Seeing what God can do

In a central plaza in Charata, Argentina, community members mill about a sunny marketplace, visiting with neighbors and eating fresh sandwiches and empanadas. A street singer strums his guitar nearby. People dance in the heat of the day.

And Senaa Debela was in the middle of it all.

As an 18-year-old soldier of the Decatur, Ill., Corps, Senaa spent six weeks in Argentina as part of the Central Summer Mission Team, partnering in ministry with Salvationists in the South America East Territory.

"We were pretty much always together, living together and working together," Elizabeth, the team’s leader, recalled.

The group worked its ministry in a range of activities like planning events for youth night at a corps; painting student residences; discussing faith at a camp; and helping repair/paint a health clinic and chapel.

Painting the clinic, both inside and outside, was especially memorable for Elizabeth.

"I was painting in the pediatric room there—and I decided to paint flowers in the room, to make it more personal," she recalled fondly.

"We were painting together all day out in the heat," Senaa remembered. "It was hard work of course. Our bodies were tired. But it was all worth it."

Levi learned about his late grandparents’ ministry while visiting the

by Craig Dirkes

The Salvation Army’s third annual Down for the Challenge urban rappelling event with the Minnesota Vikings took place this summer at the Omni Viking Lakes Hotel in Eagan, Minn., where nearly 200 people descended the 14-story building to fight homelessness.

Legendary Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Cris Carter helped kick off the event at a VIP party hosted by the hotel. His electrifying keynote address was followed by a Q&A with nine Vikings legends (Brian Robison, Carl Eller, Paul Krause, Chuck Foreman, Scott Studwell, Tommy Kramer, Lee Lewis, Randall McDaniel, and Patt Williams) which was moderated by WCCO-TV sports director Mike Max.

The following day, hundreds of rappelers, volunteers, donors and partners joined together to create a dazzling event that supported the goal of raising $600,000 for The Salvation Army’s local housing and homelessness-prevention programs.

Among the rappelers was Staci from the "Staci and Hutch Show" on KS95.

"This is probably the most fun way to raise money I can think of," she said. "Anything I can do to help The Salvation Army. I’m happy to do it."

Retired Minnesota Vikings defensive end Brian Robison also rappelled.

“We want to be a part of the community, and we want to give back to the community, and this is our

Continued on page 2

Continued on page 5
Home is where the heart is

by Colonel Steven Howard
Chief Secretary

“There’s no place like home,” said Dorothy in “The Wizard of Oz.” The concept of home encapsulates a safe place we are familiar with and where we are loved. My wife, Janice, and I have just passed the six-year mark in our appointments in the Central Territory. We feel at home.

This summer we were able to visit the only place where we lived for a longer time as officers. We spent seven years in Maine which has the slogan “Maine, the way life should be.” We were there for our 40th session reunion as “Heralds of Hope” and to attend the Old Orchard Beach camp meetings. It was great to reconnect with friends and colleagues. It was going home. It was a place of love. It was a familiar space. It was the way life should be.

I think some of you had similar experiences this summer as you took part in Central Bible Leadership Institute, Resonate or Central Music Institute at Wonderland Camp. These were times of feeling at home in a safe place and experiencing the love of God. I have every confidence there were many new relationships cemented with others and with the Lord during these weeks. Summer camps still serve as a place where people can come to meet God and to grow in their Christian faith. We are truly blessed by such opportunities.

On the subject of camp, it is noted in this issue that the Great Lakes Division now has a new and beautiful performing arts center at Echo Grove Camp. This is a place made possible by generous Army donors. It is a place where many people were positively impacted this summer and where the name of Jesus was lifted high. That will continue to happen for years to come. It is a place where our mission to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination is at the forefront. It is a place where girls and boys and women and men made decisions for Christ.

I pray each of you has a place where you feel at home, where you are safe and where you are loved. I pray that place is your corps. I pray that there you feel the love of God and cement relationships with other believers. May your corps also be a place where those who don’t know Jesus Christ as their Savior can come home to a relationship with God. What is your part in helping to make your corps a home for others?

Rooted in Kingdom values

by Captain Chrissy Cooper

The summer sun shines, laughter flows and friendships are forged in the warm glow of campfires. Echo Grove Camp is a place where time seems to stand still. Amid the familiar sounds, smells and scenery, a new addition graces the grounds—the Mervin Price Chapel and Performing Arts Center. This sacred sanctuary already holds a special place in the hearts of campers and staff alike.

Inspired by Echo Grove’s rich heritage and commitment to nurturing hearts in faith, the vision for the chapel was born from a desire to provide a dedicated space for spiritual growth, worship and reflection. Generous contributions from donors who share the camp’s vision for fostering Christian values helped make this dream a reality.

The chapel’s architectural design echoes nature’s beautiful color and textural contrasts. A cross, visible from the top of the structure, extends down through the chapel entrance symbolizing hope and a beacon of light for those seeking solace and guidance as campers and guests enter at its foot.

