

salvos

magazine

An unexpected world beyond the front door

Building connections
in your community



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"UNEXPECTED KINDNESS IS THE MOST POWERFUL,
LEAST COSTLY AND MOST UNDERRATED AGENT
OF HUMAN CHANGE."

— BOB KERREY





The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

Vision Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice



The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders, past, present, and future. We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children.

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Taking the first steps

Loneliness is a worldwide trend, and Australians are not exempt from its debilitating impacts. Research findings show that one in three of us feel lonely, with one in six experiencing severe loneliness.

In this edition, Faye Michelson explores loneliness and what we can do to help build connections in our local communities. This can be daunting though, especially if you're feeling isolated and vulnerable. Often, just opening your door and going for a simple walk around your community can be a realistic start. Start small with casual interactions and go from there.

Our news pages look at a couple of regional community initiatives that have helped locals build friendships and enjoy activities – perhaps something similar is available in your area?

A local church may also be an option. In Faith Talk, Salvos officer (pastor) Belinda Davis shares how she wants her church to be a place where everyone is welcomed and accepted, where relationships are key.

To find what community activities and services are available through your local Salvos, go to salvos.org.au. Take a deep breath and step out.

Simone Worthing **Editor**

An unexpected world beyond the front door

Taking the first steps to building connections in your community

By Faye Michelson

Sometimes our world shrinks. Almost without noticing it, we go to fewer places, see fewer people, feel less a part of the community going on around us. Perhaps it's because of a change in our living arrangements or relationships, health or financial security. As our circumstances change, so too can our sense of place in our community, and one of the results of this can be feelings of loneliness.

If this resonates with you, you're not alone.

The Ending Loneliness Together (endingloneliness.com.au) research, conducted in 2023, surveyed 4026 Australians aged 18-92 on the subject. Its findings show that almost one in three people feel lonely, with one in six experiencing severe loneliness. Around 30 per cent of people living with others – housemates, extended family, immediate family or partner – said they were lonely, compared with 40 per cent of those living alone. The survey reported that men and women were equally lonely, and that young and middle-aged people had the highest levels of loneliness.

Loneliness is such a widespread concern that last year the World Health Organisation launched a commission on social connection to see the issue recognised and resourced as a global public health priority. But, despite this, the Ending Loneliness Together research

found that half of respondents were too embarrassed to admit they were lonely, with one in three saying they were ashamed of feeling that way and concealed how they felt.

THE FIRST STEP

So, what steps can we take when we seem to have lost our footing in life? The research report suggests joining an interest group, nurturing current relationships or volunteering. It also reminds us to set realistic expectations, and that's worth noting. It takes courage to take the first steps to reconnect when you're feeling lonely and vulnerable. Sometimes it's simply too overwhelming to join a new group or take a seat at a community meal, however much you think it's a good idea. Perhaps the most realistic expectation could be to just open your front door and step out of your comfort zone into the world beyond your driveway.

Walking can start you on a low-stress journey to find connection to your community in unexpected places. Go for a regular stroll around your local area and greet or smile at whoever you meet. If you go at the same time every day, you'll often see the same people. Walk past a school in the morning or afternoon and have a chat to the crossing supervisor while you wait for the traffic to stop. Got a dog? Take your

four-legged friend to a park and you'll often have someone strike up a doggy conversation with you. If you like coffee, factor a take-away coffee from a local café into your day and get to know your local barista. It's a good feeling when they remember your name and order and exchange pleasantries. Casual interactions like these can build over time, becoming connections that brighten your day.

“

Perhaps the most realistic expectation could be to just open your front door and step out of your comfort zone ...

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There may come a time when you're ready to try volunteering, join a hobby group or go along to a coffee morning or community meal. Many organisations, such as The Salvation Army, offer open invitations to anyone to enjoy the friendly companionship that comes with joining in their activities or going along to a dinner or lunch. But they offer much more than something to do for a few hours. They offer a place to belong.

Perhaps your next step to finding a community is to connect with your local Salvos.



Scan here to find out more about Salvation Army services.



Community is somewhere to belong; where strong, supportive relationships are cultivated. With community comes the gift of doing life with others and not alone. Ecclesiastes chapter 4, verse 12 (The Message Bible paraphrase) expresses the strength of standing together in community: "By yourself you're unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third?"

A three-stranded rope isn't easily snapped."

- Sherrie

Support. Belonging. Connection.

What does community mean to you?

For me, community is a space where resources are shared generously, ensuring that everyone has what they need to thrive. It is built on genuine friendships, where trust and understanding create a strong foundation of belonging. Most importantly, community is a place of vulnerability, where we can show up as our true selves, embrace and support one another with compassion through life's challenges.

