



Autumn 2011 Edition

REPORTER

SOUTHERN AFRICA TERRITORY

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She picks up the tiny mite crying in her cot. She holds her tenderly, rocking backwards and forwards till the crying becomes a whimper, then stops altogether. In a warm, spontaneous gesture, her cheek rests gently on the baby's head and she quietly speaks the baby's name. And, for a few precious moments, it's as if there's only her and the little one she holds in her arms, in the whole world.

There are some things about **Auxiliary Captain Heather Roussouw** that you just don't have to ask, simply because – when you meet her – you feel you already know the answers. Firstly, she *loves* children. Clearly, she loves working at The Salvation Army's **Ethembeni Children's Home**, situated in a quiet corner of Doornfontein in Joburg, which is home to 60 little ones from birth to four years old. Right now Ethembeni – it means Hope – is full to the brim. For Auxiliary Captain Heather, however, her motto is: *'there's always room for one more'*!

"Like any children, these little ones have rights," she says. "I love it when I'm able to help them. Ethembeni works closely with Child Welfare: when a child needs a place to live, they ask if we have a place. When the courts stipulate that the child must be placed with us, he or she is then admitted."

Many tiny residents come here when they are 24 hours or a few days old, having been unceremoniously abandoned in fields, toilets, shopping malls, street corners or hospital steps. *Seven such babies have been admitted since December!*

Working in the Yellow Room – for babies up to six months old – is registered **Careworker Caroline Mogatwe**. "I love my job of bathing the babies, feeding them, changing and cuddling them and talking to them," she says.

Heather admits she has a soft spot for the toddlers, who number 22 at present, and who run to "Captain Heather", as they fondly call her,



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Ministering to the poorest...

Friendly, capable and dedicated to helping others, **Captains Moya and Glen Hay** are the embodiment of what it means to be Salvation Army officers. They're now based at **Durban's Montpelier Corps** and, since the closure of the Family Care Centre in Greyville – which they headed up – they have also assumed the mantle of responsibility for the nearby **Durban Corps**.

The months since December have introduced major challenges, but this is a couple who took change in their stride by creatively re-channeling their energies to helping elements of the community that most need help. The sign on Captain Moya's computer says it all: *“God is greater than any problem I face”!*

In the past three months, the Hays have identified the biggest problems in the surrounding communities and set about tackling each problem with a unique solution. Unemployment and lack of skills head up the list of community needs, with problems like hunger and poverty, school absenteeism, young school dropouts and school studies coming in next.

Setting up a skills centre is costly, but their prayers were answered: several companies have come on board to provide computers, software, craft materials, paint, labour and foodstuffs. These organisations include Kelly Group, KPMG, Woolworths, Hotel Edward, Style Design College and various churches, especially the Grace Church.

Montpelier Corps now has its own skills training facility, called the **Dorcas Centre**, to help make the unemployed employable. Here there's a basic R100 a month fee for learning candle-making, card creation, bamboo craft, jewellery-making and sewing: all materials are provided, and attendees get to keep what they make. There's also a **computer training programme** in which successful applicants pay a small annual fee for four lessons a week to learn MS Word Step-by-Step Office, Excel, Power Point, internet usage and typing skills. They are also taught how to prepare and send out their CVs. The Centre also refers people to ABSA's street vendor courses.

Then there's the **Homework Centre** to help children struggling to learn in English rather than their mother tongue. “Children like these are often unable to cope, but are pushed through the system until high school, when they become dropouts and socially dysfunctional, unemployable young adults.” Every weekday afternoon, Moya and Glen host 20 such children from a nearby school and – with parents' signed permission – they do supervised homework for around one-and-a-half hours and have a cooked meal before going home. “We're also teaching the children about the discipline of a homework routine and encouraging them to make it a habit.”

Knowing that it's been hard for long-term residents to leave the former Durban Family Care Centre, Captains Moya and Glen found places for them to stay. They run a life skills course for them and offer them counselling.

At the nearby Durban Corps, the Captains are grateful to have the help of **volunteer Octavia** who is assisted by part-time student **Sphe Madonsela**. With **helper John**, these capable women and several volunteers prepare

hundreds of sandwiches daily and transport them to **Cato Manor Primary School**. There headmaster “QJ” Thombela and assistant Sifiso Nthuli make sure each child is fed. Each Wednesday, Octavia and John go to the Coastlands Conference Centre where executive chef Siva Ganas and Vukani Mabaso have prepared a huge cauldron of meaty soup to feed the hungry of Cato Manor. The local Bread Shop and Coastlands also supply them with leftover bread for distribution. Many buckets are filled to the brim with hot soup and taken to where hundreds of men, women and children are eagerly waiting with their containers and, after saying grace, they are able to take home a nourishing meal.