Upon entering the chapel, a sense of reverence and tranquility envelops visitors. The chapel’s lines approach the platform, inviting campers to take a moment from the day’s activities and find respite in prayer or meditation while creating a sense of expectation for what is to come. The first floor has many functional spaces that provide opportunities for activities. At music camp, five bands and two choirs met in the same building simultaneously.

Throughout the camp season, the chapel becomes a hub of artistic, meaningful decision moments and fun experiences. While the facility is mere months old, many tears have already been shed by children and adults, spiritually dedicating the space with heartfelt Holy Spirit-led responses.

“[This facility means so much to us already],” said Captain Jonathan Cooper, youth and candidates secretary. “Yes, it provides much-needed programming space. It is aesthetically beautiful, but more importantly, it has the potential to shepherd people through the challenges of life as a result of our service to them.”

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CBLI 2023: a living and active faith

by Captain Jen Polanco

Central Bible Leadership Institute (CBLI) 2023 is in the books, but the effects of it will be both long-lasting and life-changing for the 350 delegates who attended. This year’s theme, “Faith Works,” challenged them to put their faith into action in practical and powerful ways.

He challenged listeners that when we are squeezed by pain, we can stand on the promises of God, prayer and praise and then be able to persevere and truly live out our faith.

“When perseverance in a trial is at play, your faith will work,” he said.

The highlighted scripture for the week was James 2:18 which says, ‘But some will say, ’You have faith; I have works.’ Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” Several works proved the theme was being lived out during the campment.

Delegates were extremely open and responsive to the theme because the effects of the scripture and the challenges received during the tracks were on display in several significant times during the week. One of those times was during the Tuesday evening United Meeting Worship Circle led by the musical group “Of Dust.” During that service, the Holy Spirit filled the room as people shared powerful testimonies and got on their knees in repentance and praise.

“There was a sweet Spirit of true worship during the Worship Circle, and God revealed Himself in beautiful ways,” said Amanda Keene, young adult track leader. “Lives were transformed, reconciliation was experienced, and our Father was shipped through song and surrendered lives.”

Faith and works also came alive during the TSAO events as staff helped campers discover God through his creation.

Major Amy Jo Ferguson said, “TSAO often ended the night with a campfire, where delegates were able to look up at the stars, listen to the bats and enjoy a treat over the fire. During these moments, many were able to reflect again on just how awesome God’s mighty creation is. We can affirm with the old hymn writer, ’I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, their power throughout the universe displayed. Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee, How great thou art!’”

Another time the camp experienced faith working was the Awards Night program during worship. The Jr. CBLI track sang louder than the rest of the campers in the chapel, believing with all their hearts the words of “Waymaker.” It was a moving moment of true worship, of seeing the faith of young children in action—being an example to the teens and adults in the chapel.

For first-time attendee Rachel Roman of the Traverse City, Mich., Corps, the theme of CBLI came alive in a personal way.

“This week I really learned how faith and work come together and how my emotions and my past hurts play out in my life and effect my faith,” she said. “By coming here as a family, we are learning how to live out our faith together in a healthy way and are being challenged to figure out how to keep doing it at home. This has been a safe place to share and to see how our faith can come to life.”

Faith also worked in a practical way this week as campers from all tracks worked to raise a little more than $11,000 (including a match from THQ) to send much-needed laptops and IT equipment bundles to the India National Headquarter to build and strengthen their educational resources in Salvation Army schools. It was encouraging to see people in the Central Territory passionately giving to make a difference in the lives of children and youth across the globe. That was faith working.

Faith continued working in action even more when the World Missions Department presented the locations for next year’s Summer Missions Teams to Italy, Greece, Malaysia and Singapore. Several young adults expressed interest in participating.

Throughout the week delegates also expressed interest in attending the territory’s 730 Weekend in September, which explores calling into full-time ministry through officership and service in The Salvation Army.

God is clearly moving in the hearts of Salvationists in this territory for greater faith and works for His Kingdom. The fruit of CBLI 2023 will continue to produce a rich harvest of faith in action that will impact marriages, families, corps, communities and the world for years to come.

Full list of award winners online
And justice for all

B
erit Lolo who prefers to be called simply Lolo—“It’s easy to remember,” she said—is a 25-year-old student from the East Kenya Territory who worked this summer as the first intern for the Central Territory’s Social Justice and City Mission Center (SJCM), which has found a new home at the Chicago Midwest, Ill., Corps.

A lifelong Salvationist, Lolo is one of four children born to officer parents, Majors Julius Omukonyi Lolo and Gaudencia Atieno Lolo, who serve in the Kenya West Territory.

She first arrived in the United States in March as a member of the Salvation Army’s International Social Justice Girls Who took part in the 67th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

“I was privileged to be part of a roundtable discussion there,” Lolo recalled. “We were talking about the importance of girls’ education—including girls with disabilities.”

