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*An update on the programs and impact  
of The Salvation Army in Malaysia*

# Stories of Courage, Compassion and Lives Transformed



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## Mission Statement

Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ while meeting human needs without discrimination.

# Foreword

*By Major Andrew Lo, Regional Officer, The Salvation Army Malaysia Region*

In every community we serve, hope begins with a small step—someone showing up, listening closely, and believing change is possible. This collection brings together stories from across our homes, centres, and corps—stories of children finding their voice, parents rebuilding after hardship, seniors rediscovering connection, and volunteers who keep returning with open hands and open hearts.

You will meet young people like Rocky and Tharan, growing in discipline and confidence; families like Celine's and Shanti's, navigating challenges with courage; and dedicated practitioners like Sabrina, Josephine, Major Francis, and Anthony, whose daily presence turns compassion into practical help. You will also meet volunteers—Carolyn, Jerone, Shirley, and Vivian—who remind us that generosity is measured not by what we have, but by what we share.

These beacons of hope—care, courage, and connection—are woven through our mission. They create a fabric strong enough to carry heavy stories, and soft enough to comfort those who are hurting. As you read, we hope you'll see more than programmes and services; we hope you'll see people, each one made visible by the light of another's care. Thank you for partnering with us to ensure that, wherever there is need, hope is never far behind.



## About The Salvation Army Malaysia Region

For more than 88 years, The Salvation Army has served communities across Malaysia with compassion, dignity, and practical assistance. Since our beginnings in Penang in 1938, our mission has grown into a nationwide network of centres and programmes supporting individuals and families from diverse backgrounds.

Central to our work are care services for children and youth in Penang, Perak, Melaka, Kuching, Kota Samarahan, and beyond. These centres provide safe accommodation, education, life-skills development, and emotional support for children affected by neglect, abandonment, or family crisis. Our education and day care programmes further strengthen early learning and after-school support for children from underserved communities.

Family support and counselling services help households facing financial strain, trauma, or conflict regain stability and resilience. Elderly residential and day care services ensure compassionate care, dignity, and community connection, while individuals with disabilities receive specialised support and skills training at centres such as Hopehaven.

During emergencies, The Salvation Army provides disaster relief, essential aid, and recovery support. Red Shield Industries and thrift stores promote sustainability while supporting community welfare.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to serving Malaysia with integrity and compassion, made possible by our officers, staff, volunteers, donors, and partners.

Across Malaysia, The Salvation Army operates 15 care centres, including 4 children's homes, 2 kindergartens, 3 day care centres, 2 elderly homes, and a special needs centre, supported by 5 family thrift stores.



Each year, we care for over 230 people, including 200 children, 40 adults with special needs, and 30 elderly persons, while reaching more than 1,000 individuals through 10 emergency relief operations nationwide.



# Becoming Rocky

## MUSIC, DISCIPLINE, AND THE COURAGE TO CHOOSE

Arriving at Kuching Children's Care Centre at five, Rocky grew up learning to name his strengths and manage his fears. Now 17, he weighs futures—mechanics or nursing—while tuning guitars, cutting hair, and kicking a ball with purpose. His story is about ownership: of choices, of calm, and of the life he wants to build when he steps beyond the Home.

### *What do you hope to achieve in the next 5 years?*

**ROCKY:** In the next five years, I want to understand who I'm becoming. I hope to be surer of myself and the choices I make. I want to learn skills that help me stand on my own and be confident in whatever path I choose. I want to look back and know I used my time well, pushed myself, and became someone I'm proud of.

### *What career would you like to pursue?*

**ROCKY:** I'm choosing between mechanics and nursing. Mechanics feels natural because I grew up watching my uncle fix engines, and I like figuring out how things work. But nursing interests me too, especially since many people from the Home went into it, and helping others feels meaningful. I'm still exploring both so my choice fits who I am.

### *What scares you about growing up?*

**ROCKY:** I worry about what happens when I leave the Home—where I'll live, how I'll support myself, and whether I'm ready. Sometimes the future feels like a blank space. But I remind myself that I've changed so much already, and if I've grown this far, I can keep going.



### *What's the toughest part of living here?*

**ROCKY:** Being away from my family. When I was younger, I didn't understand why I had to stay here, and it made me angry. I felt like my mum didn't want me. Later I learned she sent me here because she cared and wanted me to learn discipline. Understanding that helped me accept things and appreciate how much I've grown.

### *What have you learned about yourself here?*

**ROCKY:** I've learned that I'm capable of changing. I used to be stubborn and quick to react, but now I think first and stay more in control. That means a lot to me.

