Reflecting on 35 Years at

THE SALVATION ARMY

by Linda M. Wright, ACSW
Executive Director for Professional & Community Services

I feel very blessed to have been part of The Salvation Army of the Syracuse Area for over 35 years. My journey began in 1976 when I was hired to be the social worker for a new group home for teenage girls in foster care. At that point in time, Syracuse Area Services had one worker in the emergency assistance office, one preschool day care center, a homeless shelter for women and children with 6 beds (open only in the evenings), a senior center and the new group home. There was no way I could have imagined how this community would come together over the next 35 years to care for its most vulnerable members.

I feel incredibly privileged to be part of an organization that now offers over 40 programs and services and serves about 40,000 individuals each year in Onondaga County. In my heart, I am constantly grateful to all those who support us with their time and resources so that we may do the most possible good in our community. I believe that The Salvation Army is currently as important to this community as it has been at any point in our agency's history. Below are some examples of how we are making a difference.

Youth Programs

The Salvation Army of Syracuse Area was the first agency in New York to offer a continuum of services for runaway and homeless teens. Today, these services include two shelters, four transitional housing sites, a drop-in center for at-risk youth, case management services and street outreach to curtail gang involvement and activity. It is through these programs that we can see some or our most tangible and gratifying results: the abused child who ends up graduating from high school and going on to college; the young gang member who changes course and ends up being a role model and mentor to other youth; and countless other success stories.

In addition, The Salvation Army has formed a collaborative partnership with the Onondaga County Probation Department to provide support to high risk juveniles in the court system, offering research-based family therapy treatment services for the youth and their parents. Our juvenile justice programs keep young people out of jail by helping them form meaningful relationships and make better choices in their lives.

Children in Foster Care

Family Place, which celebrated its 5th anniversary this year, has revolutionized the way that this community deals with children in the foster care system. Separating children from their parents is always a traumatic event, even when it is necessary due to abuse or neglect. Through Family Place, we have been able to create a safe place for children to visit with their birth families while providing the resources, counseling and support needed for struggling parents to form healthy relationships with their children. The end result is a decrease in the need for long stays in foster care and an increase in the number of children who are reunited with their birth families.

Housing and Shelters

Over the last 35 years, The Salvation Army has found innovative and creative ways of supporting our homeless population. Our Emergency Family Shelter is the only homeless shelter in Onondaga County that houses fathers with their families. In addition, we created specialized housing for mentally ill women and families who are1 chronically homeless and who have not been well served through the traditional mental health system.

With the recent economic downturn, our homeless shelters have been at or over capacity for several years. We are also seeing some incredible situations in our shelters. This June, for example, our Emergency Family Shelter has had an influx of families with very young infants. For several weeks, we were helping provide care for four infants that were less than a month old, which required some extraordinary service from our extremely dedicated staff.

Emergency and Basic Needs

The Salvation Army has seen dramatic increases in the number of meals provided by our food pantry over the last few years. In the first six months of 2011, we have served 14,000 more meals than we did during the same period last year.

In addition, Christmas Bureau Distribution, a program that has a 35+ year history of providing hope to families during the holidays, has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of families served. Over the past three years, we have provided turkeys, food, gifts, toys, books and stocking stuffers to more than 9,000 families, an incredible undertaking that would not have been possible without our wonderful community partners and thousands of volunteers.

Community Support

One of the most gratifying parts of my 35 years here is the extraordinary level of support that The Salvation Army receives from this community. There is no way that we could serve 40,000 people each year without the local companies, organizations and individuals who generously donate their time and resources.

One of the newest examples of community support is the development of The Salvation Army's Young Leaders Advisory Council, a group of young professionals who have committed their time and energy to help us fulfill our mission of providing services to all who need them. In 2010, our Young Leaders initiated the Turn-Around Jumpers 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament, an event that grew from 67 to 113 teams this year and has raised approximately $50,000 for our programs over the last two years. Our Young Leaders should be very proud that they've helped to create such a successful event in such a short period of time!