- Savaen

TO ME, COMMUNITY MEANS CONNECTION - CONNECTION WITH OTHERS WHERE YOU FIND A SENSE OF SOLACE AND BELONGING, KNOWING YOU ALL MATTER TO EACH OTHER. REMEMBER, DISTANCE DOESN'T DICTATE COMMUNITY - SOME FIND CONNECTION WITH OTHERS LOCALLY WHILE SOME FIND CONNECTION WITH OTHERS ACROSS THE WORLD.

- MATT



It is a place where I feel that I belong, am connected, am seen, am heard and valued. A place where I can receive as well as give. A place to grow, mature and see myself as God sees me.

- Robbin



To me, community is all about the people who support you. The ones that you turn to once it's obvious that the hole you've landed in may need a few ladders to escape from. There's always a community of your people, friends and family, that will lend that helping hand.

- Calani



Community is the term I use to describe the people that I do life with. The people I get to love and serve. The people who love and serve me. We do things together consistently and go to the same places together regularly. These are the people who miss me when I go away and call me when I am sick or have had a tough time. These are the people who I can be honest with. They put up with my complaining and encourage me to live my best life.

I find my identity and unique God-given gifts and personality have purpose in community. It's the place where I belong and have fun.

– Bryce



Community is about discovering a place where you feel welcome and belong. People with disabilities can sometimes experience barriers to accessing community. It is vital in building healthy communities to ensure everybody is included, enabled to fully participate and develop meaningful relationships.

– Joseph



My community is made up of family and friends who care about me and we support each other. Community is there for you if things go wrong, and they are there to help. I feel accepted by my church community and it's my favourite place to be.

– Noah



We often use the word 'community' to describe a group of people who exist within the same geographic or demographic placement. We might automatically assign people who share similar characteristics to belonging in a community. While I don't think this is wrong, I do think that community means much more than what pragmatic labels have to offer –community is a feeling, it is belonging, and it is in many senses for me, a home.

– Hannah



I am a proud Dunghutti woman on my mother's side ... Community to me is a sense of belonging to my country, my family ties and extended kinship. Community is a strong part of my identity and how I make my decisions. With the support of my community, I feel a sense of empowerment and feel strong connections within my spiritual, emotional, cultural and physical wellbeing.

– Caitlin

Helensburgh Walk n Talk group

The popular Walk n Talk group in Helensburgh (NSW) meets for a 45-minute walk around local bush trails.

"We ask that people spend the first five minutes of the walk quiet with their own thoughts," said Lauren Martin, 2508 Salvos Mission Leader. "The suggestion is that they use the time to shake off any worries of the world they are carrying into this space and ask God – or their higher power – to show them what they need to talk about that day."

The Walk n Talk group was started a few years ago by 2508 Salvos volunteer and fitness instructor Alison Hawley, who operates Fluro Fun N Fitness.

Alison is passionate about seeing people thrive and introducing exercise into their lives for its benefits for body, mind and

soul. "I love to connect with people and bring joy into people's lives," said Alison. "Walk n Talk is a big part of that."



Alison Hawley, left, discovering beautiful bush trails with two group participants.

Youth Drop-In zone at Colac

The Drop-In youth zone in regional Victoria has given young people the space to have fun, form friendships, and have a say about their future.



Youth enjoy the space to have fun, form friendships and have a say about their future.

The space was made possible by a generous donation to the Salvos from a local resident, and developed in conjunction with local police, schools, SkillsConnection and Scott Keane, Victorian Secretary for Youth and Young Adults for the Salvos.

"It's been an absolute lifesaver for the young people," said Josiah Van Niekerk, leader at Colac Salvos.

"We aim to provide a space where teenagers can connect with others in a supervised and safe place and be able to switch off from their problems, and they also get a chance to experiment with games and arts and crafts that they wouldn't normally have access to."



An occasional column on all things books and reading



Word on the street

By Andrea Redford

What's on your social media bio or 'life resume'? You know, the things we do for fun (or because we simply have to!) that aren't our actual profession. I'm thinking of titles like green thumb, barbecue master, chauffeur of offspring, social secretary, Mr/Ms Fix-It.

I added a new one to my list a couple of years ago: street librarian. I became the proud owner of my own 'little free library' after successfully applying for a community grant from my local council.

Street Library supplied the library and a numbered plaque. I gave it a lick of paint, my husband attached a mounting post and concreted it into the front garden and, voilà, my street library was up and running.

If you're unfamiliar with the street library concept, here's a brief rundown. You, or passersby, put books that are no longer wanted into the street library.

Anyone is then welcome to take a book and is encouraged to leave a book too (although it's not mandatory).