### *What do you enjoy doing?*

**ROCKY:** Music is a big part of my life—guitar, drums, piano, ukulele. Playing helps me express myself and stay calm. I also enjoy cutting hair, which the manager encouraged me to try. And of course, football is one of my biggest passions.



# Finding His Future

## LAUGHTER, LESSONS, AND A PITCH LIT BY EVENING SUN

At 15, Tharan is catching up—with classes, with confidence, and with the friends who have become brothers at The Salvation Army Ipoh Boys' Home. Between English drills and football drills, he sketches a future with big dreams and bigger heart: engineering or comedy, usefulness to his community, and the grit to secure a stable life.



*What do you hope to achieve in the next few years?*

**THARAN:** I want to grow into someone who is truly useful to the community and able to contribute in meaningful ways. I also hope to speak English much more confidently so I can communicate better with people around me. My big dream is to become a mechanic one day—or maybe even try my luck as a comedian because I love making people laugh! I believe that if I stay focused, keep improving myself, and study harder, I can do these things.

*What scares you about growing up?*

**THARAN:** Sometimes I'm afraid that when I grow up, I won't have a stable job or enough money to take proper care of my dad. I also feel sad because I miss my father and brother a lot, and thinking about the future can be overwhelming. To handle these feelings, I try to put all my energy into my education, and whenever I feel down, I talk to the staff and the boys here. Sharing my worries helps me stay strong and not feel alone.



*What keeps you active and motivated?*

**THARAN:** Football keeps me going! I play every evening with the boys, and it's the best part of my day because it keeps me active, happy, and connected with everyone. If I ever got the chance to play professionally, I'd want to join Manchester United because Ronaldo is my favourite player and he inspires me with his hard work, confidence, and determination.

*What have you learned about friendship?*

**THARAN:** I've learned that real friendship means having people who are there for you no matter what. My best friends here—Kean Soon, Chandry, and Roy—always support me, listen when I have problems, and take care of me like I'm their own brother. Being around them reminds me that I'm never alone and that friendship can make even the hardest days easier.

*If you had a superpower for a day?*

**THARAN:** If I could have a superpower for just one day, I would choose to be the richest man in the world. With that power, I'd be able to help people in need—especially families and children who are struggling—so they can have better lives and more opportunities.

# The Road Back To Her Children

## LOVE THAT PAUSES TO HEAL, NOT TO QUIT

Overwhelmed by hardship and addiction, Tina\* made the hardest loving choice: place her children in the care of The Salvation Army Kuching Children's Care Centre while she works to recover. Guided by her social worker, Sabrina, Tina leans into counselling, community, and consistency. The children are thriving; hope is gathering; and the family's story is being rewritten—toward stability and reunion. [\*Name changed]



*Sabrina, can you tell us a little about Tina's situation before she came to The Salvation Army for help?*

**SABRINA:** Tina had been carrying a heavy emotional and personal burden for many years. She's always been a deeply devoted mother of three, but she was also struggling privately with substance abuse—an illness that slowly took hold of her life. By the time she reached out to us, she was overwhelmed, exhausted, and trying desperately to hold her family together. Her living conditions in Kuching were extremely challenging. The family stayed in a deteriorating wooden house without proper facilities, and with no stable income, food insecurity was a constant concern. Tina worked as a part-time cleaner, often being away from home for long stretches. This meant her elderly mother—who herself had significant health limitations and no legal identification to access medical care—shouldered most of the childcare responsibilities.

*How did the decision come about to place her children into care?*

**SABRINA:** It was not an easy decision for Tina, and we never take such steps lightly. But by December 2025, it was clear that the children needed a stable, safe environment while Tina focused on her recovery. Tina understood this deeply. She wasn't giving up her children—she was protecting them. She told me during one visit, "I want them to have what I can't give right now." The placement gave her the space to

heal, while ensuring the children received consistent care, schooling, and emotional support. Tina made a promise to them, and to herself, that this separation would not be the end of their story, but a turning point.

*What kind of support has Tina received since then?*

**SABRINA:** We visit her regularly, creating a safe space where she can speak honestly about her struggles without fear of judgment. Recovery isn't linear—she has good days and tougher ones, but she keeps showing up. She's engaged in counselling, participates in family programs, and is learning healthier ways to cope with stress and triggers. Every positive step she takes builds her confidence.

*How are the children doing now, and how does that impact Tina?*

**SABRINA:** They are thriving. They attend school consistently and are showing positive emotional and behavioural progress. Knowing they are safe brings Tina immense relief. It fuels her determination to rebuild her life.