The Next 35 Years

While I'm not able to predict what the next 35 years may bring, I do have confidence that Syracuse Area Services will continue to play a vital role in serving our community. Since 1883, The Salvation Army has been on the front lines of caring for and empowering this region's most vulnerable people. I believe that one of the keys to our success and longevity is the ability to evolve in order to respond to the changing needs of our community.

At The Salvation Army, we are constantly envisioning new programs to help more people, and looking for ways to enhance our collaborations with other agencies. Thanks to your support, we are able to say yes to about 40,000 individuals each year when they ask for our assistance to turn their lives around. We thank God each day for the generosity of this community and for the resources that allow us to make a difference in the lives of infants, children, young adults, adults and seniors. Without you, none of what we do would be possible. Thank you for your continued support!
Volunteer Spotlight: Diane Tedesco

In this issue of Others, we pay tribute to the inspired creativity of Diane Tedesco, a Cazenovia resident who came to us with a wonderful initiative to support the runaway and homeless youth of Booth House. Diane is a long-time Sunday School teacher who has always tried to instill a sense of social responsibility in the children with whom she works. When thinking about ways that she could help children who are less fortunate, she came up with an idea she called Bags of Hope and started collecting the materials necessary to make this dream a reality. In the meantime, she discovered Booth House and thought it would be the perfect place to distribute the bags.

Each Bag of Hope contains a stuffed animal, a journal, a pen or pencil, an inspirational book, a t-shirt and a soft blanket. Diane worked with her church and Cazenovia Schools to collect these items, then delivered the first batch of bags to Booth House in June. She intends to keep enough bags on hand so that each child who enters Booth House (~ 20/month) will receive one. Diane says, “I’m under no illusions that these bags will fix all of their troubles, but it might make them feel less alone, less afraid and less hopeless.” The success of Diane’s efforts can easily be seen by the look on the face of each child who receives a Bag of Hope. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Greg Meitus, PR & Marketing Manager for The Salvation Army, at 479-1337 or Gregory.Meitus@use.salvationarmy.org.

113 Teams Participate in 2nd Annual Turn-Around Jumpers

On June 11 & 12, over 450 basketball players gathered at Le Moyne College’s Henninger Athletic Center to compete in The Salvation Army’s Second Annual Turn-Around Jumpers 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament, helping to raise almost $30,000 for our programs and services.

The diversity of players was impressive, with many different CNY towns and neighborhoods represented by male and female players that ranged from 8 to 55 years old. In addition to some wonderfully competitive games in all age brackets, players participated in free throw and 3 point shooting competitions, with a select few flying high for the slam dunk contest. J-D Varsity Boys Coach Bob McKenney ran skills clinics with help from CNS star female player Beavenna Stewart.

We are extremely grateful for the enthusiastic support of our honorary chair, SU Assistant Coach Mike Hopkins. Coach Hop was a tireless promoter of Turn-Around Jumpers and was instrumental to its success. We also send out a big thank you to the 30 individuals and companies who stepped up as team sponsors, allowing many young players to participate who would not otherwise have been able. Thanks also to all of the local businesses who donated an item or certificate for contest prizes or the raffle.

Finally, we appreciate the dedication and hard work provided by our Young Leaders Advisory Council, including co-chairs Mike Kelly & Jen Feher, who came up with the idea for Turn-Around Jumpers and who have helped to create a premier community event in just two years. We received some great feedback from this year’s participants that will allow us to make improvements to the event for 2012, so we hope you’ll join us for the third annual Turn-Around Jumpers, Changing Lives One Hoop at a Time on June 9 & 10, 2012.

A Big Thank You to our Turn-Around Jumpers Supporters!