In January this year, **Captains Alfred and Nomathemba Hadebe** took charge of the **Ezakheni Corps**, situated about 25 kms outside **Ladysmith in Kwa-Zulu Natal**. By that time, several nearby rivers – all tributaries of the mighty Tugela River – had flooded the low-lying parts of the township, causing much damage and hardship. Living in the heart of this poverty-stricken community, they see every day the struggle that families are experiencing to feed and clothe their children. The recession has hit Ladysmith and its surrounding areas hard, leaving local companies and individuals little in the way of surplus food or cash donations to help The Army help others.

But the Captains are determined to improve the lives of the Ezakheni community and are visiting Ladysmith companies to seek donations of non-perishable items like bread, mealie meal, samp, beans, tinned food as well as meat or bones. A one- or two-plate gas cooker and some large pots are desperately needed, too.

Once these donations are sourced, Nomathemba intends making large pots of soup on a regular basis to feed the hungry – especially the little children – of Ezakheni. With winter already on its way, this will be welcome indeed. The Hadebes also hold a popular, twice-weekly **Kids' Club** where local children come to the Church to play games, sing songs and take part in Bible studies.

In the heart of Durban's oldest suburbs is **Thembela**, a Salvation Army home providing full board and accommodation for 48 elderly men and women. At its heart is kindly **Captain Miranda Lang** who has been there for two years. She's someone who enjoys every aspect of her job and especially likes spending time with the residents: Thelma Cutler is one of them. Now 99 years old, this sprightly lady remains as bright as a button, and spends her time sitting on the verandah with friends and watching TV – while never missing her “alone-time” of prayer. She has two sons who visit regularly and says the secret of a happy old age is to let go of past hurts and to accept people as they are. Her friends include people like quiet Charmaine, gentle Margaret, Glenys with a wonderful Welsh lilt in her voice, kindly Ellen, and Dot who likes helping everybody.

Residents here enjoy the library on the premises, attending The Salvation Army Church, reading, chatting, playing bridge and doing jigsaw puzzles. The Home is helped by the Robin Hood Foundation and Danville Girls High School pupils' “Adopt a Granny” project, which ensure that residents receive regular visits and gifts. “It's heartwarming to know that so many people care,” says Captain Lang.

Touching hearts and lives



Captain Moya Hay (above left) is giving many unemployed and homeless people opportunities to make a brand new start, and helping school children become English-literate. **Captains Alfred Hadebe and his wife Nomathemba** (centre) are working hard to find enough donors in Ladysmith who will partner them in their efforts to feed the hungry people of Ezakheni. *Right:* A hungry child from Cato Manor township, outside Durban, protectively hugs the bread she got when The Salvation Army distributed food in the area.



For this elderly Cato Manor resident (above), joy is a loaf of bread and a container of meaty soup to take home to his family. *Above right:* **Salvationist Octavia** looks on as chef Siva Ganas and Yukani Mabaso, of Coastlands Conference Centre on the Durban beachfront, decant a huge cauldron of tasty soup they've made to feed the hungry people of Cato Manor. It also feeds the homeless people who gather outside the Durban Corps. Here (below left) **volunteer Sphe** asks everyone to bow their heads as she says grace.



Above: **Captain Miranda Lang** is a great favourite at Thembela Home for the Aged in Durban. Here she spends time with residents Thelma (left) and Charmaine. The Salvation Army's flood relief programme was welcomed in Lusaka Settlement in Mamelodi, where **Cadet Busi Mdluli** (below left) helped to



hand out hundreds of food parcels. *Right:* A daily crate of sandwiches is welcomed by headmaster QJ Thombela (on right) and Sifiso Nthuli of Cato Manor Primary School. Army volunteers prepare and deliver sandwiches Monday to Friday – and QJ says it has made a *huge* difference to the children's school attendance and to their ability to study.



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with pleas that continue unabated until she obliges – picking them up for a hug and a cuddle or pushing them on the swings.

But playing with toddlers and nursing tiny babies is only *part* of Heather Roussouw's busy job. Being in charge of administration takes up most of her time, along with staff matters, talking to donors and ensuring the cleaning and upkeep of the old building. And there's paperwork to do and oversee when a little one is fostered or adopted.