*What does Tina hope for the future?*

**SABRINA:** Hope—that's the word she returns to again and again. She hopes for reunification with her children, a stable home, and the strength to continue healing. Most of all, she hopes to become the mother she knows she can be.

# Strength in Quiet Places

## A WARM KNOCK AT THE DOOR, MONTH AFTER MONTH

In the home she and her husband built, 76 year old Madam Pathumavathy faces the ache of loss with dignity. The Salvation Army's Penang Corps monthly distributions lighten practical burdens—and soften loneliness with conversation, familiarity, and friendship. In the rhythm of these visits, sorrow yields to steadiness; connection restores calm.



### *How long have you been receiving the food basket?*

**PATHUMAVATHY:** I have been receiving the food basket for two years now. Every month, when the volunteers hand it to me, I feel a bit of my worries lift. At my age, it is difficult to manage everything alone, so this help means more than just food—it gives me peace of mind.

### *Can you share briefly about your family?*

**PATHUMAVATHY:** My life changed after losing my husband in an accident. He was my partner in everything. Not long after that, my son also passed away in another accident... it felt like my heart was breaking twice. I have a daughter, but her in-laws are not supportive, so I don't want to be a burden. I love her, but I choose to stay on my own. I manage, even when it's hard.



*“Sometimes, just knowing someone remembers you or asks how you are... it gives strength.”*

### *What work did you do before?*

**PATHUMAVATHY:** I worked in a prawn factory for 20 years. It was tiring work—long hours, cold water—but it helped me raise my children and support my husband. Those were simpler days. Now, when I look back, I feel proud that I worked hard for my family.

### *What is your current living situation?*

**PATHUMAVATHY:** I live in the small flat my husband managed to buy before he passed away. Every wall, every corner reminds me of him and the life we built. Living alone is not always easy, but this flat is my home. It makes me feel close to my family again.

### *Do you have friends or support from others?*

**PATHUMAVATHY:** Yes, I have made friends among the other clients. When we meet during the food distribution, we talk and laugh a little. Even a short conversation makes me feel less lonely. Sometimes, just knowing someone remembers you or asks how you are... it gives strength. These friendships mean a lot to me.

# A Sister's Light

WHEN LOVE, PATIENCE, AND WATER SET A SPIRIT FREE

Celine has watched her younger sister, Hwee En, step into herself—one carefully guided lesson, one joyful swim, and one proud Olympic moment at a time. With Hopehaven's support, a once quiet voice now communicates more clearly, and a bright personality has room to shine. This is a family's journey of patience and possibility—and of a young woman discovering the confidence to be fully seen.

*Can you share a little about your sister and what makes her special?*

**CELINE:** Hwee En has always been a bright spot in our family. She was born with Down's syndrome, but what defines her far more is her creativity, her emotional warmth, and her naturally joyful spirit. One of her greatest loves is swimming—she goes once a week, with encouragement from her swimming coach, and the water seems to bring out confidence and freedom.

*What were some challenges your family faced before joining Hopehaven, and how has it made a difference in her daily life?*

**CELINE:** Before Hopehaven, life felt a little scattered. My mum was balancing a full-time job while the rest of us were in school, so Hwee En was often cared for by a nanny. Communication was sometimes difficult, and we didn't always understand what she was feeling or needing. Since joining Hopehaven, she has blossomed. She's more confident, more expressive, and it feels like her personality shines through so much more clearly.

*Can you describe a moment or achievement that made you especially proud?*

**CELINE:** One of my proudest moments was watching her participate in the Special Olympics Malaysia Outreach Programme. Seeing her so happy and determined—completely in her element—filled me with a joy I still carry with me.



*What support at Hopehaven has been most meaningful for your family?*

**CELINE:** The teachers have been amazing. They guide us gently—helping parents and siblings understand communication, patience, and the importance of recognising that every child grows at their own pace.

*What would you like the public to understand, and how could more support help?*

**CELINE:** Children like Hwee En teach us what truly matters in life. With more funding and resources, Hopehaven can continue providing trained teachers, specialised equipment, and deeper support for children and young adults with special needs.



# Holding On, Moving Forward

## A MOTHER'S COURAGE IN THE HEAT OF HARDSHIP

For Shanti\*, love looks like lists, routines, and relentless care for seven children—some living with hypohidrotic ectodermal dysplasia that demands constant cooling and caution. Her children are also recovering from physical abuse inflicted by a family member, a trauma that has left deep emotional scars. With The Salvation Army's Melaka Corps support, she is rebuilding after trauma, choosing steadiness over despair, and giving her family time and space to heal. [\*Name changed.]



