corps
	29 Saturday	Ezekiel 13-18	Wayne/Westland, Mich., Corps
	30 Sunday	Luke 15-16	Bloomington, Ind., Corps

Go to www.salarmycentral.org

If you follow the prayer calendar during the year, you will have read through the Bible!

--Mustard Seeds--



The ripple effect in Duluth

How much difference can one Christian sports league make in a community? If you live in Duluth, Minn., the answer is beyond measure.

For more than 35 years, the Rookie Basketball Association (RBA), a program of the Duluth Corps, has planted spiritual seeds and nurtured good character and sportsmanship in the hearts of thousands of kindergarten through eighth graders. With nearly 100 adults who volunteer to coach the 500-plus children in the program each

season, the RBA's reach is expansive.

Salvationist Kristin Mallet, director of the award-winning program, said the RBA is more than a sports league.

"The heart and soul of the RBA is for the love of Jesus," said Kris. "We holistically train our players so that they are learning more than just basketball skills."

The RBA focuses on developing its participants in mind, heart and body by teaching "marks of excellence"—for instance goodness, kindness, patience and self-control—based on the fruit of the Spirit. Although not all players enter the program from Christian homes, parents overwhelmingly support the biblical values taught through the RBA.

"Who wouldn't want their child to learn what it means to be patient or to show self-control?" asked Kris. "These are character traits all parents want for their kids."

All RBA players engage in team activities which emphasize the fruits with examples of how they are evidenced in sportsmanship. Coaches begin practices with a huddle and



short talk, highlighting a new fruit each week. Players then practice showing it in their attitude and sportsmanship. For example, they learn a player shows self-control when he or she chooses to pass the ball to an open teammate rather than keeping it to themselves. Likewise, congratulating other players and opposing teams on their success shows kindness and goodness.



According to Kris, the RBA is as much a ministry as it is a sports league.

"Our program is a seed-planting initiative," she said. "We're planting these faith-based seeds in their hearts and their minds, and we're trusting that God will take it from there. I can't change hearts, but I can plant seeds and water them."

Evidence of the program's impact long after participants have aged out is seen in the community. Many have used the skills they learned in RBA in other sports and activities throughout high school, and some have played college sports. Many volunteer and serve their communities, some even as RBA coaches.

"The ripple effect is massive," Kris said. "As we engage with our players at the kindergarten level, we are instilling in them these values that will prepare them for life in 10, 15, 20 years."



WONDERLAND CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

SAVE THE DATE

August 16-18, 2024



This year Wonderland Camp celebrates 100 years of camping ministry done in Jesus' name! Thousands of children, teens and adults have experienced the love of God as a result of the many programs that have taken place at camp through the years. Gratitude and praise to the Lord for all He has done in the lives of people on the grounds of Wonderland Camp is worth a time of remembering and worshiping together. Join us as we celebrate the past and commit to prayer for the future of Wonderland Camp and Conference Center. Times of laughter, healing, and lives reborn in Christ Jesus await future generations at camp. Plan to be a part of this joyful gathering!

August 16-18, 2024

Visual timeline of camp through the years

Saturday evening Celebration and Worship Banquet

Housing and meals will be available for the entire weekend

"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power and the wonders He has done." Psalm 78:4b NIV