I love to see how long a book I really enjoyed sits in the library before someone else chooses it. The same is true for books that were ... how shall I put it? ... not for me. And, I can't deny it, one of the greatest thrills is when a book I've been wanting to read shows up. You beauty!

In my experience, readers tend to be sharers – whether that's of actual books, recommendations or opinions! It's true that street libraries tend to operate somewhat anonymously, but they provide such a wonderful and novel (pardon the pun!) way of sharing the love of books and reading with your local community. I plan on pursuing my street librarian 'career' for many years to come. Happy reading!

To find a street library near you visit:
streetlibrary.org.au/find



PHOTO BY CHERRY T ON UNSPLASH



PHOTO BY KEGHAN CROSSLAND ON UNSPLASH



PHOTO BY CLIFFORD ON UNSPLASH

The coffee community

Church and the café vibe

By Belinda Davis

As a part of our 'holiday at home' one year, my husband and I set the challenge to have coffee together from a different location every day. Our town had a multitude of caffeine options to choose from, and it was an interesting experiment to see the variety of offerings presented from the same coffee order of a small latte and a large flat white.

I decided to take a photo of the first location and post it to Facebook, and then a contrasting photo the next day. I initially focused on the quality of the coffee and how close it was to the request, but it didn't take long for another element to become quite influential on the overall experience.

CONNECTION AND CARE

The cafés had a very definite ambience that impacted each visit – some were vibrant, busy and noisy; others were clinical in their feel. Some of the cafés gave the vibe that there were no strangers among the customers and staff; others felt as if there would be limited recognition even if you were a daily customer.

Towards the end of our holiday, we took some time to reflect on this social observation activity and compared our 'highs' and 'lows'. The locations we would be happy to revisit were ones that had a strong sense of community and connection – those places where relationships and care were part of the culture, rather



than serving the best tasting coffee. This came as a bit of a surprise to us, and yet really, it shouldn't.

“

I want my church to be like one of our favourite cafe 'finds' where every person is welcomed and accepted like an old friend.

”

At the very start of 'church' existence, there is a beautiful description of what meeting together should look like. In Acts chapter 2 it says: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of

bread and to prayer" (verse 42). Four strong elements working together to ensure spiritual growth and development. While they are all essential, what will keep people invested in returning is strong relationships, which was just as evident in the cafés we visited.

I want my church to be like one of our favourite café 'finds' where every person through the door is welcomed and accepted like an old friend. I want my church to strive for excellence, but not at the cost of warmth and relationships.

Heading back to work, I want to evaluate how well we might measure up to this benchmark. Can I have a flat white with that?

Major Belinda Davis is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) and prisons chaplain. She blogs at a-blessed-life.com

Morley Salvos: A place of community

Reactivating unused spaces

The community of Morley, in the north-eastern suburbs of Perth, is very multicultural and the local Salvos are excited about what's happening there. Morley Salvos pastor Major Pete Brookshaw told *Salvos Magazine* about the way the church has changed over the past few years to make it more relevant and helpful to the community.

"We started to embark on a big building project," says Pete. "We took a gymnasium that was underutilised and, during COVID, our little op shop moved into the gym.

"Part of that building project was to create a café. Fifty-odd years ago, this used to be a honey factory. It became a Salvation Army church – a place of community – and we opened the Milk and Honey Café, the M&H Café. The café has been an incredible part of our building project that's created a space of welcome across our community."

Mandy, who is part of the team at the café, sees the name as significant. She notes that in the Bible, God promised Abraham a land of milk and honey. "Milk and Honey is the promised land," she says. "It's a beautiful blessing place.

A PLACE TO BELONG

"I remember this time when a guy who often came here, his wife passed away. He came to have a coffee and just support the community. Then, when he heard the music we were playing, he was crying ... he said that he can feel the warmth from the staff, so he feels that he's loved in this place. This is amazing."

One of the things that Pete loves is

that the previously unused space has been activated. "Sometimes we have buildings that lay dormant and we think, wait a minute – how could we use this to build community? How could we use this to be a place where there's transformation happening in people lives, and [where they] feel a place of belonging?

“

**I love what God's doing
through this community.**

”

"Today we've got playgroup. We've got an art and craft group. We've got youth workers out in local high schools. We've got 'Home League' – our seniors program. There's so much happening that just seeks to create a place of community."

"It's a beautiful opportunity just for people to come together," says Margaret, who coordinates the seniors program, "and to have those conversations that you normally wouldn't have with neighbours or friends. Things like, 'How am I doing spiritually?'



Mandy, left, and Pete chat over a coffee at the Milk and Honey Café.

"A couple of ladies have lost their spouses this year, and the way that the other ladies respond to them with love and care is just beautiful.

"So there is that support and encouragement, but in a spiritual sort of way. When you're doing that, and you're enjoying that relationship, the knitting and the sewing don't need to be done."

