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Emerging CALD leaders commissioned

By Lauren Martin

A nine-month Salvation Army online training program for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) emerging leaders has culminated in a Celebration and Commissioning weekend at Eva Burrows College in Melbourne.



Saupriya Solanki was one of 20 Salvationists across Australia who participated in a nine-month culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) leadership training program.

Twenty participants representing various nations of origin, including Ghana, Nigeria, India, New Zealand, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Iran, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, came from 12 different corps across five states.

Each had been earmarked by their corps leader as an emerging leader and invited to participate in the course, which took in the foundational values and mission of The Salvation Army. Topics included intercultural communication and engagement, servant-hearted leadership, discipleship and the godly character of a leader.

Saupriya Solanki arrived in Australia from India in 2006. He is a fifth-generation member of the

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Salvation Army family with a distinguished heritage.

Saupriya is actively involved with the Orana Corps in Dubbo (NSW). He volunteers in numerous corps activities and says Salvation Army evangelism and community engagement here are quite different from what he experienced in his home country.

He said he was thrilled when his corps officer nominated him to participate in the training, strengthening his passion for mission and ministry in Australia.

One of the highlights for Saupriya was the Celebration and Commissioning weekend in Melbourne. On the Sunday, each CALD Emerging Leader trainee went to a different corps to serve.

"We prayed, gave messages to the congregation, shared testimonies, reaffirmed our faith and deepened our commitment to serve," he said.

"We witnessed a glimpse of the heavenly vision described in Revelation 7:9: 'A multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language stood before the throne and the lamb, united in worship and service.' It was a powerful reminder of the diversity and unity within the body of Christ."

The weekend was also a time of learning and sharing. Officer Recruitment Secretary Major Gavin Watts spoke on 'The Call, The Conversation and The Answer'. Head of Mission Support Major Matt Reeve and Chief Secretary Lieutenant-Colonel Winsome Merrett gave leadership advice.

Salvation Army Territorial Commander Commissioner Miriam Gluyas commissioned each of those who completed the training as lay leaders in their ministry contexts.



New Beginnings Project

Salvos refugee sponsorship

By Kirralee Nicolle

Supporting those entering Australia as refugees is missional love in action, a Salvation Army mission support leader says.

The comments come as The Salvation Army launches its New Beginnings Project, a partnership with a government pilot program that seeks to offer deeper community connections to refugees from their date of arrival in Australia.

The Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) program is an initiative of both the Australian Government and Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA).

The New Beginnings Project encourages corps members to participate in the program under both the CRSA and Salvation Army banners.

The program, which began in Canada, is now gaining traction across the world as an alternative to case-worker-driven settlement programs. Through CRISP, refugee households are instead assigned a Community Supporter Group (CSG) made up of five or more sponsors. This CSG then provides 12 months of practical, hands-on assistance in accessing temporary housing, support services, transport and social connections. CRSA workers offer support, training and approval to CSGs to best assist refugee household members.

The Salvation Army's Refugees and People Seeking Asylum Lead, Cynthia Gunawan, said the benefit of getting involved in the CRISP program through the Salvos was that in addition to the current supports, participants would also have access to the wrap-around support The Salvation Army offers, which

include a range of social services such as material aid, life skills, employment range and also community connection and spiritual support.

Cynthia said how Leviticus 19:34 in the Bible spoke about loving the foreigner, as the ancient Israelites were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.

"We have this privilege to welcome and love people who have experienced lots of difficult things in their life," she said. "This is love in action, and this is actually what God wants us to do as Christians [and] as [followers] of Jesus."

She said for corps and Salvos Supporter Groups who got involved, the project would give them the chance to learn about other cultures and experience the satisfaction of watching someone who initially felt out of their depth in terms of language, culture and sense of place flourish into a confident and independent person able to navigate life in Australia.

"It is a new beginning not just for the family, but also for the whole congregation," she said. "It will really bless them in an immeasurable way."

Cynthia said that while some might feel the prospect is daunting or too involved, there is plenty of support available.

"There's lots of support from The Salvation Army and great resources from CRSA and also other community groups who have [sponsored] before," she said. "This is actually very doable because it's a group effort."

To find out more, contact Cynthia at intercultural@salvationarmy.org.au.

Serving overseas officers – Major Fran Everitt

By Simone Worthing

Major Fran Everitt has a global appointment! As the Australia Territory's International Service Support Officer, Fran works with her team to oversee the needs of 32 Australian officers serving overseas, one Aussie officer on International Headquarters living in Australia, and nine officers from overseas currently serving here.

Fran works from Divisional Headquarters in Brisbane, where her husband, Major Mark Everitt, is the Queensland Divisional Commander.

She is physically separated from those she serves, as well as from her own team who are based at Territorial Headquarters Redfern in Sydney – Major Esther Ong, Major Romona Kinder and Gaenor McAlister.

Fran and Esther began their roles in January this year, taking over from Majors Beth Brooks and Julia Price. Beth is now a corps officer in the Blue Mountains and Julia is serving in the Hong Kong Macau Territory as Territorial Protection Coordinator – Children & Vulnerable Adults, and Territorial Spiritual Life Development.