Presenting Sponsor: Tournament Host: Media Sponsors:

Bob McKenney Matt Russell & E.J. MacAulay Quaker Steak & Lube
The Fraser Company, Inc. Byrne Dairy V.I.P. Structures
First Niagara Eastern Cavy Products Papa’s Sports
Hoffmann Salvage Fitton Forum CNV
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African-American Leaders to receive the Excellence in Leadership: Strong Men 2006; and recognition by Dominion and the Dominion Foundation as one of nine Doctor of Divinity (May 2008) from Taylor University in Upland, Indiana; being of Humane Letters (May 2005) from Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky and global leadership and ministry are honorary doctorates: Doctor Among the honors received by Commissioner Gaither for his the first African-American to serve in this distinguished assignment.

In November 2002, Commissioner Israel Gaither was appointed to serve as The Salvation Army’s Chief of the Staff, the first African-American to hold the position since the founding of the organization in 1865. As the organization’s chief executive officer, the Commissioner served as second-in-command of the worldwide organization. Among his varied leadership accomplishments, Commissioner Gaither has achieved many ‘firsts’ as an African-American in Salvation Army history. He is the first to be conferred with the rank of commissioner, the highest that can be achieved in the organization. The Commissioner is also the first African-American to serve as a divisional commander and the Gaither’s marriage in 1967 - during the turbulence of the African-American civil rights era - marked the first racially integrated marriage of Salvation Army Officers in the USA. In May 2006 Commissioner Gaither assumed the key executive leadership assignment of National Commander, the first African-American to serve in this distinguished assignment.

Among the honors received by Commissioner Gaither for his global leadership and ministry are honorary doctorates: Doctor of Humane Letters (May 2005) from Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky and Doctor of Divinity (May 2008) from Taylor University in Upland, Indiana; being named in the San Francisco Examiner as one of the ‘Top Ten Communists’ in 2006; and recognition by Dominion and the Dominion Foundation as one of nine African-American Leaders to receive the Excellence in Leadership: Strong Men and Women Award (2008).

Commissioner Israel Gaither to Give Keynote Address

at The Salvation Army’s Annual Civic Celebration

In addition to Commissioner Gaither’s keynote address, we will present Community Team Spirit Awards to several community leaders. The Honorable Joanne M. Mahoney will receive the award for Leadership. She is the first woman to serve as County Executive of Onondaga County. She is a dynamic leader who has built strong alliances with community groups, corporations, and citizens to improve the quality of life in our region.

Dr. Debbie L. Sydow, President of Onondaga Community College, will also receive the award for Leadership. She has served as a community college educator and administrator for over 20 years. Throughout her career, she has worked in support of high quality educational programs and comprehensive support services for students seeking college transfer, job training, continuing education, or basic skills development.

Eric and Judy Mower will receive the award for Business Leadership and Philanthropy. They have consistently demonstrated their commitment to improving our region through their involvement in many civic organizations and causes. Their passion and expertise have greatly benefitted local arts, educational, and social service organizations, and Eric and Judy have both helped to develop the next generation of civic leaders in the Syracuse area.

Please join us as we celebrate our accomplishments over the past year and recognize these outstanding community leaders. Proceeds from the Civic Celebration will help The Salvation Army provide vital services to 40,000 Onondaga County residents over the next year. Individual tickets to this event are $150, or you can host a table of 10 for $1,500. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. For more information, please contact me at 479-1319 or visit sasyr.org.

Commissioner Israel Gaither

On July 1st, Major George Polarek joined Syracuse Area Services as our new Area Coordinator. Major Polarek brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership to his new position. Most recently, he worked at The Salvation Army’s National Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, where he has served as the Assistant Executive Director for The Salvation Army World Service Office (SAWSO) since July of 2008.

Prior to his appointment to National Headquarters, Major Polarek assumed administrative command of Buffalo Area Services with responsibilities for Western New York. He previously served as the Incident Commander with responsibilities for the New York World Trade Center relief operation on September 11, 2001. His responsibilities included all aspects of work with Homeland Defense, State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) and the NYC Emergency Management Office.

Major Polarek has also provided leadership with Katrina, in Louisiana; the tsunami of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Samoa, and New Zealand; and has provided leadership for the US response to earthquakes in both Haiti and Japan.