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Lolo’s passion is helping children who have disabilities. She is currently working on her master’s thesis at Daystar University in Nairobi, focusing on school preparedness and integrating students with disabilities into all schools. She hopes to complete her degree by the end of this year.

“My biggest wish is that all stu -
dents with special needs can attend a regular school, if they choose to—and they won’t have any challenges. The building will be accessible. All resources [like books] will be accessible,” Lolo said.

Lolo’s first assignment at the SJCM was to create a pilot of a community assessment tool which is being used by the Midwest Corps, looking at the strengths of the community, programs the corps offers to residents and The Salvation Army’s impact.

“I have managed to create some of the tools, like a questionnaire, that are helping me to get a general view,” she said. “I think we are going to do community mapping, understanding some of the assets in the community that can be beneficial. Schools, re -
source centers and parks are assets that the department could have a partnership with someday.”

Lolo also traveled a bit, visiting different corps, sharing her testi -
mony about being a champion for justice. She also spoke of Kenya East and its provisions for quality education.

Lolo’s skills and background have been a great match for the intern -
ship’s duties, said Major Katherine Clausell, territorial social justice and city mission secretary.

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Living joyfully in all circumstances

Colonel Phil meets with the Central SMT.

Every new appointment comes with the need for adapting and adjusting, learning about a new community, context and circumstances. For some, this transition involves the same type of work in a new environment. For others, it is transitioning to a new type of work. For yet others, it also involves learning a new language and everything else related to international service.

Colonels Phil and Sheila Davison have experienced each of these over the course of more than 29 years of being officers. With service in three corps appointments, three different training colleges, plus a Salvation Army university, and now two territorial leadership positions, they have served in five territories with almost half of their offi cership outside the Central Territory. According to the Davisons, the first year or so often feels full of new experiences and learning.

“We’ve been here over a year-and-a-half, and it feels like our territory now,” said Colonel Phil. “There is so much more to understand, of course, but we are very comfortable operating in these roles.”

The Davisons took up roles as the territorial leaders in the South America East Territory, consisting of Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, in February 2022 after four years in Spain and Portugal.

“The language is always going to be a challenge,” Colonel Sheila said, “although it is easier for me to concentrate on just Spanish and not both Spanish and Portuguese.”

But then there is the factor of different accents and regional expressions. The language differences between Spain and Argentina, for example, bring their own adjustments. Beyond those elements, there is the continual need to think about residency requirements, establishing healthcare contacts, learning to navigate the transportation systems, and to discover how to adapt their cooking to what is available locally.

“My grandparents were directors of the school in 2008-2010. I met some of the former cadets, and they told me stories of my grandpa and grandma and about what good teachers they were,” he said. “They left a huge impression on this territory for the better.”

Team members only knew one another by names when they first met at orientation, but soon became close as they served in Argentina.

There was time for relaxation too. The team met various corps officers through their travels and were also able to sample new foods and do a bit of sightseeing too.

“In Putayas we got to go to the beach with some of the officers’ kids,” Senaa said. “We played cards, played volleyball and looked at the water.”

Elizabeth was particularly touched by a visit to the Iguazu Falls.

“Oh, seeing the waterfalls was of course a super-memorable experience. Seeing something like that, God’s creation, drives home how amazing God really is,” she said. Levi remembers an evening at a camp in Charata with youth from four different corps.

“It was so cool to be able to help with that, sitting and observing how the Lord was working on the youth of that division,” Levi said. “The Lord saved kids’ lives that night. It was an amazing experience, seeing how He can move and what He can do.”

Senaa added, “It really opened my eyes, getting to see people worshipping God in a different place. The people in Argentina were on fire for God.”

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“Being a grandparent so far away is one of the costs,” said Colonel Phil. All five of the Davisons’ grandchildren were born since they left Canada for Europe over five years ago.

“The technology is great and very helpful for staying in touch, but with younger grandchildren there is nothing that can replace being there in person,” he said.

The Davisons have been able to return to the U.S. on average once a year during the past 12 years. Nine or 10 hours on a plane and time zone differences also force adaptations in routine family connections.

“We are so very grateful for the support of our home territory,” said Colonel Sheila. “You’ll never know how much it means to be able to count on folks back home.”

Both Colonels Phil and Sheila experienced the death of a parent while away on international service.

Aging parents and growing grandchild aside, they say there are the daily adjustments to leadership roles in another language and culture that fill their time.

Over these past months they have overseen a territorial review, a Congress with the General, visits to over 90 percent of the appointments in the territory, the reinauguration of a territorial music institute, visits from youth mission teams from two territories, plans for a visit by the Canadian Staff Band, the further restructuring of the Argentina Division after consolidation, the development of the new governance model and the transition to the IFAS standards and implementation of the NeteSuite software being promoted internationally.

The colonels were also members of the High Council in May which elected General Lyndon Buckingham. A significant challenge in Argentina is how to administer all the programs and support personnel with an ongoing personnel budget.

