Captain Jim Brickson isn’t your typical Salvation Army officer. Find out why he is MILES FROM ORDINARY pg. 4

Plus
- Finally, a shelter in North Dakota oil boomtown pg. 15
- Social worker reaches out to vets living alone in wilderness pg. 7
- Former attorney reclaims life at rehabilitation center pg. 8
- Attention, volunteers: We’re looking for a few good Kens pg. 12
Northern Highlights, a publication of the Northern Division, is a newsletter about Salvation Army activities in Minnesota and North Dakota.

MISSION STATEMENT
The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.
Its message is based on the Bible.
Its ministry is motivated by the love of God.
Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

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If you would, please flip back to the front page and look at the cover photo of Captain Jim Brickson, lead pastor of The Salvation Army in Albert Lea, Minnesota.

I know what you’re thinking – he doesn’t look like a traditional pastor. Even with his Salvation Army uniform on (see back page), he doesn’t necessarily look like one, either. And the motorcycle club he’s in (page 4) certainly is miles from traditional.

Captain Brickson embodies an important truth: The Salvation Army is not, and has never been, traditional in its methods of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and serving in His name without discrimination. This idea dates back to the late 1800s and early 1900s, when Salvation Army officers and staff in the U.S. and abroad attracted attention by performing free vaudeville variety shows – one of the era’s most popular and risqué forms of entertainment – with Christian-themed comedy acts, songs and dances. In today’s world, this type of outreach would be akin to The Salvation Army sponsoring free Christian-themed mud wrestling events across the country.

I’m not alone in my belief that putting faith into action can require unconventional tactics. I’m joined by the 482 full-time employees, 77,688 volunteers, and untold number of donors in The Salvation Army Northern Division. Together, we use atypical means to achieve remarkable results, from a first-of-its kind shelter in the heart of North Dakota’s oil boom (page 15), to providing hope to veterans living alone in the wilderness (page 7), and so much more.

I pray that the inspirational stories in this 2014 edition of Northern Highlights magazine spur you to join The Salvation Army, and help celebrate our history of serving humanity in ways that are anything but typical.

May God bless you for your support.

Lt. Col. Robert E. Thomson
Northern Division Commander
2013
Statistical Highlights
The Salvation Army Northern Division

Who offered help?
Full-time employees 482
Volunteers 77,688

What kinds of help?
Meals 894,000
Housing stays 395,000
Items of clothing 152,000
Christmas toys 229,000
Rent and energy assistance cases 10,000
Volunteer hours 394,000

Who received help?
People given disaster assistance 23,000
Inmates counseled 8,300
People and families receiving social services 136,000
Total people served 403,000
God who made it all possible 1

Delores Fitzgerald is a proud Salvation Army supporter, and an inspiration to anybody who likes to make things and donate them. Since 1997, she and the Eager Hands Quilters ministry from Woodbury Lutheran Church have sewn 4,000 quilts and given every last one to The Salvation Army. Each quilt includes the words “Jesus Loves You,” handwritten by Fitzgerald.

Every quilt has a tremendous impact.
“A year or so ago,” Fitzgerald explained, “a woman came up to me and asked if I was the lady who writes ‘Jesus loves you’ on the quilts. I said yes. Then she said I saved her life. She said she was homeless, sleeping in her car, with nothing to cover up with. But then she got one of the quilts.”

If you have a similar talent you’d like share, please contact your local Salvation Army. There are many people who could use your help.
Captain Jim Brickson isn’t your typical Salvation Army officer. He has an oversized goatee and tattoos galore. On the weekends, you’ll find him on the open road riding his Harley, or in a tree stand hunting bears.

He’s a mountain of a man, and a durable one at that: During Christmas 2013, he stood next to a red kettle for five straight days, setting a new Salvation Army world record for continuous bell ringing – 105 hours.

Although some of Brickson’s interests seemingly run counter to those of a traditional pastor, he’s found ways of using them to glorify God and advance the mission of The Salvation Army – from a motorcycle ministry, to a Christ-centered archery class, and more.

He and his wife, Captain Lee Brickson, have been leading The Salvation Army in Albert Lea, Minnesota, since 2007.

Here’s a closer look at Brickson and the exciting programs he and his wife have implemented.
**BULLSEYE!**

Brickson had always wanted to teach kids about Christ in a way that was fun and interesting. In 2011 he discovered the answer in Centershot, an eight-week program that fuses archery with Bible studies. In the past three years, close to 100 kids have participated.

“This program is exactly what I was looking for,” said Brickson, an avid bow hunter. “The first half-hour is about life lessons, life skills, and the foundational living that Christ provides. The second half-hour is about incorporating those lessons into archery.”

Example: Learning how to stand and position yourself with a bow and arrow provides a solid foundation for a successful shot. Similarly, following the teachings of Christ provides a solid foundation for how to live life.

Brickson runs two programs – one for kids in grades K–6, another for grades 7–12 – twice a year. The kids shoot inside the Albert Lea Salvation Army gymnasium, under plenty of adult supervision.

“What’s impressive is the amount of girls who come through this program – there’s two of them for every boy,” Brickson said.

One of those girls is Jasmine, 15.

“She’s good enough to compete at the state level,” Brickson said.

But it didn’t start that way. Jasmine struggled when she joined the program two years ago.

“Even the little kids could shoot better than me,” she said. “I just didn’t have good form. But Captain showed me some pointers. I started getting better after that.”

Brickson learned about the program through a hunting buddy of 25 years. “I was told to get involved from my Deacon.”

Brickson said. “These kids are hearing about Christ because of archery. They’re learning about Christ by doing something fun.”

