Let the games begin

This month the Northern Division is holding the latest in a series of new regional Salvation Army Gamers Assemblies (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 23-25, 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.”
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’s 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” [1:6]. 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.

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, access 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.

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

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.”
Dwelling with God

by Natalie Shiel

In the afternoon, Captains Christie and Enrique Coreano introduced a model for disciple-ship 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.

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, “to 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.

Leadership Changes

The following leadership changes in the Central Territory have been announced on behalf of Territorial Commander 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.
Let them praise His name in the dance: let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp. Psalm 149:3 (NKJV)

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

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 six months.

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 container to represent each conversation—one 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 says because of her faith, she never really dances alone: “I feel like it is just me and God.”

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 Glidle dormitory in the midst of about 20 Savills. 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.

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.

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

*Some steps adapted from the book *Everyday Interactions* by Carl Medeari

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 despising 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 alurred me with hope. Maybe my desires could be filled?

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But the first thing that broke through that darkness was Salvation Army students at Asbury. You see, I was placed on second Glidle dormitory in the midst of about 20 Savills. 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, never stopping 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?”

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

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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 six months.

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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

*Some steps adapted from the book *Everyday Interactions* by Carl Medeari
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 heritage within the Hispanic community.”

The Gospel Choir made its debut during commissioning weekend 2023. “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.

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 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. "The revival of the Gospel Choir, which had existed decades earlier, and creating Hispanic Voices provides an avenue for diverse groups to worship and minister 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. NCI Hispanic Voices lead praise at the One Conference last year.
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.

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 Lake-land, 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 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, 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 in 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 incorporate 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 upon 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.

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.”

Linda and Bill Himes

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Linda and Bill Himes

A call to fight for justice

The Salvation Army is on the front lines of justice movement in the Wisconsin state capital.

The Salvation Army red shield is a symbol of hope and service for all, says Lt. Col. David Harvey, territorial commander of the Wisconsin Division. These are the good people of the Salvation Army, Harvey says. Even in times of adversity, Salvationists are there, Harvey says. They are the good people of the Salvation Army, Harvey says. They promote awareness and protect the vulnerable.

The Salvation Army is on the front lines of the justice movement in Wisconsin, Harvey says. Even in times of adversity, Salvationists are there, Harvey says. They are the good people of the Salvation Army, Harvey says. They promote awareness and protect the vulnerable.

Major Greg Voeller and Wesley Carter discuss the class material.
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.
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.”

“Acting on faith is what we do,” Pierce said. “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.

“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.”

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.

“Instead of acting it out, we have 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.

“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.

“The 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.
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 800—and children and adults—were taking part.

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

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.

“Sometimes it hit me that they were writing music theory class. ‘I 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 Geofrey Crowell (chaplain), Amy Kruger-Cross, Donna and William.

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 do 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 noticeable; 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 when temperatures soared past 100 degrees.

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

Continued on page 11
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 be sure to stop by and say a friendly “Hello.”

To fill the world with music

The Salvation Army

June Prayer Calendar

My Prayer List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Bible Reading</th>
<th>Pray for The Salvation Army</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Saturday</td>
<td>Jeremiah 47-52</td>
<td>Atlon, Ill., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sunday</td>
<td>Luke 7-8</td>
<td>Champaign, Ill., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Monday</td>
<td>Galatians 1-3</td>
<td>Bloomington, Ill., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Tuesday</td>
<td>Exodus 37-40</td>
<td>United Kingdom and Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Wednesday</td>
<td>1 Kings 5-9</td>
<td>Dekalb, Ill., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Thursday</td>
<td>Psalms 66-68</td>
<td>Anderson, Ind., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Friday</td>
<td>Proverbs 2-3</td>
<td>Aurora, Ill., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Saturday</td>
<td>Lamentations</td>
<td>Eldorado, Kan., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Sunday</td>
<td>Luke 9-10</td>
<td>Flint, Mich., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Monday</td>
<td>Galatians 4-6</td>
<td>India Eastern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Tuesday</td>
<td>Leviticus 1-3</td>
<td>Goshen, Ind., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Wednesday</td>
<td>1 Kings 10-13</td>
<td>Sioux Falls, S.D., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Thursday</td>
<td>Psalms 69-71</td>
<td>Battle Creek, Mich., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Friday</td>
<td>Proverbs 4</td>
<td>Kansas City Citadel, Kan., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Saturday</td>
<td>Ezekiel 1-6</td>
<td>Lakeview Temple, Mem., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Sunday</td>
<td>Luke 11-12</td>
<td>St. Clair County, Ill., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Monday</td>
<td>Ephesians 1-3</td>
<td>Indonesia Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Tuesday</td>
<td>Leviticus 4-6</td>
<td>Burlington, Iowa, Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Wednesday</td>
<td>1 Kings 14-18</td>
<td>Summer Ministry Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Thursday</td>
<td>Psalms 72-74</td>
<td>Traverse City, Mich., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Friday</td>
<td>Proverbs 5-6</td>
<td>Pekin, Ill., 360 Life Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Saturday</td>
<td>Ezekiel 7-12</td>
<td>Austin, Mem., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Sunday</td>
<td>Luke 13-14</td>
<td>Richmond, Ind., 360 Life Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 Monday</td>
<td>Ephesians 4-6</td>
<td>Sioux City, Iowa, Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Tuesday</td>
<td>Leviticus 7-9</td>
<td>Southern Africa Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Wednesday</td>
<td>1 Kings 19-20</td>
<td>St. Clair County, Ill., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Thursday</td>
<td>Psalms 75-77</td>
<td>Topaz Citadel, Kan., Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Friday</td>
<td>Proverbs 7</td>
<td>Waukau, Wis., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Saturday</td>
<td>Ezekiel 13-18</td>
<td>Woyne/Westland, Mich., Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Sunday</td>
<td>Luke 15-16</td>
<td>Bloomington, Ind., Corps</td>
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The team also presented computers, new music stands, a backup 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 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.”

To my Prayer Calendar

Go to www.salarmycentral.org
If you follow the prayer calendar during the year, you will have read through the Bible!
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 kindergarteners 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.”