Senaa added, “It really opened my eyes, getting to see people worshipping God in a different place. The people in Argentina were on fire for God.”
Dwelling in God’s presence

by Joy Caro

From the moment I was greeted to the time I left the scenic grounds of the Glen Eyrie Conference Center in Colorado Springs, Co., I found the National Seminar on Holiness was designed with purpose and provided ample opportunity to reflect on holy living.

I came without expectations in order to be open to whatever God had for me. My only expectation was that God would have something to say, whether conviction, clarification or confirmation. During this time I found He often convicted my heart, but with that came hope.

On the first night we heard from National Chief Secretary Colonel Ralph Buklewicz. He didn’t ease into the deep challenges but right off challenged us to pray three daring prayers of surrender:
- Lord, help me to see sin as You see it.
- Lord, help me to see others from Your point of view.
- Lord, help me to see how I fit into Your plan of redemption.

Kevin Hodges and Travis Heard keep the faith and represent the Midland Division on the Territorial Soldiers’ Forum.

Kevin Hodges

The Salvation Army is a worldwide family, and Kevin Hodges is happy to be part of it.

“The Salvation Army makes this world a bit smaller,” Kevin, a second-generation Salvationist and Midland divisional sergeant-major, said. “I have met people from all over who work in variety of ways, but we are all there for the same mission. People from everywhere—it really does feel like a family.”

His love of music and involvement in it with the Army over the years also has fostered connections and brought many friendships.

“At Salvation Army camp, we used to have conservatories and spend four or five weeks in the summer learning about music and Jesus Christ at very advanced levels. I was building relationships with other teenaged kids. I still have a lot of friendships that go way back to those music camps,” Kevin recalled fondly.

Growing up in the east, he once was part of the National Capital Band. Today, he is part of the Central Territorial Staff Songsters and plays cornet in the Midland Divisional Band. Kevin, his wife Envoy Rosetta Hodges, and two sons, Caleb, 18, and Keagan, 15, have lived in the St. Louis area for 18 years. They attend the St. Louis Temple, Mo., Corps where Envoy Rosetta is the corps administrator.

“We have a music school where they teach brass instruments, drums and singing,” Kevin said. “There is also the community meal on Wednesdays, the Golden Age Club [for older adults] meets on Tuesdays, and there is the pantry during the week.”

Kevin’s sons pitch in with corps programs and activities whenever needed.

Kevin, who works as the senior director of finance for the St. Patrick Center in St. Louis, tries to show his faith by treating people in a Christ-like way.

“Showing my faith in how I conduct myself, and how I treat other people is important,” he said. “I feel that many times, actions show a lot more than your words.”

Envoy Rosetta says her husband is quiet by nature. But he listens well to others. And he is strong when tough times arrive.

“In the face of adversity, he stands in the truth,” she said. “And that truth is his faith and trust in Jesus.”

Travis Heard

Today, Travis is the assistant divisional sergeant-major for the Midland Division and is a soldier at the St. Clair County, Ill., Corps in the greater St. Louis, Mo., area. He is also the first person in his family to be part of The Salvation Army.

He became a soldier at age 19.

“It was the next step in opening a new positive chapter in my life,” Travis said.

At his corps, Travis runs the audio-teaching sessions by National Ambassadors for Holiness Dr. Bill Ury and Rev. Diane Ury. These meetings were deep and thought-provoking. People sought the Lord at the altar and scribed many answers.}

Faithful and true

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Is reading fiction holy?

by Rev. Diane Ury
National Ambassador for Holiness

It is critical that Christians be readers of books. Theology, history, biographies, relationship resources should all be part of what we regularly feed our minds. Maybe I’m unusual, maybe not. But I believe it’s nearly essential also to read fiction as a part of a holy life.

Paul repeatedly refers to the essence of Christianity being a mystery. The depths of the beauty of holiness cannot even begin to be approached without imagination. To behold God, to be beheld by God, is an encounter. In the still quiet of our hearts and minds, this occurs. When it does, we are transformed. Prayer is the making real in our spirits and minds what we “see” in God’s heart. Faith is clinging to what is unseen, and yet we know it.

Fiction provides the development of imaginative creativity. Reality is understood through story. God revealed Himself and the nature of everything else, including ourselves, through story. He wants to enter our story.

Fiction provides contexts to learn empathy which does not come naturally but can be developed through story. Entering into another person’s life and feeling their experience can cultivate the ability to care about someone besides ourselves.

Fiction can lift us out of difficult context into a new world that inspires courage, sacrifice, heroism, mercy and faithful kindness. Oftentimes, we meet characters who are quirky, irksome and difficult. We learn endurance and patience with these folks, perhaps realizing in fact we are not irritated, but irritable-able. The Spirit convicts, then He creates mercy and grace in our attitudes.

To preachers who read fiction, I want to say, “Thank you for the allure, the fragrance, the beauty—for more than mere information.”