**VROOM, VROOM**

Brickson is a member of the Salvation Army Motorcycle Ministry, an international group that is gaining momentum in Minnesota and North Dakota. He and five other members in the Northern Division, along with 10 others from throughout the Midwest, saddled up their Harleys for their first official ride in early April. They started in Peoria, Illinois, and later caught historic Route 66 to St. Louis, Missouri.

“We’ve come together with a common passion – riding,” Brickson said. “This is about finding new ways to reach people with the gospel.”

Although members of the group don’t have to be members of the Salvation Army church, they must adhere to a strict set of bylaws, including no smoking or drinking.

“Even if you just have an occasional drink, you’re excluded,” Brickson said. “We want to be held to the highest standard possible.”

Two of Brickson’s friends from Albert Lea are in the group – Mark Rouche, a longtime Salvation Army volunteer and retired Albert Lea fire captain, and Carlos Kramer, a Salvation Army church member originally from Venezuela.

“This group is my dream come true,” Kramer said.
Brickson and the gang are making tentative plans to attend the mother of all biker rallies – Sturgis in South Dakota, which will celebrate 75 years in August 2015.

“We want to make a difference, somewhere, somehow,” Brickson said. “The biker community can be very exclusive. But if another biker doesn’t know who we are and sees us riding our Harleys, that makes us more approachable and makes it easier to talk about the Lord.”

Free lunch?

Actually, there is such a thing as a free lunch. It’s served hot and fresh every weekday at the Albert Lea Salvation Army. The program has one purpose: build a stronger community.

“Some people come because they’re having a hard time making ends meet,” Brickson said. “Others need the socialization more than they need a sandwich in their stomach. They need to go somewhere where they’re accepted.”

Brickson often marvels at how much the lunchgoers lean on one another.

“They legitimately care for each other,” he said. “One time, one of the guys was in the hospital, and a dozen guys went to see him.”

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The program has come a long way. When the Bricksons took over the Albert Lea Salvation Army seven years ago, the facility served one lunch per week. Today, that number is five.

“We’re serving between 80 and 100 meals a day,” Brickson said. “Some days, it’s 120 or 130.”

Granted, Brickson says he doesn’t deserve any of the credit. That belongs to the people of Albert Lea.

“This program is successful because the people wanted to make it happen,” said Brickson, adding that every lunch requires the help of four to eight volunteers. “This is nothing we ever intended to grow so large. It’s been led from somewhere else.”

Although the program is often low on funds, local businesses donate enough to keep it going.

“Without them, we’d be in big trouble – this program does cost a lot of money,” Brickson said, adding that much of the food comes from the local Walmart. “We may serve meatloaf a little more than the people want, but we’re just thankful to be serving.”

Better late than never

Albert Lea remains the Bricksons’ first appointment as Salvation Army officers, having joined the organization well into their 40s.

Their path to officer ship began in 2001 when they volunteered for The Salvation Army at a disaster in East Peoria, Illinois. That experience eventually led to them attending a Salvation Army church in nearby Galesburg. After that, God handled the rest.

“It got to a point where you need to do what God asks you to do,” said Brickson, a retired railroad engineer and U.S. Navy machinist. “You either take His calling, or you end up working against yourself for a long time.

“We took our calling, and here we are.”
Across North Dakota, a number of homeless veterans live alone on the state’s windswept prairies and rugged badlands, miles from civilization. Their homes can be abandoned grain bins or barns, or shelters of their own making, including lean-tos and underground huts. They live off the land, in total isolation.

Ellen McKinnon is a Salvation Army outreach specialist who finds these men and attempts to get them into proper housing. Based in Devils Lake, she travels across the state to make contact with them, offer food and water, establish trust, and present her message of hope.

Thankfully, most of the veterans are friendly.

“It’s like talking with your neighbor – we sit on five-gallon buckets and shoot the breeze,” said McKinnon, who is escorted by law enforcement during every visit. “They’re gracious, hospitable and funny, and super interesting to listen to.”

Some of the visits last five minutes, some five hours. Other times, the men just want to be left alone. For that reason, McKinnon must be deliberate in making her presence known.

“One of the guys who lives underground likes me to honk from the road two miles away – three long honks, so he knows I’m coming in,” she said.

When the men do invite McKinnon into their areas, she’s careful to walk in their exact footsteps – there can be booby traps.

“One of the main ones is foot traps, which were common in Vietnam,” she said. “And you see a lot of snares.”

McKinnon always brings the men fresh food and water. As supplies allow, she offers other provisions that are more substantial, including winter boots, blankets and tarps.

“As veterans, they deserve our respect,” she said. “Bringing food and water keeps the communication going and builds trust.”

McKinnon has helped six such veterans move into permanent supportive housing in the past two years. She’s currently working with about 20 other veterans living “primitively,” most of whom are from the Vietnam era.

“It’s not an easy job, but it’s very rewarding,” she said.

McKinnon discovers many of the men through a partnership she created with construction workers, railroad employees, wildlife officers, and others who work in remote locations. When they spot a homeless person in the middle of nowhere, they tell her right away.

Helping Hundreds

Reaching out to these particular veterans is only part of what McKinnon does. She and other Salvation Army case managers serve hundreds of other homeless veterans in cities and towns throughout North Dakota.

Since September 2011, the team has helped more than 550 veterans and veteran families secure permanent housing through one-on-one case management, financial assistance, help applying for VA benefits, referrals to other community resources, and more. McKinnon alone has assisted more than 140 veterans in returning to their home states for services.

It’s all made possible through a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs grant program called Supportive Services for Veteran Families, along with The Salvation Army’s partnership with the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People Inc. The program covers all of North Dakota’s 53 counties, with Salvation Army case managers in Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo, and Grand Forks.

When the program started in 2011, veterans represented about 22 percent of North Dakota’s homeless population. Today, that number is 12 percent.