*What does a typical day look like for you as a single mother of seven?*

**SHANTI:** My day starts early with feeding, cleaning, and checking on each child to see how they're doing. With some of them having HED, I must constantly make sure they stay cool, hydrated, and safe throughout the day. It takes a lot of attention and energy, and some days feel long, but I keep going because everything I do is for their wellbeing.

*How has the abuse your children experienced affected your family?*

**SHANTI:** It was very painful, and the children were frightened for quite some time. The experience left emotional marks, and we're still slowly healing from it. I focus on giving them stability, comfort, and plenty of reassurance, reminding them often that they are now safe, protected, and surrounded by people who care.

*How do your children manage their condition, hypohidrotic ectodermal dysplasia (HED)?*

**SHANTI:** They've learned to avoid the sun and stay indoors most of the time to keep their body temperature under control. It limits their activities and what they can do outside, but they try to stay cheerful and accept the routines we follow. They understand why these precautions are necessary, even if it sometimes feels a little restrictive.

*What role does The Salvation Army play in your life now?*

**SHANTI:** I attend The Salvation Army church, and my children participate in the Sunday school programs. It has become a place where we feel supported and encouraged, not just spiritually but emotionally as well. Being part of that community gives us strength and helps us feel less alone.

*What kind of support from The Salvation Army has helped you the most?*

**SHANTI:** Their practical help, regular visits, and guidance came at a time when I felt completely alone and overwhelmed. They helped stabilise our situation and gave me the confidence to keep moving forward. Knowing that someone cared enough to show up made a big difference to us.

*What would you like others to understand about families rebuilding after hardship?*

**SHANTI:** Healing takes time. Even after the immediate crisis is over, families like mine still face challenges quietly, day by day. Kindness, patience, and even simple support from the community can make a huge difference. Sometimes the smallest gestures help us keep going and remind us we're not facing everything alone.

# Hope in Every Lesson

## TWO HANDS, STEADY HEARTS, AND YEARS OF PATIENT STEPS

For nearly two decades, staff member Josephine has welcomed students into the classroom at Hopehaven Special Needs Care Centre where progress is measured in courage, not speed. From early education to adult training, she champions stops believing in what persistence—shared by teachers and families—can do.

*What first brought you to Hopehaven, and what has kept you here for 19 years?*

**JOSEPHINE:** I used to teach kindergarten in Kuala Lumpur, and after getting married, I moved to Melaka. While settling in and searching for a new job, I came across an opening at Hopehaven. I decided to join—and I never left. The work can be tiring and sometimes emotionally demanding, but every day feels purposeful and rewarding. The students, with all their unique personalities and strengths, are truly what keep me going year after year.

*How have the needs of the students changed over the years?*

**JOSEPHINE:** Over time, we've seen many of our students grow up with us. They're no longer little children but young adults who need different kinds of guidance and training. The pandemic was a major turning point—some students couldn't continue, and online learning simply wasn't possible for many of them. Because of that, our focus has shifted even more toward teaching practical life skills and helping them live as independently and confidently as they can.

*Is there a moment with a student that you'll always remember?*

**JOSEPHINE:** Patience means everything when working with individuals with special needs. Their progress can be slow, but every step forward is precious. I'll never forget one boy who came to us at age seven unable to walk. I carried him everywhere for years. Today, at 23, he walks on his own.



Witnessing that transformation fills me with so much joy every time I think about it—and his parents are truly over the moon.

*What challenges do you and your colleagues face?*

**JOSEPHINE:** One of our biggest challenges is the need for more funding and resources. With better support, we could provide even more specialised tools, therapy, and training programs to help our students reach their full potential.

*What makes Hopehaven's approach special?*

**JOSEPHINE:** We take the time to look at each student individually—especially when it comes to their behaviours and learning styles. Some behaviours can be difficult, but we work very closely with parents to guide positive change and ensure that every student receives the patience, structure, and understanding they need to grow.

*What would you like the public to know?*

**JOSEPHINE:** Our team is incredibly dedicated, passionate, and deeply committed to our students. With more community involvement and support, we can continue empowering them through life skills training, vocational programs, and meaningful initiatives like our bakery project, which gives them real hands-on experience and confidence.

# Giving With A Quiet Heart

## SMALL SHIFTS THAT CHANGE WHOLE DAYS

What began as a simple offer to help became Carolyn's rhythm of service. At the kettle, a few ringgit given with joy tells a bigger story: generosity is measured by spirit, not sums. At the centre, her time fuels programmes that keep children safe, learning, and loved.