A varied role

"I just love this appointment and serving those overseas," Fran says. "I have a map on my office wall with the names and photos of our overseas officers pinned to the location on the map where they're serving, and I often look up and see them and pray for them and their families," she shares.

Fran's role is varied. She leads the team that looks after the process of sending officers overseas, repatriating them home and holistically taking care of them while they're away. On the 'home front' side, this can include assisting with obtaining passports and visas,



The world map on Fran's office wall.



Majors Fran and Mark Everitt are officers based in Queensland.

organising language classes, booking any children into schools, and organising luggage and storage.

"There are so many nitty gritty details, all of which are so important," Fran explains. "We're also getting feedback from the officers about our processes – what works and what doesn't – taking advantage of their collective wisdom."

When an officer returns – such as Captain Cherry Ip who had served as Assistant Training Principal in the Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand Territory – different processes are activated.

"There are flights home, a very warm welcome, installations into new appointments, transporting any stored goods and making sure accommodation, computers and phones are all taken care of," Fran explains. "Re-entry debriefing is also arranged."

The team also manage details around accommodation, transport and other needs when officers return on furlough or on any extended leave, including compassionate leave.

Pastoral care

Wholistic care and not just focusing on the physical essentials is a critical part of the role for Fran.

"It's definitely one of my top priorities," she says. "I regularly send devotions, Bible verses and prayer resources, and ask for prayer points as well. We, as a team, also check in with the officers as to how they're going – sometimes through (Microsoft) Teams meetings or by other means of communication, which I love. It's deliberately not always about work, just a check-in."

One of Fran's favourite verses is Jeremiah 29:11 – the words of which are on a wooden cross that hangs in her office: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

VIEWPOINT

Simple acts of kindness

By James Burns*

When my friend Pauline asked if I wanted to hear some good news for a change, there was no way I was going to say no. Is it just me, or is positive news in short supply now?

PHOTO BY ADAM NEMEROFF ON UNSPLASH



Pauline and her friend were in a café, and when she sat down, she put her stick beside her, which fell and hit the man at the next table. That wasn't a problem, and they engaged in some banter. When they were ready to leave, they went to the counter to pay, but the waitress said there was no charge. They couldn't understand this, so they asked why.

The waitress said that the man they had spoken to had paid for their meal along with his. As theirs came to £16 (A\$30), it was by no means a small amount. Pauline wanted to thank the man, but he had already left. The waitress explained that the man was a regular customer, and once or twice a week, he chose to settle other diners' bills. But he always leaves before they can thank him, presumably as he doesn't wish a fuss. How kind is that?

"One can only imagine what a lift it gave the recipients of the gift, and we can be sure that they were probably walking on air for the rest of the day ..."

When we met a few days later, she had heard of an elderly lady who was in the supermarket. When it came to paying for her groceries, she couldn't remember her card's PIN. And the more she tried without success, the more flustered she became. Finally, she asked the till operator to put the groceries behind, and she would return once she had gone home to get the PIN. At this, a young woman behind her in the queue offered to pay. At first, the lady declined the offer, but the young

woman insisted and paid the £20 (A\$38). Again, not an insignificant amount.

One can only imagine what a lift it gave the recipients of the gift, and we can be sure that they were probably walking on air for the rest of the day ... if not the week. And you can be certain that they will have told many people about the stranger's kindness, for that's how I heard about it. It is a real way to restore our faith in human nature, in total opposition to the 'me first' culture we often meet.

Whether these donors were carrying out random acts of kindness or subscribing to the Pay it Forward movement (rather than paying someone back for their support), we will never know, but for me, I hope it was done as part of their Christian service.

Outward focused

Jesus said, "Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for them! If you only love the lovable, do you expect a pat on the back? If you only help those who help you, do you expect a medal? If you only give for what you hope to get out of it, do you think that's charity? The stingiest of pawnbrokers does that. "I tell you ... help and give without expecting a return. You'll never – I promise – regret it. Our Father is kind; you be kind." (Luke 6:31-36 *The Message*)

PHOTO BY NATHAN LEMON ON UNSPLASH



We may not be able to afford to pay for someone's meal or groceries, but we can all do simple acts of kindness. What will you do to brighten someone's life?

*James Burns is a freelance writer from the Dunstable Salvos in the United Kingdom.

Heathcote Hope Shop – a second-hand store with a difference

By Lauren Martin

A new Community of Hope that has opened its doors in Sydney aims to be a place of belonging and welcome to all.

The 'Hope Shop' at Heathcote is part of Shire Salvos and combines a second-hand retail store with a community space where people can enjoy hot drinks, warm meals and fellowship.

At its official opening recently, Shire Salvos Mission Leader Mark Soper said the Hope Shop would be so much more than a second-hand store.

"This is not just a store; we want this to be a place where people can belong and be known. Part of the shop is actually a sitting area where people can come, sit, and have conversations."