“The Salvation Army’s commitment to veterans dates back to our serving soldiers in foxholes during World War I,” said Lt. Col. Robert Thomson, Salvation Army Northern Division Commander. “A hundred years later, we are proud to support today’s veterans as they fight a different battle – homelessness.”

To learn more about this program, visit SalvationArmyNorth.org or call 701-662-4974.
Jim Paige woke up in a St. Cloud hospital with a tube down his throat, clueless about how he’d gotten there. The doctors later told him that his blood alcohol concentration might have been .7.

“At .4 is usually when death starts occurring,” said Paige, 45. “But I wasn’t concerned about death. I’d tried killing myself plenty of times before.”

It was fall 2012. Six years earlier, Paige had a family, big house, and a six-figure job as a patent attorney. But all of those things were gone now.

After Paige was released from the hospital, he got straight to drinking again. He later checked himself into detox, at which point his probation officer was notified. He was put in jail for a week.

After jail, Paige arrived at the Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center in Minneapolis on Saturday, Oct. 20, 2012. Although it wasn’t his first time in treatment, none of the other programs led to him saying these six beautiful words: “I haven’t had a drink since,” Paige declared in August 2014.

EARLY YEARS

Alcohol began chipping away at Paige’s life right after high school. He grew up with his parents, brother and sister in Exira, Iowa, a podunk farming town west of Des Moines. His parents split when he was 9.

“My dad was an alcoholic – my mom said that’s what destroyed their relationship,” Paige recalled.

As a teenager, Paige was a decent student, good baseball player and hard enough worker. His mother got married again, this time to the owner of a local pub. “He was a good guy and he wasn’t a big drinker,” Paige said.

After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy to become a nuclear engineer. Unfortunately, that aspiration got nixed right before boot camp, when he was arrested for drunken driving in early 1988.

“That got me demoted to electronics technician,” Paige said. “I suppose it was the start of things to come.”

He spent nearly five years in the service, until December 1992, when he was discharged a year early under the military’s Sole Surviving Son policy. An unthinkable tragedy had struck when his brother, also a serviceman, was home on leave that September.

“He died in a single-car crash that was alcohol-related,” Paige said. “My mom was one of the emergency responders. She didn’t know it was him. She was asking everybody what was going on, and they kept trying to take her back up the hill.”
As devastated as Paige was, he didn’t allow the tragedy to derail him. Instead, he enrolled in junior college just one month after he was discharged from the military. In college, he’d get a second chance to become an engineer.

**Problems begin**

The 1990s were busy for Paige. In addition to transferring to Iowa State University, he’d gotten married and had three kids – twin boys and a girl – with his then-wife, Lisa, who already had two kids of her own. She made good money working as a registered nurse, and floated the family while Paige finished school.

He was well on his way to becoming an electrical engineer.

“I had a 4.0 GPA right until the first semester of my senior year, when I got my first B,” he said.

Paige was also on his way to becoming an alcoholic. Sometime during the busyness of raising five kids and going to school, alcohol had gained a dangerous foothold in his life.

“I didn’t go out a lot, but I’d drink at home while I was doing chores,” Paige said, noting that Lisa did not drink. “By the end of my senior year, drinking started becoming an everyday thing.”

He graduated from Iowa State in 1998 at age 29, then dove straight into law school at Drake University.

“I loved the science and math and technology of engineering, but I realized that implementing it was boring,” Paige said. “A friend of mine said patent attorneys use science and engineering, and they make really good money.”

He spent the next three years in law school. Every year, his drinking got worse and worse.

“Toward the end of law school, I’d stop and get a 40-ounce bottle of beer on my drive home,” Paige said. “Looking back, that’s when the problems really started picking up.”

Alcohol problems aside, Paige had done so well in school that he’d written his own ticket. Job offers started coming in immediately after he graduated from Drake, with honors, in spring 2001.

Although Lisa suspected that his drinking was a problem, she didn’t have enough ammo to call him out on it.

“How do you tell someone who’s aced their way through college and law school, and is now getting six-figure job offers, that they have a problem?” Paige said. “I was invincible.”

**Downward spiral**

Paige moved the family to the Twin Cities, where he’d accepted a job as a patent attorney at a prestigious Minneapolis law firm. Lisa scored a good job in health care, and eventually began working in management for a well-known local hospital.

Paige would spend the next six years at the law firm, working long hours and making serious money.

“There were periods when I’d work 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, for months at a time,” he said. “In my best year I made $175,000.”

Then, in his sixth year, it all went south. It was 2006, and Paige was approaching partner status.

“I had reached such a high level that I didn’t have anybody breathing down my neck,” he recalled. “At that point the alcohol started getting out of control. It moved from beer to liquor, and it went all day. I’d wake up with the shakes. I’d go to restaurants for lunch and have four or five drinks. But I could do whatever I wanted, because who had ever stopped me before?”

His work began to suffer. He was arriving late. Leaving early. Making stupid mistakes. Saying inappropriate things. Soon enough, Paige got called into his boss’s office.

“Like a true alcoholic, I blamed getting fired on everyone but myself,” Paige said.

He found another job as a patent attorney in Omaha,
Nebraska. He and Lisa were still married, but decided to live apart for a spell to build up their bank account; they'd lost big when the housing market collapsed.

His new job lasted six months.

“I got fired again – I was drinking a liter a day,” Paige said. “I made several trips to the hospital and detox. It was another ledge as I bounced further and further down to my bottom.”

He made his first trip to treatment – a 30-day program – in February 2007 and stayed sober for just 20 days afterward. He went to treatment again that April and stayed sober for a while, finding another job as a patent attorney in Minneapolis. He kept the job for about three years, then fell off the wagon.