We spoke to Carolyn, who has spent more than a decade volunteering at Kuching Children's Care Centre, touching countless young lives along the way.

*What has been the highlight of your volunteering experience, especially during the Christmas Kettle Campaigns?*

**CAROLYN:** The highlight for me is truly the meaningful impact. Knowing that my time directly supports children from vulnerable backgrounds—whether through daily care, education, or festive activities—makes every moment worthwhile. I also treasure the small, unexpected moments: a child's smile, a kind passer-by who pauses to chat, or a simple donation given with sincerity. These little gestures stay with me and remind me why the work matters so deeply.



*What motivates you to return each year?*

**CAROLYN:** What keeps me coming back each year is the understanding that even a few hours can make a real and lasting difference. The fundraising helps sustain programmes that give children stability, encouragement, and love. Reconnecting with fellow volunteers also reminds me that I'm part of something bigger and meaningful. The experience grounds me, offers perspective, and shows how small, consistent acts of kindness can create long-term change.



*Can you share a memorable moment?*

**CAROLYN:** One moment I'll never forget is when a young man approached the kettle and donated just a few ringgit. He clearly didn't have much, yet he gave so joyfully and without hesitation. It was a profound reminder that generosity isn't defined by the amount—it's defined by the heart and intention behind the act.

*How does the centre impact children and the community?*

**CAROLYN:** Kuching Children's Care Centre offers far more than shelter—it creates emotional support, structure, and a sense of belonging for the children. It helps them grow in confidence, resilience, and self-worth. For the broader community, the centre helps break cycles of hardship and brings people together through compassion, shared responsibility, and hope.

*What message would you share with future volunteers?*

**CAROLYN:** You don't need any special skills to make a difference. Every contribution, no matter how small, truly matters. Volunteering not only helps the children—it also changes you in unexpected ways. You often walk away feeling you've received far more in return than anything you've given.

# Where Teaching Meets Heart

## A LONG DRIVE AND THREE EXPECTANT SMILES

After teaching at her primary school, Jerone crosses the island to sit with two boys who save her a seat and a story. Lessons turn into laughter; calligraphy becomes confidence; structure makes space for joy. In the simple act of showing up, young lives begin to bloom.

We spoke to Jerone Loo, a passionate volunteer at The Salvation Army Penang Children's Home Care Centre, who shared what inspired her to begin volunteering and the moments that continue to motivate her.

### *What inspired you to volunteer at the Children's Home?*

**JERONE:** I've always believed that teaching goes far beyond what happens inside a classroom. In 2025, I felt a strong personal calling to contribute in a more meaningful way, so I simply walked into the Children's Home and offered myself as a volunteer tutor. As a primary school teacher in a rural community, I constantly see how much children need genuine interaction, encouragement, and—most importantly—someone who is willing to truly listen.

### *Tell us about the boys you worked with*

**JERONE:** I tutored two lower-primary boys for about three months, and they surprised me from the very beginning. Despite their age, they were remarkably disciplined and responsible. They followed their routines closely and carried themselves with a sense of order—honestly, they were even more structured and well-organised than many children I've met outside the Home!

### *What were your sessions like?*

**JERONE:** Every Wednesday, and often during school holidays, we had tuition sessions together. To keep



things fun and meaningful, we balanced learning with activities like board games and even tried Chinese calligraphy. Slowly, I saw the boys becoming happier, more relaxed, and more willing to open up. They started sharing little stories about school and their day-to-day experiences. One moment that touched me deeply was when one of them looked at me and said, "I like your lesson so much!" It was simple, but it meant a lot.

### *What keeps you motivated?*

**JERONE:** I've always been inspired by Mother Teresa's wisdom: "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." That reminder keeps me grounded. I hold on to the belief that even small acts of kindness can have a big impact on someone's life.

### *Any advice for other potential volunteers?*

**JERONE:** Don't focus too much on a child's background or circumstances. What matters more is showing up with sincerity. Just be the person you want to be—kind, present, and willing. And if your heart is nudging you, take the step and be a volunteer.



# Grace In Every Season

## FRIENDSHIP AS A GENTLE MEDICINE

At 75, Shirley proves compassion grows stronger with use. In circle times and craft sessions, the Rainbow Club turns strangers into friends and moments into memories. The laughter is loud, the learning is real—and the welcome is for everyone.

