



A life-changing investment

Jason Poutawa was 10 when he, his mother and brother moved into a government housing estate in which youth riots, drugs, violence and domestic violence meant many locals were too afraid to step out of their houses.

But when the Salvos moved into the area, life for Jason – and many others – was transformed.

Jason says his family had few possessions or resources. They struggled with basic necessities and had no computer or internet. So Jason became a regular at The Salvation Army homework club and cricket group. He attended youth events, camps, youth group, church and much more.

Inspired by the support he was given, Jason decided at the age of 17 that he would study youth work and has now worked for The Salvation Army for almost nine years. His current role as Territorial Youth Liaison Consultant sees him oversee a range of essential programs to help disadvantaged youth.

He recently shared his story with Honoured Friends of The Salvation Army at an event in Sydney. “I want to thank you for being part of The Salvation Army’s work 365 days a year,” he said. “Thank you for playing your part in The Salvation Army’s mission. It’s a big part of the reason I am here and why I do what I do.”

He continued: “A couple of years ago, a man who had passed away left a significant amount of funds to allocate to youth programs. That has enabled us to significantly help hundreds of young people in need to get their licences – a basic need in this world – so they can get jobs.



“We’ve been helping young people who’ve fallen out of the education system to gain an education, and helping young people into mentoring relationships through dance. In many areas, The Salvation Army is finding ways to engage with young people who are on the margins of our society.”

That one bequest and many other gifts, Jason says with a wide smile, have “allowed young people to experience the same hope and the same love that transformed my life.”

By Naomi Singlehurst

A lifetime of care

Margaret's life changed forever when her father returned from the war severely injured and traumatised. After a period of great family pain and conflict, he left his wife and children and never returned.

Margaret's mother was a trained nurse but was unable to work, as she had to care for Margaret and her sister, who had cerebral palsy. With no stable income, the family often struggled to get by.

Despite this financial hardship, Margaret was a bright and happy child. She went on to win scholarships to school and university, gained two degrees at Sydney University, married happily and raised four of her five children (sadly, one passed away).

Now in her 90s, Margaret – a long-term and passionate supporter of The Salvation Army – attributes her blessed life to the support she received from The Salvation Army. Without them, she says, "I really don't think I'd be here!"

"(My mother always) loved The Salvation Army," she continues. "They supported my mother with whatever she needed. They helped with food, home expenses, clothing, books and even my school fees.

"I don't think we would have made it, no – I'm sure of it. Things were really bad at times," she says, "but they came in and they were just so helpful – financially, emotionally and practically. I even remember my sister writing lovely poems about The Salvation Army."



Margaret (right) with grandson Lance.

Once supported, now a supporter

As Margaret grew older and could take on casual work, the family became more independent. Margaret's mother decided to donate regularly to The Salvation Army, and later volunteer. Soon Margaret was doing the same.

"Whatever money we had left over – whatever we could spare – we donated," she says. "We have always donated to the Salvos."

Margaret, who now lives with her daughter and grandson, says: "I do also plan to leave a gift to The Salvation Army in my Will."

Margaret hopes she has instilled her admiration for The Salvation Army in her children and grandchildren.

"I respect what The Salvation Army has done for people, both here and overseas. As a family, we're very grateful," she says.

"I hope through our ongoing support The Salvation Army can help someone in a similar situation to what I grew up in; maybe a mother struggling with young children, or dealing with a disabled child. I hope we can help offer a bit of help to anyone in bad circumstances."

By Naomi Singlehurst and Lauren Martin

The Salvation Army Australia is on an exciting journey, with new national mission and values statements. Learn more at salvos.org.au/mission

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