Lisa had seen enough.

“I came home one day and everything in the house was gone except for my stuff,” Paige said. “She’d taken the kids and moved across town. She said get sober and I’ll come back.”

That was October 2010. Suddenly, Paige was jobless, living in a 3,400 square-foot-home, alone, with oodles of money. It was a recipe for disaster.

**Hitting bottom**

Lisa never did come back, and Paige doesn’t remember much about living in the house by himself – he was always drunk. But he does recall certain things.

“I remember lying in bed, hammered and frustrated, swearing at God, saying I wanted nothing to do with Him, because He wasn’t doing anything for me,” he said.

During the next two years, Paige wound up hospitalized about 10 times, spent a Christmas in jail, got another DUI, and attempted suicide on several occasions.

“I’d try drinking myself to death, but I’d pass out before I could finish the job,” he said. “Another time, I walked into a gun store to buy a nickel-plated .50 caliber handgun. But they didn’t give it to me; thank God for the final security check.”

He went to treatment again in January 2011 but “was drunk on the plane ride home,” he said.

As time ran on, his money ran thin. He began taking jobs for which he was drastically overqualified, working as a clerk at a health store and several gas stations. He got fired from those jobs, too, and eventually lost his house.

“I was just a wreck,” Paige said. “I’m not doing any of this any justice because it’s all such a blur.”

In April 2012 he went to treatment yet again, this time in St. Cloud. He completed a 45-day program and stayed sober for six months, living in a supportive housing program.

“I was feeling good, but then I relapsed,” Paige said. “I was drinking at a friend’s house and had passed out on the floor. He had to go to work and was debating whether or not to call an ambulance. But he did. The doctors said that if he wouldn’t have, I would have died.”

Those were the same doctors who shoved the tube down his throat and said his BAC was .7. It was October 2012, and Paige had reached his bottom.

“I was beat up,” he said. “I had lost everything. *Everything.*”

Soon, The Salvation Army would help him get it back.

**Hope Springs**

Paige was referred to The Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center by his probation officer.

“He said it was only a matter of time before I’d be dead, and asked me, ‘What’s it going to take?’” Paige said. “I told him I was willing to do a year of treatment.”

The rehabilitation center was the perfect fit. The center is a free program funded by sales at Salvation Army stores, providing six to 12 months of food, shelter and residential treatment services for up to 130 men at a time. The men receive counseling and spiritual support every night. By day, they perform volunteer “work therapy” for 36 to 40 hours per week. Most of this work involves the organization and distribution of clothes, furniture and other donations made to Salvation Army stores.
Halfway through the program, Paige began making notable progress.

“A switch went off,” he said. “It hit me how I’d been treating people, how selfish I’d been. I didn’t want to live my life like that anymore. I decided I was going to be the guy I’d always wanted to be when I was a kid. A good guy. A stand-up guy. A man with integrity. Instead of talking the talk, it was time to walk the walk.”

He graduated in six months. Afterward, he began living in a sober house for veterans, and working at a Salvation Army store.

“I worked hard and tried to do a good job at everything I did,” Paige said. “If you focus on today, tomorrow will take care of itself.”

Management couldn’t help but notice his strong work ethic. In June 2014, he was promoted to warehouse supervisor of the Salvation Army Store Headquarters in downtown Minneapolis. He now manages The Salvation Army’s fleet of trucks, its donation inventory, its storage facilities, and a million other things.

“I don’t think or care about the future anymore, because God has it taken care of,” said Paige, who is making headway in repairing the family relationships he’d broken. “I used to be insanely motivated to be wealthy, to have a big house, to always want more. But my life perspective has changed. I’m blessed with talents and I have the ability to do a lot, but not for the sole purpose of having money. I want to be of use to people.”

Paige is thankful for the rehabilitation center.

“I would recommend it to anyone,” he said. “Use it to discover what God has planned for you.”

Paige was reluctant to share his story because he’s not boastful. But he agreed that his story could bring glory to God and inspire others to seek help.

As the newest leaders of The Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center in Minneapolis, Majors Jerry and Vangie O’Neil have two simple goals: “To have the best program we can have, and be the best stewards we can be,” Major Jerry said. “Jesus was quite clear when He said if you’re not moving forward, you’re moving backward.”

This is the majors’ first time in charge of a Salvation Army rehabilitation center. They’d spent the previous 20 years leading Salvation Army worship and service centers across the Midwest.

“This is an exciting position to be in,” Major Jerry said. “The great thing about this kind of work is the amount of time we get to spend with folks. At the service centers, we helped people with things like utility bills and groceries, but we never got to see the end result. In this setting, we see a guy come in at rock bottom and we get to stay with him for six months, nine months, a year.”

The majors have a long history with The Salvation Army. Major Jerry came to know the organization as a boy living in South Minneapolis. He was the oldest of nine kids raised by a single mom.

“The Salvation Army nurtured me,” he said. “The men there took me to father-and-son banquets. I went to Salvation Army summer camps. I learned to play an instrument, which was a great self-esteem builder. I knew at a very early age that Salvation Army officership was for me.”

Major Vangie is a fifth-generation Salvationist, meaning that everybody from her great-great grandparents down to her own parents served as Salvation Army officers.

The majors are proud of their new leadership role and view their position as a new “vision” for the facility.

“We’re not here to change the program – we’re here to keep it going in the right direction,” Major Vangie said.

If you or somebody you know is suffering from addiction and needs help, contact the rehabilitation center at 612-332-5855. The program is free and accepts applicants from across Minnesota, North Dakota and nationwide.
A FEW GOOD KENS

Dedicated volunteers like Ken Wolfgram are needed at Salvation Army locations across Minnesota and North Dakota

What did Ken Wolfgram do while volunteering at the Salvation Army food shelf in Fairmont, Minnesota, for six years? More like, what didn't he do.

