



# Wills Update

News & stories from The Salvation Army Wills & Bequests team

## Joy of growing independence

**“Our clients are among the most vulnerable people in our community, and we believe they need to have choice in their lives – buying their own clothing, choosing (and where possible cooking) their meals, setting life goals.**

**“I have a brother with cerebral palsy, and if he could have had a service like this, his life would have been so much better.” Captain Ed Henderson**

Seventy-three-year-old Audrey could not stop smiling, as she clutched her boarding pass and moved to board the plane that would take her from Brisbane to Los Angeles. After two weeks in LA with another friend Christine she would then go on to New York to stay with an old friend on the Hudson River. She loved every sight, sound and experience.

Throughout most of her life, such experiences would have seemed impossible.

Audrey has a moderate disability and has lived in institutions since she was just five years old. She was fed, cleaned and dressed to a regimented routine her whole life. Then, six years ago, for the first time in her adult life, and with government support, Audrey moved into her own home, supported by The Salvation Army Individual Lifestyle Support Service (SAILSS).

Manager of SAILSS, Salvation Army Captain Ed Henderson says: “We have 33 clients who have mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, as well as a range of other physical disabilities. The aim of the service is to support and enable them to live successfully in their own homes and function successfully as part of their

local communities.”

Lifestyle worker Cheryl Watson says: “We are ‘lifestyle workers’, not ‘carers’. We are there to encourage, support and teach. It may be teaching cooking, budgeting, public transport skills, cleaning, grooming, dealing with the supermarket.

“Many of the clients are very capable, but many have never really been given the opportunity to develop or express what they could do.”

Cheryl says the undertaking to organise the trip to the USA for Audrey and Christine included years of planning, saving, encouraging them to get passports, and organising carers to travel with them.

She says: “There was the budgeting, the excitement of going to travel agents. They bought and learned how to use digital cameras. We had to work through all the details, from getting photos taken for passports, to going through customs. It was a huge, huge undertaking and turned out to be a huge adventure!”

The SAILSS service recently moved from a rented premises to its own building in Toowong (Qld), purchased with the help of bequest funding after rent on

the rented premises jumped sharply and unexpectedly.

According to Ed Henderson, the service is seeing some clients move to incredible levels of independence. He says: “We have some clients who have bridged out and live totally by themselves now ... They have work, they live independently. One of our clients [who was orphaned and in institutions for years] wasn’t even able to make herself a cup of tea. Now that young lady lives in a unit by herself, and goes to a range of community activities. She’s totally independent!”



Audrey enjoyed the trip of a lifetime, which would have seemed impossible for most her life

## Building lives, building communities

Matthew\* brims with enthusiasm as he explains the importance of the support he and his partner were given by The Salvation Army Eastlakes (NSW) after an attempted house purchase went terribly wrong and left him in debt, saying: "They are absolutely fantastic mate!"

The frail aged pensioner who, until the past few years, had never asked for help, says: "I've got quite a few medical problems and every fortnight, I look at paying \$50 just for medication ... I'm surviving day to day, or week to week. Where would I be without the help the Salvos have given us? I'd probably be in a gutter somewhere."

Matthew is one of the 500 or so clients who have been assisted by The Salvation Army's 'Project Liberate' in the past two and a half years.

The program was initiated by members of The Salvation Army Eastlakes Corps (church) who wanted to put their faith in Jesus into action and make a long-term, tangible difference within the local community. It expands the traditional level of welfare or community support (plus offers emotional and spiritual support), through the help of bequest funding, to build individuals and families up in a positive way and to help avoid a downward spiral.

Local schools and medical providers were approached by The Salvation Army team prior to the start of the service to gauge areas of greatest need in the community. The service may now provide – for example – medical funding to those in greatest need, or help to send children to school in proper uniforms or on excursions.

Project Liberate also supports a number of high school students who have no parental support.

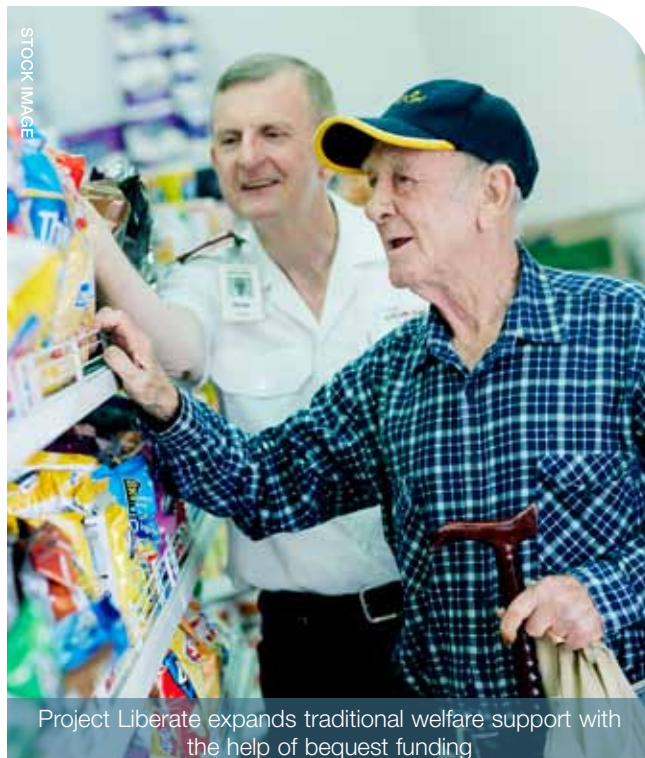
Manager Janet Davies says: "We've got a few upper secondary students, and if we weren't helping them they wouldn't be able to stay at school."

The team also works with the local women's refuge to support women and children escaping domestic violence and has supported a number of people who were unemployed to gain qualifications.

Janet says: "One lady has gone on to do several nursing certificates and now has a part time job. One more certificate to go and she'll be able to get a full time job. That has an incredibly positive flow on result within the whole family."

Because of the pockets of great economic disadvantage and number of large caravan parks in the area, the team sees a growing number of clients who are homeless or on the brink of homelessness, "so one of the big projects this year has to be to try and find some housing for homeless families in the area," says Janet.

"We have one homeless family at the moment - a mum and dad and three preschoolers. I'm desperate ... to do something for them, such as securing a 'head lease' (where the Project Liberate service guarantees to a landlord/ real estate agency that lease agreements will be complied with)," she says.



Project Liberate expands traditional welfare support with the help of bequest funding

Project Liberate funding is helping the family to stay temporarily in a small motel room, while they try to secure housing.

Janet says: "Last week, we had a mini pamper morning. I invited some clients to come, and they were able to get haircuts, manicures and that sort of thing ... I went down to pick up the mum and in talking to her found she hadn't had a haircut for 18 months.

"I really don't think the kids in this particular family are going to stabilise much until they get a house of their own. But despite being in one room with three little boys, at least they know there are people who love and care for them," Janet says.

"I think in this case it's actually saved their lives ... If they weren't getting this support, I don't think they'd be around still. It's tragic."

\* Names of clients have been changed to protect their privacy

People featured in photographs are not necessarily clients of the service

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