Different people’s responses to what occurred at the Asbury Revival in February 2023 were very telling. Where many flocked to meet the living God who had come to love and serve and heal those hungry for Him, others stood back with their arms crossed, demanding apologists be taught at the altar, that people arise from prayer being able to get 100 percent scores on doctrine questions. Like Zechariah in Luke 1, they demanded certainty, where Mary offered herself to be beheld by her God and was filled with His Life.

Perhaps we wouldn’t be debating the full beauty of what God can do in our lives when He sanctifies us entirely if we nurtured our imaginations so that His Word could fly on wind, and His Spirit could make our stonesy hearts tender, causing rivers of living water to flow out of them. His hand can reach into our leprosy and immediately cleanse us completely. Jesus’ blood can wash away our defilement. He can bear our sins in His body. He can create the world in a week, and He can bring people from death to life in a moment, filling us with perfect Love.

You don’t believe that? You haven’t experienced that? Curl up on a sofa and read Middelmarch, Jayber Crow, The Warden, The Chronicles of Narnia, The Dean’s Watch, The Hobbit, and The Lord of the Rings. The Bible is the source of all good story, because it reveals Reality. Every morning immerse yourself within it, the very Real Word of God. Yes, that’s what it certainly is. Every single word is True. And yes, you can hear His Voice.

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BRENGLE FOR TODAY
4,127 days and counting
for themany Pathway of Ho pe families I’ve helped find hope, healing, a God in all circumstances of life and ness of the deep abiding presence of experience. It comes from the aware - m inistry. Finding joy inthejourney spaceforallwho enter. Iam grateful comes by continuously trusting Spirit to m ake our sanctuary a sacred Sunday m orning, asking the Ho ly to share the loveof Jesus. from a m om entary mountaintop ex - hard placesbring an unshakeable the Lord. Iam gratefulform oments atthe altarw ithchildrenand adultsseeking the work the Lord Jesus has given me. He wants me to tell others about the good news of God’s grace.” I pray God will give you eyes to see how He can help you find joy in the hard places, knowing He is with you. new start and a community with the corps’ body of believers. I am grate - ful to walk alongside staff during life’s struggles, including the deaths of family members. I am grateful for God’s provision when we weren’t sure there was enough cash flow to keep the corps’ doors open. Reflect - ing on these moments, I am re - m ined of how God has shaped and formed me through the years. Early in my officership I learned, “You cannot lead others where you have not been or are not willing to go yourself.” It’s grown within me a desire for deep spiritual formation so I can share God’s transformative power with others. For me, joy is al - lowing God to use the hard places to achieve His work in me and lead - ing others to do the same. My prayer for the next part of my ministry journey is found in Acts 20:24 (NIRV): “But my life means nothing to me. My only goal is to finish the race. I want to complete the work the Lord Jesus has given me. He wants me to tell others about the good news of God’s grace.” I pray God will give you eyes to see how He can help you find joy in the hard places, knowing He is with you. L ooking back over the past 11 years as an officer, I never anticipated all the opportuni - ties God has given me to be a blessing and to be blessed. Had I written this article before 2020, it would have held a different sense of optimism and joy for the journey. However, the last few years have been filled with difficulty, uncer - tainty and what has felt like a cosmic shift in the demands of ministry. I am sure feelings of exhaustion res - onate with other officers, soldiers and employees. Yet, I know with certainty I am called to this ministry, and God has used my feeble hands to share the love of Jesus. I’ve learned joy does not come from a momentary mountaintop ex - perience. It comes from the aware - ness of the deep abiding presence of God in all circumstances of life and ministry. Finding joy in the journey comes by continuously trusting Jesus to make Himself known de - spite the circumstances. We tend to share good things that are happening, but miss how the hard places bring an unshakeable sense of joy gained by running the race with endurance. Just the other day, I reminded a friend that ministry is not a sprint. It is a marathon. We must run at a slow and steady pace.

Where have I found joy in this crazy, busy, beautiful journey? I am grateful for moments at the altar with children and adults seeking the Lord. I am grateful for quiet mo - ments of prayer in the chapel each Sunday morning, asking the Holy Spirit to make our sanctuary a sacred space for all who enter. I am grateful for the many Pathway of Hope fami - lies I’ve helped find hope, healing, a new start and a community with the corps’ body of believers. I am grate - ful to walk alongside staff during life’s struggles, including the deaths of family members. I am grateful for God’s provision when we weren’t sure there was enough cash flow to keep the corps’ doors open. Reflecting on these moments, I am re - m ined of how God has shaped and formed me through the years. Early in my officership I learned, “You cannot lead others where you have not been or are not willing to go yourself.” It’s grown within me a desire for deep spiritual formation so I can share God’s transformative power with others. For me, joy is allowing God to use the hard places to achieve His work in me and leading others to do the same. My prayer for the next part of my ministry journey is found in Acts 20:24 (NIRV): “But my life means nothing to me. My only goal is to finish the race. I want to complete the work the Lord Jesus has given me. He wants me to tell others about the good news of God’s grace.” I pray God will give you eyes to see how He can help you find joy in the hard places, knowing He is with you.