From 2008 to summer 2014, Wolfgram was the food shelf. Week in and week out, he spent untold hours organizing food donations, sorting them, and handing them over – with a big smile on his face – to hundreds of local families in need.

“I call myself a professional volunteer,” said Wolfgram, who got involved after retiring from a career in agriculture machinery.

Unfortunately, Wolfgram and his wife had to move to Colorado in fall 2014. In a show of gratitude, the Fairmont community gave him a proper sendoff by raising more than 7,000 pounds of food for The Salvation Army in his honor.

“Ken truly has been an amazing advocate for the Army and we are very grateful to him,” Major Dale Hixenbaugh, co-leader of the Fairmont Salvation Army, said just before Wolfgram departed. “He'll be tough to replace. I wish we had another Ken.”

In September 2014, they found one. Longtime Fairmont resident and retiree Bob Witty stepped up and dedicated about five hours per week to operating the food shelf.

“Bob is wonderful and doing great,” said Major JoAnn Hixenbaugh, Major Dale’s better half.

Witty’s efforts allow Majors Hixenbaugh to devote more time to other ministries. In turn, the Fairmont Salvation Army is able to reach more people in need.

Similar volunteer scenarios play out at Salvation Army locations across Minnesota and North Dakota: When longtime volunteers go, other people fill their shoes.

One of those people could be you. All Salvation Army locations need volunteer support, be it organizing food, cooking, cleaning, ministering to adults and children … the list goes on. In helping, your time commitment doesn't need to be “Kenormous.” Even one hour per month is a blessing.

If you’re still on the fence, the inspirational stories of these two volunteers in Grand Forks, North Dakota, might just tip you over the edge. Both are foreign-born women who recently moved to the U.S. with their American husbands.
Vjosa Dodds

When Kosovo native Vjosa Dodds first came to the Grand Forks Salvation Army, she thought it was an extension of the U.S. military, for three reasons: she’d never heard of the charity; it contained the word “Army”; and one of its social workers did nothing but help veterans.

She still chuckles about that day in October 2013, when her husband suggested she stop by the facility to see if her help was needed. Soon after, Dodds became a full-time, do-it-all volunteer. She wound up giving about 35 hours per week for nearly a year, spending every weekday filing documents, restocking the food shelf, and helping with whatever else needed doing.

“I’ve become a better person since I started here,” she said. “I can’t even say how good it is here. I wish I knew about The Salvation Army the first day I came to the U.S.”

Dodds, raised Muslim, has even attended church services at the Grand Forks Salvation Army. “I went a lot this winter,” she said. “Everybody was very welcoming.”

Dodds would eventually like to attend college to become a social worker – a career she’s been inspired to pursue based on her time volunteering at The Salvation Army. Whatever her career path, she’ll never stop helping her new favorite charity.

“I don’t think I’ll ever be able to let go of this place,” she said.

Keiko Edwards

Although Keiko Edwards loves helping people, the native of Japan admittedly has two other motives for volunteering at the Grand Forks Salvation Army: learning English and meeting new people.

“They teach me American traditions,” she said with a laugh. “And this is a good place to meet friends.”

Edwards has been helping at the food shelf since February 2014, two or three days a week. Her husband suggested that she volunteer at The Salvation Army because “it’s a great place,” she said.

One thing that’s impressed her about American culture is the generosity of businesses. She’s noticed this at the Grand Forks Salvation Army, which relies on local grocery stores that donate food that is close to expiring – aka “rescued food.”

“In my country, we don’t have this kind of system – the food gets thrown out,” she said. “This is a great system.”

Edwards is also planning to attend school in the near future. She was a nurse in Japan, but must start her education all over again to be certified in the U.S.

Like Dodds, she’s not going to stop volunteering anytime soon.

“I want to keep this pantry work,” she said. Meanwhile, she’s trying to convince her other friends to join.

“They’re in their houses, bored,” she said. “I tell them to please come here. It’s a good experience and you can meet friends.”

Major Jonathan Fjellman, leader of the Grand Forks Salvation Army, is thankful for Dodds and Edwards.

“We feel blessed to have volunteers like Vjosa and Keiko,” he said. “They both work very hard and have become key components of our team.”
Bob Erikson, 95, is a World War II veteran who knows a thing or two about giving up something precious to help others. That precious something is his life, which he nearly gave in combat... twice.

His first brush with death happened in December 1944, when he was run over by a tank during the Battle of the Bulge. He spent months recovering, then got right back onto the battlefield.

The second brush occurred in May 1945, while he and fellow Airborne troops were pushing into Germany. A bullet tore through Erikson's chest and exited out his back, missing his heart by centimeters. Blood was bubbling from his mouth. He thought he was going to die.

Thankfully, God had other plans. Erikson survived, and would spend five months in several hospitals until he was discharged that September, days after the war officially ended. He was awarded both a Purple Heart, with cluster, and Bronze Star Medal.

**SERVICE TO ANOTHER ARMY**

Many would say that Erikson has given enough during his lifetime. But he would say otherwise.

"It pays to be good to people," affirmed Erikson, who started giving to The Salvation Army regularly almost 40 years ago.

His statement is true, literally, thanks to The Salvation Army's "charitable gift annuity" program, which Erikson began donating to about 10 years ago. These gifts allow The Salvation Army to make guaranteed payments to him for life.

Through a gift annuity, for example, a person Erikson's same age could give a $5,000 donation and receive annual payments of about $450 for life, plus enjoy a $3,500 charitable tax deduction. After God calls the donor home, The Salvation Army would use any leftover money to help people in need.