Major Polarek is joined in Syracuse by his wife, Major Sharon Polarek, who is serving as Divisional Social Services Secretary for the Empire State Division of The Salvation Army. Please help us welcome Major George and Sharon to the Syracuse area community!

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Syracuse Area Services

thanks Majors David & Eunice Champlin for their 2 years of service...

After two years as Area Coordinators in Syracuse, Majors Dave and Eunice Champlin are becoming Divisional Commanders for the Southern New England Division of The Salvation Army, which encompasses Connecticut and Rhode Island. Majors Dave and Eunice provided strong leadership for our Salvation Army as we witnessed dramatic increases in the need for our services due to deteriorating economic conditions. We wish the Majors all the best in their new adventures and look forward to seeing them when they are back in the Syracuse area to visit family. Thank you for your friendship and guidance!
Your Lasting Touch
Each year, we receive calls from friends who want to include The Salvation Army in their will, and also want that gift to specifically support programs in the greater Syracuse area. To achieve that goal, the following exact wording should be used.

I bequeath to The Salvation Army Syracuse Area Services with offices at 677 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202, to be used solely and in its entirety for the ongoing programs and services provided by The Salvation Army Syracuse Area Services, the following:

Syracuse Area Services is Reaccredited!
In the late 1990s, Syracuse Area Services decided to pursue accreditation through The Council on Accreditation (COA), in order to assure that we were doing the best possible job to help the individuals and families we served. COA was founded in 1977 as an independent, not-for-profit international accreditation agency for human service organizations. After our initial accreditation in 1999, Syracuse Area Services has been reaccredited every four years, being recognized as one of approximately 2,000 organizations worldwide that deliver the highest quality services possible and maintain the highest standards for quality improvement. This high honor gives our supporters, stakeholders and, most importantly, those we serve, confidence in the credibility and integrity of our many services and the dedicated individuals who deliver these services.

Congratulations to our 2011 “Can-Do” Award Recipients
These volunteers and staff members have demonstrated a special willingness to roll up their sleeves to help others.
Mindy Loren, Laura McNally, Tekla Henderson, Chandra Smith
Mothers of Preschoolers:
Katie Morgan, Jen Scholtz, Pam Demascole, Ann Bullard and Wendy Tuliwcki

Thanks to our Community Partners:
Keller Williams for their ‘Red Day’ Food Drive for our Food Pantry
G&G Foods for providing food storage services
Wegmans and C&S Companies for their support of the KidsCare Campaign
Onondaga County & The City of Syracuse for supporting National Salvation Army Week
All Christmas in July participants who helped us with Food Drives and Mini Red Kettle Campaigns

Gifts That Give Twice
(Gifts recorded from April 15, 2011 to June 30, 2011) Those who make gifts in honor of another or memorial gifts to our Salvation Army of the Syracuse Area have chosen a meaningful, tangible way to demonstrate not only how much they care about someone they love, but how much they care about people in need. These gifts may be sent to the Development Office at 677 South Salina St. Syracuse, NY 13202.

MEMORIALS
IN MEMORY OF
Given By
KATHERINE (TRISH) ROBB
Mrs. Regina Clinton
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. McCarthy
Mr. and Mrs. H. Alan Smith
LOU BENEDETTO
Ms. Theresa Murphy
MARION FORD FRASER
Mrs. Patricia K. Smarzo
ROBERT AND HELEN FISH
Mr. Thomas Fish
ROBERT SCHLICHTEING
Mr. and Mrs. James L. Badgley
Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Barr
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald E. Debacker
Ms. Nancy E. Marsh

TRIBUTES
IN HONOR OF
Given By
ERASER COMPANY’S
100TH YEAR IN BUSINESS
Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Baldwin
JIM ROBB
Mr. and Mrs. H. Alan Smith

Stay connected to Your Salvation Army: Please visit our NEW website at sasyr.org and follow us on Facebook. Sign up for our E-Newsletter and choose to GO GREEN. On our website, you can choose to replace your paper newsletter with an electronic version, saving paper and the planet.