We’re reimagining our ministry and our min - istry spaces,” said Envoy Brenda Mc - Swine, corps administrator of the Grandview Southland, Mo. Corps. “We want to create a welcoming, family-oriented community.” Connected to the Booth Manor senior residence, the Southland Corps is in a prime location for ministry to the older adults who reside there as well as to their families and visitors. Residents are able to attend services and programs without having to leave the building, making op - portunities for ministry and connection easily accessible to them. Community members also are invited through social services outreach. “We’ve focused on the people we’re closest to in Booth Manor, but our case manager invites anyone who comes through the door to join us on Sundays,” said Envoy Brenda. “Everyone is welcome.”

As another point of connection, a newly reimagined, easily accessible space is housing a daily coffee shop which brings residents and commu - nity members together for a relaxed time of fellowship over a good cup of joe. Ambient music accompanies announcements which appear on a large tv inviting people to Sunday worship services and other activi - ties and programs, including oppor - tunities to attend youth summer camps and the corps’ newest initia - tive, a monthly Dinner Church held in the redesigned corps dining room. Envoy Brenda concluded, “We’re excited to see all God is doing and all He is going to do at Southland.”

Fifteen seniorsoldiersw ere enrolled at the Grandview Southland Corps earlier this year.

International College for Officers

Major Alisha Cho, Corps Officer Chicago Mayfair Community Church (Corps)
Session 255 Delegate
October 11 - November 20, 2023

Reimagining ministry, creating community

Five senior soldiers were enrolled at the Grandview Southland Corps earlier this year.

Booth Manor resident Mother Darnell Burk with Envoy Brenda McSwine

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Friends, fellowship and physical education

by Captain Cassandra Moffitt

The Saginaw, Mich., Corps is in its fifth year of offering a physical education program that fills a need within the homeschool community.

In 2018, the corps worked with parents to develop Homeschool P.E., a ministry which provides affordable physical education with a curriculum that meets educational and state requirements for homeschooled children. Many of the children, ages six to 14, have been coming since the program started.

Janessa Niswonger, whose 12-, 10- and 9-year-olds attend, said, "One thing I can't stress enough is the importance of finding cost-effective activities, especially when you have multiple kids. This program is very affordable and very reasonable." At Homeschool P.E., Coach Jaden Clobes, community center outreach ministry coordinator, leads youth through exercises and activities, teaching physical education skills that will last a lifetime and fostering confidence, leadership skills and relationships.

Coach Jaden's encouraging and supportive style helps them feel confident and comfortable. For example, when Leila Grimpo couldn't do an exercise, she was embarrassed, but Jaden helped her. "Jaden never made a big deal of it," said Leila’s mom, Becky. "He walked her through it a few times, just encouraged her to do her best, and then she practiced it at home, and now she's got it.”

The kids encourage each other to learn the exercises and push each other to work hard. Jaden inspires them to do everything to the best of their ability. With the largest group being only 27 kids, there's room for personal attention, and the youth set and pursue their own fitness goals.

Coach Jaden also teaches leadership skills. As the older children grow more skilled, he pairs them with younger, less-experienced children so they learn to teach, help and encourage each other. Everybody benefits, and the parents love to see it.

From the kids’ perspective, one of the best things about homeschool P.E. is the friendships they form.

"I came to The Salvation Army here and asked if we could use their building," Carol said. "We didn't have any money. We said we'd muster some up, and that was the beginning."

Carol’s vision was to provide necessities like diapers and bottles alongside educational materials, as well as to host breakout sessions on a variety of topics like breastfeeding and baby safety. With the help of donors, volunteers and community partners, she’s been able to do just that.

"Those little packages are pretty fragile, and it’s a big responsibility to understand what’s happening to them," said Carol. "The best thing you can do is educate yourself."

Envoy Andy Barylski, corps administrator, has been working with Carol for 15 years. His wife attended showers when she was expecting their two children. With Carol’s retirement next year, the corps will take the reigns in throwing the community baby showers.

"Giving ladies hope is what I've seen," Envoy Andy said. "As The Salvation Army, we really want to embrace that."

The showers have gained steady support from the community throughout the years. At one shower the mayor drove up in a pickup truck full of diapers to distribute. This year volunteers from Ford Motor Company’s Women of Ford Finance [one of its diversity, equity and inclusion groups] helped to ensure the shower ran smoothly. A community action agency also provided a grant which paid for some of the items distributed.

Schuwana Troup, who was eight months pregnant when she attended, is grateful for the community showers.

"This is the third community shower I've been to," she said. "Just trying to gather a few things, you know. It was kind of hard during COVID money-wise, so this is a good thing for the community."
Cultivating creativity, talent and faith

by Elizabeth Malovance

In the heart of summer 2023, Wonderland Camp and Conference Center was a vibrant hub of creativity and musical exploration, hosting two distinct music and creative arts camps that ignited the passions and spiritual growth of the Central Territory’s youth and young adults.