"A gift annuity seemed like a good deal to me," Erikson said. "It lets me help The Salvation Army and give myself some income in the meanwhile. My wife was all for me giving money to The Salvation Army."

Erikson has since lost his wife, and has outlived three of his six children. "I'm living so long, The Salvation Army might lose money on this deal," he joked.

Charitable gift annuities are just one way The Salvation Army's Planned Giving team can transform your estate plans into a bona fide legacy that helps you, your loved ones, and people served by The Salvation Army. The team can also help you donate stock or gifts from your IRA account, write The Salvation Army into your will, donate land, and more.

"Some donors get very creative," said David Overstake, Northern Division Planned Giving director. "One lady set up a simple gift arrangement that pays her grandson $400 on his birthday for life. The options are limitless."

No matter what type of gift you give The Salvation Army, you should first consult with your professional tax advisor, financial planner, or both.

Learn more by calling the Planned Giving team at 651-746-3504 in the Twin Cities or 800-456-4483 in Greater Minnesota and North Dakota.
COLD WEATHER SHELTER OPENS IN WILLISTON

Lack of volunteers threatens year two of Project Heat

At long last, homeless people in Williston, North Dakota, have a warm place to sleep.

In February 2014, the Williston Salvation Army and New Hope Wesleyan Church opened a new cold-weather transitional shelter program called Project Heat. The program operates daily from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. from late fall to early spring, when up to 10 homeless men can sleep in the warmth of a modular home leased from a local housing company.

Until Project Heat arrived, the Williston homeless population had no shelter options.

“We are proud of what we’ve accomplished so far,” said Captain Joshua Stansbury, co-leader of the Williston Salvation Army. “We realize there are more than 10 homeless people in Williston, but that’s 10 fewer people who will have to sleep outside when it’s below zero.”

Stansbury’s efforts were validated in May 2014, when a former Project Heat shelter guest walked up to him in public and said he’d found a good job and permanent housing. “He poured out his heart of thanks for what Project Heat did for him,” Stansbury said.

VOLUNTEER VOID

Project Heat operates exclusively by volunteers, with dozens – or even hundreds – of them needed through spring 2015. But without adequate volunteer support, year two of Project Heat could be in danger of starting later than its November target date, or not operating at all.

Every night of Project Heat requires six volunteers, four of whom must help out during the wee hours of the night. Last year, the program struck volunteer gold in the form of Tony Walters, a U.S. Army veteran in his late 20s who volunteered a full five days a week.

“I felt a tug on my heart to do something to help the homeless in Williston,” he said during a volunteer shift in March 2014. “There are 10 guys here tonight – that’s 10 more friends that I have now. To see these guys walk through the door at night with a smile on their face, and to leave in the morning with a smile on their face, it’s incredible.”

Individuals, businesses, churches and other organizations in the Williston area are encouraged to volunteer for Project Heat, if only for one night.

“If everybody pitches in, we can ensure that no Project Heat guest winds up sleeping in the cold,” Stansbury said.

FILLING NEEDS

Project Heat is an important program because homelessness continues to rise in Williston. People from all over the country come to town on their last dime, hoping to land a six-figure job in the Bakken Oilfield. When they don’t find work, they become stranded and homeless.

Thankfully, the Williston Salvation Army and its supporters are a safety net for these people.

“We spend an average of $3,500 per month on gas vouchers for people living in their cars – they can’t afford to keep their vehicle running all night when it’s cold outside,” Stansbury said. “We also spend thousands on food, and bus tickets to help people in crisis return to their home states.”

The Williston Salvation Army has been providing these and other critical services to 250 percent more people since the oil boom began, from nearly 700 people in 2008 to almost 1,800 in 2013.

Attention, Williston residents:
You can help homeless people stay safe and warm this winter by volunteering for Project Heat.
To learn more or sign up, call 701-572-2921.
Valley City shows how Service Extension is done

Volunteer-led program serves more than one-tenth of entire community

The Salvation Army’s Service Extension unit in Valley City, North Dakota, has been on fire lately. It’s become the poster child for Service Extension units everywhere, demonstrating how big of an impact these volunteer-led programs can have on a given community.

Just how big?

“Last year we helped 840 people in Valley City, and we only have 6,500 people in town,” said Lee Isensee, who’s led the unit’s four-person volunteer group the past decade. “I’ve grown up here and can’t believe the amount of people who are hurting in this tiny little community.”

Service Extension units consist of one or more volunteers who provide Salvation Army services in less-populated regions of Minnesota and North Dakota. These units are found in every county of Minnesota and North Dakota that does not already include a Salvation Army operation center, ensuring that Salvation Army services are available to people in need absolutely everywhere.

Valley City’s unit, for example, provides these and other services:

- **Rent and utility assistance.** “With the North Dakota economy booming, more people are coming to us for help because rent prices have gone up throughout the state,” Isensee said.

- **Prison outreach program.** Until recently, Isensee said, “There were many people being let out of jail and then dumped into the city, with nowhere to go, or no way to get anything. Now we are buying them bus tickets, meals, and motel rooms until someone can come and get them.”

- **Expanded food program.** Not long ago, the Valley City unit was only funded to provide families with one food basket, four times a year. Today, families get an additional $50 food voucher four times a year.

- **Transportation assistance.** “That’s one of the biggest ones right now,” Isensee said. “I think we spent $5,000 last year buying automobile gas for people.”
Generous Community

Valley City residents also deserve credit for the unit’s success – they’ve increased their giving by about 50 percent in recent years.

During Christmas 2013, Valley City gave almost $60,000 worth of kettle donations, up from around $40,000 several years ago. Like other Service Extension units, the one in Valley City is funded almost exclusively by kettles.