We interviewed Shirley, a devoted member of the Rainbow Club at Melaka Corps & Community Services, whose commitment continues to make a difference.

*What first inspired you to join the Rainbow Club, and how long have you been part of the group?*

**SHIRLEY:** I joined because I wanted to do something meaningful with my time. After retiring, I knew I needed to stay active and connected to people. The Rainbow Club immediately felt warm and welcoming. I've been part of it for two years now, and it's become an important part of my life.

*For readers who may not know, how would you describe what the Rainbow Club is and what it does each month?*

**SHIRLEY:** The club brings people together—especially those who may feel lonely or isolated. Every month, we have activities like light workshops, games, simple sharing sessions, and ways for members to express themselves. Over time, you don't just meet people—you form friendships. We look out for one another, and that sense of belonging is what makes the club special.



*What does a typical Rainbow Club meeting look like, and which activities do you personally enjoy the most?*

**SHIRLEY:** We usually start with a warm welcome, some light movement, and then move into activities like crafts, games, or small group conversations. My favourite part is the sharing session. When members talk about their week or what's on their mind, you see how deeply we support one another. Those moments help us connect more as friends.

*What is one memorable moment or experience from the club that has stayed with you?*

**SHIRLEY:** There are so many, but one that still makes me smile is when we did a role-play session where some of us pretended to be doctors and nurses. We couldn't stop laughing for a long time — everyone got so into character, and it was hilarious! But it wasn't just fun; the activity taught us a lot too. We learned how to ask better questions, how to listen, and how to express ourselves more clearly. It showed me that learning can be joyful, especially when you're surrounded by friends.

*What would you say to someone who is thinking about joining the Rainbow Club but isn't sure what to expect?*

**SHIRLEY:** I would say, "Come and see for yourself." You'll be welcomed right away, and you'll never feel alone. The club is a friendly, safe space where members become friends, and friends help each other. It doesn't matter who you are or what you've been through—there's always a place for you here.

# After School, After Hours, After All

## HOW VOLUNTEERING SHAPES CHILDREN—AND THE VOLUNTEERS TOO

Vela first stepped into The Salvation Army Banting Learning Centre with the simple intention to help—and stayed because the children lit something in her. What began as an afterschool supervision role soon became a steady rhythm of lunch routines, homework sessions, and guiding little ones through the everyday skills that shape their confidence.

For the past two years, she has been a familiar, comforting presence: part mentor, part big sister, part steady beacon. We spoke to Vela to learn more about her journey, the memories that continue to inspire her, and the quiet magic that happens when someone shows up—again and again—with patience and hope.

### *What inspired you to volunteer at The Salvation Army Banting Learning Centre?*

**VELA:** I just wanted to help children who needed support, especially in their early years. When I learned about the Learning Centre and how many kids came here after school, I knew I wanted to be part of their world—whether it was supervising them, helping with tuition, or just being someone they could rely on.

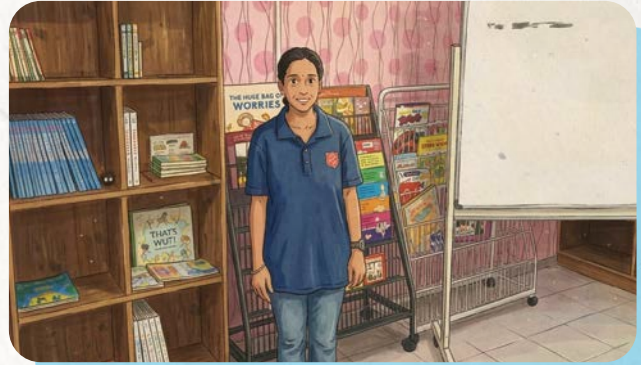
### *What does a typical day of volunteering look like for you?*

**VELA:** My role is quite hands-on. I help supervise the children during afterschool care—making sure they have lunch, helping the younger ones with bathing, and sitting with them through their English, Bahasa Malaysia, and Mathematics assignments.

Every day is different, of course, but that's what keeps it meaningful. It's not just academic support—it's guiding them through routines, discipline, sharing, and respecting one another.

### *You've joined several special outings with the children. Which ones stood out?*

**VELA:** Definitely our outings to Zoo Negara and the



KLCC Science Centre! Many of the children had never been to a zoo before. I'll never forget their faces when they saw elephants for the very first time. They were fascinated—absolutely mesmerised. Seeing the world through their eyes reminds you how magical learning can be.