OPEN TO ALL

Pete is keen for the centre to be a place where the 'whosoever' can come.

"That wherever there's hardship, wherever there's injustice, wherever there's someone who's lonely, wherever there's someone that needs support or care, that The Salvation Army would be there for them."

"I love what God's doing through this community, bringing an outward focus amongst our congregation, our corps (church) community, our volunteers,

where we're saying we want to reach people. We want to understand our faith, and we want to be passionate and bold enough to share our faith.

"But we also want people to encounter the person of Jesus Christ, because we believe that, in him, people will find fullness of life and complete transformation, abundant life.

"I love the idea that we're one Salvation Army. We might have different streams, but in terms of the community, it's The Salvation Army, not just for us at Morley, but nationally. We're part of one team, and we work together to see God use us to do great things in people's lives."



To view the Morley Salvos video, scan here:

Tim Tam rocky road

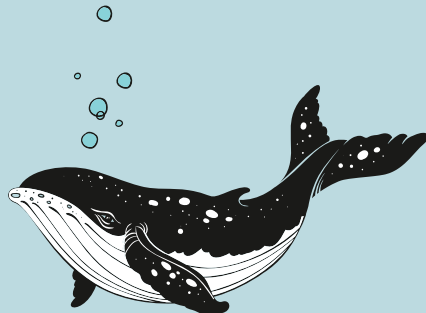


Ingredients

300ml thickened cream, 500g cooking chocolate, 200g marshmallows, 200g Tim Tams, 300g jellies, 100g desiccated coconut

Method

- Line a cake tin with baking paper.
- Roughly chop Tim Tams, jellies and marshmallows.
- In a saucepan, heat cream to boiling point, add chocolate and remove from heat as soon as chocolate is melted. Allow to cool.
- Add chopped ingredients and stir well.
- Spoon into cake tin and refrigerate until set.
- Cut into pieces.
- Enjoy!



Quick quiz

1. What sort of animal is a whale?
2. Which whale species is the biggest?
3. What do you call the small crustaceans whales feed on?
4. How far do humpback whales travel every year when they migrate?
5. What is a baby whale called?

Bible byte

"Do your best to live at peace with everyone."

Romans chapter 12, verse 18
Contemporary English Version

Tum-Tum

On which page of this week's *Salvos Magazine* is Tum-Tum hiding?



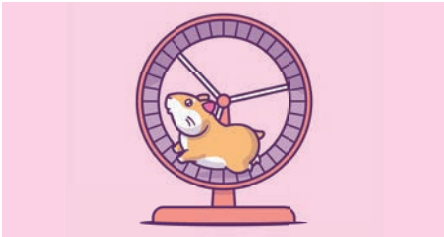
V J I Y D D U C K H D A C H S H U N D L
P X Y T E E Q B K C U K R B Z X T B L H
K R S O M H A I R L E S S M A D X U J K
N I P E L L E T S G I G N C S S M D E O
E W T K P D F W J B C R V H D N K G Q V
R B X T A A S N F M H O E I T U D E P S
T C R A E Q B R R T I O F C W T O R T C
O K K M K N C V M M C M O K R R G I G A
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L G B N P C W G K D X H S Z A V X R Q A
D V Y W E I O B E G G S M R E Z Y R C T
S T M J P L F E R R E T P U P P Y R K O
J T A N K N X V A C C I N A T I O N T O
F E E D I N G N P H A M S T E R O Q E J

Wordsearch

Words are hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, forwards and backwards. Enjoy!

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| Basket | Goldfish |
| Bird | Grooming |
| Budgerigar | Hairless |
| Cat | Hamster |
| Chick | Kennel |
| Chicken | Kitten |
| Cockatoo | Labrador |
| Dachshund | Mouse |
| Duck | Nutrition |
| Dog | Pellets |
| Eggs | Puppy |
| Feeding | Tank |
| Ferret | Vaccination |

HAVE A LAUGH



Why didn't the dog see a psychiatrist?
He isn't allowed on the couch.

Why did the crab refuse to share?
Because he's shellfish.

Why did the hamster quit his exercise routine?
He felt like he was just going in circles and not getting anywhere.

WHAT AM I?

I follow you everywhere.

I copy your every move, but you can't touch me, catch me or lose me.

Quiz answers: 1. Mammal. 2. The Blue Whale. 3. Krill
4. 16,000 kms. 5. A calf
I am: Your shadow
Tum-Tum: is peeking out from behind a rock on page 9.

**"HOW DO WE CHANGE
THE WORLD?
ONE RANDOM ACT
OF KINDNESS AT
A TIME."**

– MORGAN FREEMAN



**RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS DAY,
17 FEBRUARY**