The extra money has had much to do with the efforts of volunteer Joe Lunde, who took charge of coordinating the Valley City kettle campaign four years ago. He’s worked extra hard to recruit bell ringers through word of mouth, radio announcements and other avenues.

“I’m not responsible for this,” a humble Lunde said. “It’s the people I work with and the people who are giving – they’re sacrificing what little they have to help others.”

Importance of Serving

Like other small communities, most of the people served in Valley City have jobs but do not always earn enough money to make ends meet.

“They’re the working poor, and it’s almost impossible for some of them to get out of the situation they’re in,” Isensee said. “We have an obligation to do the best job we can for The Salvation Army and the people of Valley City, to help them get through difficult points in their life, so at least they can see there’s hope.”

Isensee said he tries to live his life according to Matthew 25, and believes his volunteer efforts mirror this Bible verse.

“When I was hungry you fed me, when I was in prison you came to visit me, when I was naked you clothed me – The Salvation Army fits perfectly into that,” he said. “It’s by the grace of God that the people put money in the kettles, and it’s by the grace of God that He has given us the ability to administrate this money.”

Join Service Extension

No matter where you live, The Salvation Army can use your help.

“We’re always looking for more individuals to come on as Service Extension recruits,” affirmed Cody Kill, one of six Service Extension representatives in Minnesota and North Dakota. He and his colleagues serve as facilitators for Service Extension activities in various regions that cover thousands of square miles.

“If you live in some of these outlying areas and would like to get involved, please contact us,” Kill continued. “Anybody can help, anywhere.”

To learn more, visit SalvationArmyNorth.org and search Service Extension.

Although Service Extension volunteers are always needed in all counties, the ones listed below currently have the least amount of support. To get involved, visit SalvationArmyNorth.org or call 800-456-4483.

**NORTH DAKOTA**
Benson, Bottineau, Burke, Cavalier, Dickey, Dunn, Oliver, Ransom, Renville, Sargent, Stark

**MINNESOTA**
Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Brown, Chippewa, Clearwater, Lyon, Mahnomen, Pope, Red Lake, Renville, Rock, Stearns, Swift, Waseca, Winona
In Fargo, Fishing Means Finances

The Salvation Army in Fargo, North Dakota, is breathing life into the old saying: Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.

In March 2014, the Fargo Salvation Army began offering free community financial literacy courses through a partnership with Thrivent Financial. The courses – taught once per quarter by a Thrivent professional – are an important component to helping people achieve self-sufficiency.

“We teach the basics of money management,” said instructor Dena Bennett, a financial associate with Thrivent since 2001. “We talk about the difference between wants and needs, and about sharing, saving and spending. A lot of it is talking about discipline.”

A student named Richard Robinson attended the class several weeks before graduating from a Fargo barber school. Although the class is geared toward personal finances, Robinson will be using some of the principles he learned for business.

“I wanted to learn how to budget and become financially stable, as I will be starting my own barber shop business,” he said. “The class was extremely helpful.”

Even the co-leader of the Fargo Salvation Army, Major Elaine Medlock, has taken the class and benefited from it.

“I took away setting up a 10-10-80 plan,” she said. “I give 10 percent, save 10 percent, and spend 80 percent.”

Medlock said the program is already ripe for expansion.

“We’re going to build upon it,” she said. “We have lots of people in this community who could benefit, including refugees who need to learn how the dollar works. In addition, two gentlemen have come forward – one is a financial planner, the other worked in the credit industry – who want to help families beyond the class through one-on-one financial mentoring. We don’t yet know where this program is going to go, but we’re excited to ride the wave.”

The idea to start the class began when Bennett bumped into a Salvation Army representative at a networking luncheon.

“We realized we both worked for faith-based companies and thought there might be a partnership there,” Bennett said. “I think the people get a lot out of these classes. It’s not about them absorbing and implementing everything, but if they can implement one thing and become better financially in the long run, that’s the goal.”

People, businesses and organizations: Do you have a talent to share that could help people in need? If so, please contact your local Salvation Army. Find your nearest location at SalvationArmyNorth.org.
The Salvation Army’s 22 food shelves in Minnesota and North Dakota are committed to providing the most nutritious food possible. But nutritious food often means fresh food, and fresh food can be expensive.

“That’s where our gardening friends come in,” said Lt. Col. Robert Thomson, Salvation Army Northern Division Commander. “An increasing number of gardeners are choosing to ‘grow a row’ for The Salvation Army. By donating a small portion of their harvest, they’re having a big impact on helping their neighbors in need.”

Donated fruits and veggies help people like Carol, a senior citizen living on a fixed income in the southern Twin Cities suburbs.

“I’m just barely able to get by on my social security income,” said Carol, who worked as a nursing teacher most of her life. “I can make my house payment and pay the utilities, but I need help with food.”

Carol regularly receives fresh produce through a food shelf shared by The Salvation Army and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville. Some of the food comes from 20 gardeners with plots at a local community garden; they pledged to donate 10 percent of their harvest to The Salvation Army in 2014.

One of the gardeners is Nelya Lukyamchuk, a Ukrainian immigrant with three young children. In 2014, she grew and donated beets, carrots, peas, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini and melon.

Not long ago, Lukyamchuk received food at the very Salvation Army food shelf she now supports.

“When we came (to America) a lot of people helped us,” she said. “I picked up (donations) and now I’m giving back.”

Salvation Army case manager Joan Moes helps oversee the Burnsville food shelf. She’s always thrilled to receive fresh produce. “Donated fruits and vegetable are a huge blessing here,” she said. “These foods save us money while providing the best possible nutritional value for our guests.”