### *Can you share one special memory that stays close to your heart?*

**VELA:** There's a young girl in Primary One whom I'll always remember. She struggled a lot with her studies when she first joined the centre—her English, Bahasa Malaysia, and Maths were all very weak. I sat with her day after day, going slowly, repeating things, celebrating small wins. Over time, she started improving—not dramatically at first, but steadily. And then one day, her parents came to tell me how happy they were with her progress. Moments like that remind you why you keep showing up.

### *What do you believe is most important for the children in your care?*

**VELA:** Knowledge—both academic and social. Marks matter, but so does learning how to care for friends, how to share, how to speak kindly, how to solve problems without fighting. These are skills that shape who they become. If I can give even a little guidance in those areas, I feel like I'm helping build something bigger—a foundation for their future.

### *What keeps you motivated to continue volunteering?*

**VELA:** Because every small effort matters. When I see them grow—whether it's improved grades or better behaviour or simply more confidence—it feels like light spreading. These children deserve hope, and if I can be even a tiny part of that, then it's worth every hour.

# A Steady Heart

## QUIET ACTS, LASTING IMPACT

For many years, Vincent has been a constant presence at The Salvation Army's Ipoh Boys and Children's Homes. As both a sponsor and tutor, he offers his time, attention, and conviction in quiet but meaningful ways. During the pandemic lockdown, he also stepped forward to sponsor meals for the residents, ensuring they were cared for during an especially challenging period. His approach to service is instinctive, thoughtful, and deeply personal, driven not by recognition but by an inner call to do what feels right. In this interview, he shares how volunteering has shaped him, the small moments he treasures, and the lessons he continues to receive from the residents.

*What motivates you to continue volunteering at Ipoh Boys and Children's Homes after all these years?*

**VINCENT:** To pacify an inner voice that constantly reminds and nudges me about the relative hopelessness of children who suffer in ways their peers never have to. It's a voice that doesn't let me forget that I can do something — even if small — and the conscience behind it doesn't rest until I act. Volunteering brings a sense of peace because it quiets that nagging feeling and aligns my actions with what I believe is right.

Vincent gestures to a quote he keeps close by: "Do not pity the dead, Harry. Pity the living, and above



all, those who live without love." Those words, he explains, encapsulate much of what keeps him going.

*What's been the most rewarding part of your experience as a sponsor and tutor?*

**VINCENT:** Simply being given the opportunity — the chance — to sponsor and tutor. It may sound basic, but the privilege of being entrusted with someone's growth, and to play even a small part in their journey, is something I don't take for granted. Knowing that I can be present for them in whatever capacity I can offer feels invaluable.

*Can you share a memorable moment or story about a resident who's made significant progress or achieved something special?*

**VINCENT:** One that stands out clearly was a brief, five minute encounter. A boy I tutored came up to me and excitedly shared that he had scored twice as

Continued on the next page ►



## *“Volunteering doesn’t require perfection, just willingness.”*

many marks as he did in the previous exam. It wasn’t a long conversation, but the honesty and pride in his voice made the moment unforgettable. Those small breakthroughs — the ones that matter deeply to them — stay with me far longer than they realise.

*How do you think your contributions, like providing meals and outings, have impacted the lives of the residents?*

**VINCENT:** I can only hope that what I’ve done has brought them some measure of happiness, even if only in small, temporary ways. Whether it’s a meal, an outing, or just showing up, I believe these simple gestures can add light to their days. Even transient moments of joy have meaning, especially in environments where stability can be limited.

*As a befriender, what’s the most important thing you’ve learned from the residents?*

**VINCENT:** That life is at its most meaningful when one lives with the bare minimum. The children at the Homes may have fewer material possessions compared to their more fortunate peers, yet they still experience and demonstrate genuine happiness — something an outsider like me cannot miss. Their ability to find joy in such simplicity has taught me

more about contentment and perspective than any textbook ever could.

*How do you balance your personal life with your volunteering commitments?*

**VINCENT:** By simply doing what instinctively feels right. I don’t overthink it, and I certainly don’t plan too rigidly. If something needs to be done, I do it. If I can be present, I am.

Vincent adds with a light laugh: “Don’t think. Don’t plan.”

A note on his desk reads “Impossible is nothing” — a phrase that, to him, reflects the idea that meaningful action doesn’t always require elaborate preparation.

*What’s been the highlight of your celebrations with the residents, like Chinese New Year or Mooncake Festival?*

**VINCENT:** Every opportunity I’ve had over the last 10 years to be of service has been a defining experience on its own. Whether it’s festive celebrations or ordinary days, each moment feels significant in its own way. Interestingly, I find the tuition sessions more meaningful than the celebratory events — they require more sobriety, patience, and focus, and because of that, they feel far more enriching and impactful to me personally.