The centre has a large kitchen to cook and supply meals to people in need. Fresh food and groceries will also be available. It has an office where a Salvation Army homelessness support worker will see people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It's envisaged that other Salvation Army services, such as Moneycare Financial Counselling and Doorways casework, will also be available at the Heathcote Hope Shop.

"We will be making this place a residential address for those who are sleeping rough because if you're sleeping rough, you cannot get a government benefit unless you have a residential address. That's actually a real stumbling block for a lot of people."

The suburb of Heathcote, on Sydney's southern edges, borders the Royal National Park, where many people experiencing homelessness live.

"We will convert one of the toilets out the back into a shower for people who might need a shower, and we will also have a laundry facility," said Mark. Upstairs from the Hope Shop is a three-bedroom unit, which will be used as transitional housing.

Barbara's heart for homeless

The inception of the Hope Shop has been God-ordained, with the idea coming from a local woman, Barbara Koppe, who began to connect with the work of Shire Salvos in nearby Helensburgh.



Community outreach worker Chez Wilson and Heathcote Mission Leader James Redwood at the opening of the new 'Hope Shop' in Sydney's south.

She shared her heart for the people experiencing homelessness who lived in the national park, and she wondered if there was anything that The Salvation Army could do. That then led to a meeting between the Barbara, Shire Salvos representatives and the owner of a local second-hand store, who was looking to retire and thrilled when she heard what The Salvation Army wanted to do in the space.

"There is a real culture in Heathcote of people giving back," said Mark, referring to the beautiful work that was already being done in the community to assist locals in need through the second-hand shop and also a free-food ministry run by a local couple that The Salvation Army will now partner with and continue.

The centre will be run by Salvation Army community worker James Redwood and part-time outreach worker Chez Wilson (nicknamed The Salvation Army's 'pocket rocket' for her huge faith and heart for others, despite her small stature!). Local volunteers will also staff the centre. "We're dependent on the community ... and we are passionate about working together," said Mark. "Because I believe that when we work together, great outcomes happen."

The Salvation Army honours and remembers Barbara Koppe, whose vision for The Salvation Army to assist people in need in her local area has now been realised. Unfortunately, Barbara passed away before the opening of the Hope Shop. She will be lovingly remembered by all who knew her.

VOLUNTEER STORY

Goodna volunteer making a difference for God

Being part of a beacon of hope at The Salvation is all-important for volunteer Maree, who has been part of the Goodna Salvos team in Queensland for the past nine years. Her role in the catering team at Goodna Community and Youth Centre brings her much joy. She shares her story of hope and faithful beginnings.

My name is Maree, and I've been a proud member of the Goodna community for nearly two decades.

As a mother of three remarkable sons and two beautiful grandchildren, family has always been at the core of my life. But beyond family ties, my unwavering faith in our Creator, Yahushua – and his Son, our Mashiach – has guided my path.

In 2014, I experienced a spiritual awakening, a calling back to the narrow path. I was baptised and 'born again,' and with renewed purpose, I embarked on a journey toward the Salvos.

The Salvos at Goodna, once a humble café, has transformed into a beacon of hope for our community. A glimpse of my journey within its walls included salad-making adventures in the early days. Around 2015, I first stepped into the Salvos. The café was a cosy spot where people could pay and enjoy coffee and meals.

Thursday nights were special, with a chapel service followed by a barbecue. During one of these gatherings, I met my dear friend Sharon.

I was inspired to contribute, so I started making salads to accompany Gene's mouth-watering rissoles and sausages. My informal volunteering extended to helping with post-barbecue clean-up.

Then came the unexpected – COVID-19. The café transitioned into a community kitchen, serving reheated meals prepared in-house. The Salvos continued to offer showers for those living on the streets, a place to do laundry and charging stations for phones. These seemingly small services make a world of difference to our community members.



Maree cooks up another delicious meal as part of the Goodna Salvos catering team.

Volunteering opportunities still abound, and friendships blossom within these walls. Our talented local musicians and singers add soulful melodies to the atmosphere.

Goodna Salvos café has undergone a metamorphosis. No longer confined to reheated meals, it now serves freshly cooked dishes and exceptional coffee. The atmosphere has shifted, one of being more relaxed, community-friendly and inviting. Volunteers, members and staff alike find solace within these walls.

Change is our ally. It propels us forward, fostering growth and adaptability. As a volunteer, I've embraced these transformations wholeheartedly. The Salvos' mission resonates deeply with me. It's not just about food; it's about making a tangible difference in countless lives. Here, we form an extended family bound by a shared purpose.

Our collective efforts, inspired by faith, contribute to a better community. We weave compassion, resilience and love into the fabric of Goodna. Goodna Salvos isn't merely a place; it's a testament to what humanity can achieve when we come together in God's strength.

I express my gratitude for the privilege of being part of this transformative journey. As I continue my journey with the Salvos, I carry gratitude in my heart. Each meal served, each conversation shared, and each smile exchanged contributes to a tapestry of compassion. Together, we weave hope, resilience and love into the fabric of our community.