But she's a firm believer in the ability of young children to adapt to new situations, which makes it a little easier to say "Goodbye" when the time comes for them to leave. "It's hard when they leave us," she says, "because we have brought them up and they feel like our own." Many Ethembeni children are fostered or adopted, and strict regulations are in place to ensure as far as possible that adoptive and foster parents are suitable and appropriate.

The reward for Ethembeni's good work is that a few large companies have taken on the sponsorship of some much-needed items. Nampak supplies all the nappies that are needed – and this can mean 300 plus in a 24-hour period, while the Rivers Foundation provides R10,000 monthly for the huge quantities of milk formula that is needed.

Under Heather Rossouw's guiding hand, no donations are wasted and, in addition to the annual open day for donors, she welcomes requests to show people around the Home. "They just have to phone me on 011 402-8101 – I'll be happy to invite them round," she says, adding that the gutters urgently need repair after the heavy summer rains.

It's easy to see why Ethembeni brings hope for the future into so many tiny hearts, and why these little ones love Heather and her staff. It is an important stepping stone for babies and toddlers who've been abandoned, abused or orphaned, and who ask only for someone kind and loving to take care of them and to welcome them into their hearts.

Seen from here



Dear Reporter Reader,

This is the first newsletter published 'on my watch', as it were, since leaving Swaziland to step into the very big shoes of Captain Garth Niemand recently. My wife and I, together with our son, have been warmly welcomed and, since arriving here in Johannesburg, our second son has been born, giving us two reasons for joyful celebration.

Over the past couple of months, The Salvation Army has introduced some sweeping changes, and I'd like to use my very first column to provide you with some broad clarity on them. Times are hard for everyone right now and, as individual and corporate donors tighten their belts, the knock-on effect makes it difficult to fulfil our commitment to others. To address these cumulative effects, it was necessary to look at how we could minimise its effects on those who need our help, while ensuring that a more cohesive, leaner Army was focused on our ministry to the poor and needy.

The results are beginning to be felt: it's meant a more creative, purposeful use of our facilities in order to help people in a more sustainable way to help them increase their independence. And here I think of that popular analogy of teaching someone how to fish – rather than fish for them and, in doing so, continue their dependence on handouts.

No change is possible without some dissent and the rationalisation of our residential centres, in particular, has not been without some resistance. However, our staff have arranged new living places for the long-term residents and counselling is offered. Many of these residents are taking up The Army's offers of learning new skills to make their own living.

Our ministry has not closed – it's different in a positive way so that we can help those who need us most of all. It's more purposeful, offering where possible practical skills training and other opportunities to the unemployed and helping them to become employable; our feeding schemes and distribution of clothing continues; we're offering homes to more abandoned, orphaned children; and providing sanctuary to abused women and human trafficking victims; we're expanding our Kids' Clubs and school feeding schemes, continuing our work among the elderly, and using our careworkers to help us fulfil our community programmes. We're ministering where it's needed most!

Our dedicated staff have put their creative shoulders to the wheel to meet the challenges of achieving our ministry goals. Many of them are introducing new projects to enhance the viability of their Centres and are actively engaging their local communities for support.

Somehow I feel certain that such focus and cohesion will not only meet The Salvation Army's challenges, but will have your approval and support, too. And we know that, as in the past 128 years, we still couldn't do it without your generosity! Thank you for continuing your valued support.

**Captain Piet Semeno,
Public Relations Secretary,
Southern Africa Territory**



Philanthropist and champion of good causes

Dr Ivan Raymond May, who died on 31st December 2010 at the age of 63, leaves behind the kind of legacy which is impossible to repeat. It's a legacy filled with good works for causes he believed in and the inestimable contribution he made to changing the lives of so many people in need. Thanks to Dr May's ground-breaking contribution to Nedbank it became known as South Africa's first 'green bank'. In addition, his keen interest in music, the arts and the welfare of the poor, made him a friend to many NGOs. As an alumni of the

University of the
Witwatersrand, where he

obtained no fewer than five degrees, he continued his support of Wits up until his death. Dr May's advice and support will be sorely missed by The Salvation Army where he was the Chairperson of our Advisory Board – rarely missing monthly meetings on public relations and media.

He will be remembered by us all with great fondness and respect as a man of great intellect, integrity and kindness.