Calling all gardeners: If you are interested in donating fresh produce, please contact your local Salvation Army to make arrangements. Find your nearest service center at SalvationArmyNorth.org.
There are heartbreaking stories behind thousands of families served by The Salvation Army in Minnesota and North Dakota. Yet in many cases, your simple donation of a backpack or school supplies is the difference between their heartbreak or happiness.

Enter Brittany Tornow, a 27-year-old single mother from Eveleth, Minnesota. She's been battling cancer since summer 2013. Every day is a struggle, both physically and financially.

"Before I started treatment I weighed 135 pounds – now I’m 119," said Tornow, who'd previously worked as a certified nursing assistant for six years. "I was used to being independent, then something like this steps in the way. Your hair is falling out, you have no energy, and you can’t work. We’re broke all the time."

Thanks to Salvation Army back-to-school programs, Tornow has one less bill to worry about. On Aug. 20, she received new backpacks, pens, paper, glue, and other supplies for her two kids, ages 6 and 7. More than 90 other northern Minnesota families received the same assistance at the Virginia Salvation Army.

"It’s nothing short of amazing what The Salvation Army does," said Tornow, who was anxious to share her story out of thanks to the people who donated. "This is wonderful. I wouldn’t have been able to buy my kids’ school things without this."
Widespread support

In August 2014, The Salvation Army provided back-to-school support to thousands of families across the Northern Division, from 800 backpacks and supplies for children in Mankato, Minnesota, to 400 backpacks for students in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

A woman was grateful in St. Cloud, Minnesota, where more than 500 supply-filled backpacks were distributed. “Without the help of the Army, I wouldn’t be able to provide all of the things that schools are asking for now,” she said.

One woman who donated a bag full of school supplies in Grand Forks used to receive the very assistance she was helping make possible. Today she is a full-time accountant with a son headed off to college.

“The Grand Forks Salvation Army has done so much for my family in the past,” she explained. “This is such a simple way to give back to the organization that saved my life.”

Plenty of businesses gave, too. That includes Twin Cities-based Morrie's Auto Group, whose customers gave a whopping 4,200 backpacks for the company’s “Buy Happy Backpack Round-Up.” What’s more, Morrie’s donated $10 to The Salvation Army, per backpack, for school supplies – a total of $42,000.

“To my knowledge, it was the largest back-to-school drive we’ve ever been a part of,” said Major Jeff Strickler, Twin Cities Salvation Army Commander. “Considering that kids also need school supplies during winter and spring, these supplies should last the entire school year. What a blessing.”

Get involved, anywhere

Donating isn’t the only way to support back-to-school programs. You or your business can also help by starting a school supply drive of your own, no matter how far away you live from a Salvation Army location.

Through Salvation Army Service Extension (learn more on Page 16), you can receive personalized support from The Salvation Army on how to start a school supply drive, where to distribute the goods, and much more. Service Extension volunteers also serve disaster survivors, distribute clothing and food, coordinate red kettle campaigns, and much more.

During back-to-school 2014, Service Extension volunteers across Minnesota and North Dakota distributed more than $200,000 worth of backpacks and school supplies.

“Back-to-school programs are one of many ways that The Salvation Army, its donors and its volunteers make a difference in the lives of families living in small towns and big cities alike,” said Lt. Col. Robert Thomson, Salvation Army Northern Division Commander.

Morrie’s Auto Group delivers 4,200 backpacks to Salvation Army headquarters as part of the company’s “Buy Happy Backpack Round-Up.”
## Northern Division Summary of Financial Statements

### Annual Financial Report of Operating Revenue and Expenses

#### Northern Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Ended 9/30/13</th>
<th>Northern Division Financial Summary</th>
<th>Adult Rehabilitation Center/Thrift Stores*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Support and Revenue</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way</td>
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<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>Program Service Fees</td>
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<td>Government Fees, Grants and Reimbursements</td>
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<td>Sales to the Public</td>
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<td>Other Revenue (Includes Gains/Losses)</td>
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<td>228,005</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE</strong></td>
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<td>$15,474,607</td>
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<td><strong>Program Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Social Services</td>
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<td>Worship and Service Centers</td>
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<td>Residential Services</td>
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<td>Rehabilitation Center</td>
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<td><strong>Total Program Expenses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Support Services</strong></td>
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<td>Fundraising Expenses</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td><strong>Total Supporting Services</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
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<td>Excess (deficiency) of Public Support and Revenue Over Expenses</td>
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<td>Net Transfers from (to) SA Territorial Headquarters</td>
<td>2,519,024</td>
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<td>(Decrease) Increase in net assets</td>
<td>456,218</td>
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<td>Operating Net Assets, Beginning of Year</td>
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<td><strong>OPERATING NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</strong></td>
<td>$18,309,790</td>
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#### Recap of Net Assets

| Operating Net Assets | 14,326,519 |
| Board Designated Net Assets | 2,711,468 |
| Total Unrestricted Operating Net Assets | 17,037,987 |
| Temporarily Restricted Net Assets | 1,271,803 |
| **TOTAL OPERATING NET ASSETS** | $18,309,790 |

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*The Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center combines its audited information with other Salvation Army rehabilitation centers across an 11-state region. The numbers listed in the above report have been extracted to show the center’s Twin Cities efforts.*
The Northern Division Financial Summary represents a consolidated reporting of the operating funds of Salvation Army units in Minnesota and North Dakota under the command of the Northern Division. Land, building and trust funds held by Territorial Headquarters are not included in these figures.
Many volunteers take one shift, some ring for a day, and the truly inspired go for the record. Last year, Captain Jim Brickson set a new high mark in Albert Lea, Minnesota, with a bell ringing marathon that lasted a whopping 105 hours. He hopes his shift will inspire yours.

Reserve your favorite spot now at SalvationArmyNorth.org/bellringing

Donations you collect will stay in your community to fund local programs for people in need.