The campground echoed with the talent of Resonate, a worship arts conservatory, where 70 students in its wake, Central Music Institute (CMI) drew 170 aspiring musicians into its embrace, focusing on the spiritual journey.

Artistic Immersion, Visionary Creativity
Guided by the theme ‘Visualize,’ Resonate immersed students for five days in audio/visual, dance, drama and praise band, igniting their imaginations and nurturing their talents. Adding international flair, guest instructor Stephanie Lamplough, United Kingdom and Ireland Territory assistant director for music and creative arts, lent her expertise in vocal music and musical theater, leaving an indelible mark on participants.

Ensuring spiritual nourishment, chaplains Captains Brenna and Vinial Lee helped campers visualize their creativity from the perspective of a holy God. Each day began with ‘Morning Manna,’ setting the tone with scripture, prayer and worship. A daily rhythm unfolded with technique sessions to refine craft, followed by individual majors for the week, and elective classes that offered a diverse range of choices. Camaraderie thrived in small groups that fostered connections. One more major class, followed by an evening meeting, punctuated each day.

One evening, acclaimed speaker, Christian recording artist, scholar and author Scott MacIntyre, who rose to fame as the first blind finalist on the TV show ‘American Idol,’ presented an evening of performance, personal story and an audience-engaged Q&A session. As the week drew to a close, the creative efforts led to a breathtaking meeting on Saturday morning. Dedication, practice and shared vision culminated as students took the stage, showcasing the fruits of their labor.

Nurturing Melodies, Cultivating Roots
The next week a symphony of musical exploration unfolded at CMI which offered a profound journey into the world of brass band, vocal music and gospel choir. Guided by the spiritual theme, ‘Roots,’ the camp drew on the wisdom of Majors Dan and Stephanie Sawka, who cultivated a deep understanding of God’s Word.

As with Resonate, each day kicked off with ‘Morning Manna.’ From refining techniques to harmonizing in chorus, the pursuit of personal election class and the resonance of major rehearsals, the camp provided a comprehensive concentration in music.

Guest Gavin Lamplough enriched the experience with his expertise. As principal cornet of the International Birmingham Citadel Band, his insights added an additional layer of mastery for participants. Vocal guest Stephanie Lamplough drew on her prowess in vocal music and inspired campers with her exemplary leadership.

CMI embraced recreation, inviting students to take part in a variety of optional activities that fostered a sense of fellowship and balance. Additionally, vocal and band reading sessions were offered to faculty and students alike. Monday night saw a memorable performance as guest recording artist Natalie Layne captivated the camp. Wednesday provided a day of exhilarating fellowship and fun as campers explored Six Flags Great America. Toward the end of the week, student showcase performances celebrated individual and ensemble achievements.

ElecFest also served as a vibrant celebration of creativity. Elective performances took center stage, showcasing the unique flavors and styles each class brought to the table. That same evening during the much-anticipated Awards Festival, each major ensemble was featured, and students were recognized for individual achievements with awards and scholarships. This year’s Ben Meritt top camper award winner was JJ Pook from the North & Central Illinois Division and the Crosby O’Neil top corps award was presented to the Omaha Citadel, Neb., Corps from the Western Division.

As echoes of CMI rezoned throughout the camp, leaving a trail of melodies and memories, the final moments arrived with Sunday morning’s worship led by Territorial Commander Commissioner Evie Diaz. In this sacred space, the notes of the week’s journey melded with worship, reminding participants that, like roots, music and, more importantly, their relationship with the Savior are sources of sustenance, growth and connection.

Fall list of award winners online
Expressions of faith

For Brie Simmons performing is more than rehearsed lines, spotlights and applause. It’s relationship-building, God-honoring ministry.

As a member of several territorial music and creative arts ministry groups, including the Territorial Youth Chorus (TYC), Central Territorial Staff Songsters (CTSS) and the Bill Boothe Theater Company (BBTC), she is utilizing her gifts as a testament of faith.

This summer Brie served as the sole member on the CAST Summer Mission Team, which since 2015 has sent a team of creative arts (CTSS) and the Territorial Youth Chorus (TYC), Central Territorial Staff Songsters (CTSS) and the Bill Boothe Theater Company (BBTC), she is utilizing her gifts as a testament of faith.

“Growing up a child of officers, it was thanks to their encouragement that she pursued theater in school, developing her skills and gaining confidence which would later help enable her ministry.”

"At first I was scared to be the only one," Brie said. "But I had a lot of support, and it turned out to be a ‘God thing,’ a chance for me to grow."

Participating at her corps, attending divisional camps and later taking the drama track at Central Music Institute (CMI) helped Brie to connect her God-given gifts with sharing her faith. From there it was an easy decision to audition for the BBTC and territorial vocal groups, and a natural fit for her to spend a summer further developing her skills through CAST.

“It’s just another way to express and illustrate what God can do in your life,” she said.

Brie with friends and former CAST members Amanda Mercado and Erin McDonald

Brie with friends and former CAST members Amanda Mercado and Erin McDonald

A skit during commissioning weekend

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

Correction/Clarification

The Long Service list printed in the September issue inadvertently omitted Major Nicholas Montgomery who was recognized for 25 years of service. We apologize for this error and congratulate Major Montgomery on this milestone.
Sitting in God’s house

People often attend religious services inside buildings with wooden benches, potted plants and colorful stained-glass windows. But some attend services outdoors, surrounded by a rainbow of blossomed trees, as ducks waddle by and a nearby waterfall churns.

This summer marked the 25th anniversary of the Tuesday in the Garden Salvation Army Summer Garden Ministry in the pavilion at Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford, Ill. The venue has partnered with the Rockford Temple Corps to present the outdoor ministry at 7:30 a.m. Tuesdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

The congregation has grown to about 50 people attending in-person, and an estimated 300 watching online around the globe via a livestream on Facebook, said Jodi Beach, who assists her mother, longtime Salvation Army volunteer Sonja Beach, with the services.

“We are truly sitting in God’s house,” Jodi said. “We have every kind of beautiful Japanese tree. Everything is pink when we begin in May, with the azaleas. We are close to the Rock River and will often see a heron fly through.”

Sonja organized the event in 1998 at the request of Anderson Gardens owner John Anderson.

Sonja Beach with daughter Jodi.

“The focus is on inspiration and encouragement,” Jodi said. “Our goal was to unify the body of Christ. It has been beautiful to see the ministry expand.”

Services feature hymns, guest singers and other musicians and an inspirational message. Refreshments are served following the program.

Sonja still oversees many of the details, making sure everything runs smoothly.

“Mom sets a pretty table with flowers and hands out the programs,” Jodi said.

The Summer Garden Ministry is free and open to the public. Those attending are invited to stay and explore the gardens.

Major Angela Wanding, who leads the Rockford Temple Corps, has spoken at the Summer Garden Ministry several times and says the atmosphere is very peaceful.

“You walk [to the pavilion] on a wooded path,” Major Angela said. “You look out over a pond where there are turtles and fish. The trees and flowers are everywhere. It’s so inviting. You are right in the middle of God’s creation and the beauty of it.”

Embrace life, be blessed

by Captain Tracy Gantner

As part of women’s ministries at the South Bend, Ind., and the Rockford Corps Community Center, I have introduced a quarterly “Embrace Life, Be Blessed” event.

My inspiration was John 10:10 (NIV): “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” I have always believed God has called each one of us to embrace life, not merely to survive.

My vision is to connect women through shared experiences and celebrations. I want to provide opportunities for community, self-discovery, and development of gifts and talents. My goal is to empower them and improve their quality of life.

This year the invitation list includes all of the nearby corps officers and their women. We hope they’ll join us simply to connect with each other and enjoy themselves. We are one Army and are better together.

The first event in February was called “Cupcakes and Canvas.” We offered a salad buffet and painted with step-by-step instructions from Lauren Freeze, one of our Kroc Center’s art instructors. We concluded with a step-by-step painting of cupcakes, a perfect ending to a joyful evening.

That evening 98 women gathered, connected and had a bit of self-discovery as they painted spring flowers on canvas.

Captain Kendra Hixenbaugh, along with six women from her corps in Goshen, Ind., embraced the fun. Major Charlotte Hall, Indiana general secretary, painted with her daughter, Lindsay, Major Jodi Montgomery, Niles, Mich., corps officer, attended and closed the evening with a thoughtful and encouraging prayer.

“It was such a blessing to be part of cupcakes and canvas at the Kroc,” said Major Jodi. “What a beautiful diverse group of women coming together from all walks of life in Jesus’ name.”

While I didn’t know what to expect, I felt called to expand my reach with this program. After all, Kroc Centers have plenty of room. It’s clear that God’s hand was in it all from the beginning. He continues to overwhelm me with His grace.

Promoted to Glory

Major Florence (Mitzie) Moffitt

Major Florence [Mitzie] Moffitt, nee Kubik, was promoted to Glory on July 20, 2023. Mitzie was born on January 5, 1933, in Chicago Heights, Ill. She graduated from Bloom Township High School in 1951 and immediately gained full-time employment in the accounting department at Montgomery Ward.

Following God’s call on her life, Mitzie entered officer training in 1953 and was commissioned in 1954. After serving two years as a single officer, she married Charles Moffitt on May 5, 1956.

Along with Charles, Mitzie served for another 42 years before retiring in 1998. She loved and cared for the people God entrusted to her in eight corps appointments, one divisional youth appointment and two territorial headquarters appointments, firmly believing God would use her anytime and anywhere to love others into His Kingdom.

She is survived by her children, James (Leslie) and Major Lisa (Butch) Frost; six grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband and two children, Gail and Timothy.

Sonja Beach with daughter Jodi.

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