*What message would you like to share with others who might be considering volunteering at the Homes?*

**VINCENT:** Be thankful if you feel the compulsion to help, because not everyone hears that calling — and even fewer have the courage to respond to it. Volunteering doesn’t require perfection, just willingness. Biblically, many were said to have been called, yet only a few were chosen. If you feel moved to step forward, honour that feeling. It might lead to something meaningful for both you and the community you serve.



# Lighting Up Little Lives

## PATIENCE, FESTIVALS, AND THE ART OF NOTICING

Vivian walked in during Mid Autumn and stayed for every season after. Tutoring led to creative projects, where young hands make colourful things and learn to value what truly matters—kindness, friendship, and finding joy in small wins.

We spoke to Vivian, a passionate volunteer at the Ipoh Children's Home Care Centre, to learn more about her journey and the impact of her service.

### *What sparked your passion to volunteer at The Salvation Army Ipoh Children's Home?*

**VIVIAN:** It actually began during the Mid-Autumn Festival. Volunteering had always been something I wanted to pursue since my school days, but I never found the right moment. When I visited the Children's Home with my JCI (Junior Chamber of Commerce) group, I had a meaningful conversation with Monnie, the Home Manager, about getting involved. She shared that a few primary school girls needed tuition support, and that simple request became the first small but significant step in my volunteering journey here.

### *What's been the highlight of your volunteering experience so far?*

**VIVIAN:** There are many highlights, honestly. But one thing that truly stands out is teaching the children to appreciate not just material things, but also the value of emotions and human connection. When they begin to understand the importance of gratitude—whether it's for friendship, kindness, or even a small gesture—you can actually see joy light up their faces. Those moments, where something "clicks" for them, are incredibly meaningful.

### *Share a heart-warming moment you've experienced while volunteering.*

**VIVIAN:** Heart-warming moments happen every single day if you're willing to notice them. A shy smile, an unexpected "thank you," or that spark of excitement when a child finally

understands a lesson—they may seem small, but they carry so much emotion. These little moments of genuine connection make every visit feel worthwhile.

### *What keeps you motivated to give your time and energy?*

**VIVIAN:** Patience is key. I've learned to take things slowly, plan my time well, and come up with fun activities that the kids can enjoy. Seeing them learn, open up, and grow—bit by bit—keeps me motivated. Their excitement and progress are what make me want to continue giving my best.

### *What's been the toughest part, and how did you overcome it?*

**VIVIAN:** The toughest part is committing to a regular volunteering schedule, especially when life gets busy. But I remind myself that I'm not here to expect anything in return. For me, volunteering is simply about giving from the heart, and that mindset helps me stay steady.

### *How has your role evolved, and what new skills have you picked up?*

**VIVIAN:** I started out just providing tuition, but over time I naturally became involved in more creative projects with the children. They absolutely love hands-on activities, and with Malaysia's many colourful festivals throughout the year, there's always something exciting to create and explore together. Along the way, I've picked up new ways to teach, craft, and connect with them.

### *Would you recommend volunteering here?*

**VIVIAN:** Absolutely. It does take dedication and a willingness to follow the Home's guidelines, but the rewards are immeasurable. Watching the children grow, learning resilience from them, and seeing how they find joy even in challenging circumstances—these are lessons that stay with you. In many ways, I truly feel that I've gained far more than I've given.



# Hope to the Forgotten

## A CHAIR PULLED CLOSE BESIDE A HOSPITAL BED

Anthony serves people carrying heavy diagnoses and heavier loneliness. He brings groceries and adult diapers—and something rarer: time, prayers, and presence. In that quiet dignity, those who felt abandoned remember they still belong.

In retirement, Anthony Simon continues to give back, serving as a devoted volunteer with The Salvation Army's Kota Kinabalu Corps & Community Services..

*Anthony, what areas of need do you encounter most in your ministry in Inanam?*

**ANTHONY:** A large part of our outreach involves supporting people who are dealing with serious health problems, such as chronic illnesses, disabilities, or conditions that prevent them from working. Many of them live alone because their families cannot—or in some cases choose not to—care for them. We try to meet their physical needs, but also remind them that they are not forgotten.

*How does abandonment or lack of family support affect the individuals you serve?*

**ANTHONY:** The emotional impact is huge. When someone loses family support, they often lose their main source of dignity and belonging. Many elderly clients tell us they feel like a burden, especially when their children stop visiting. Others were abandoned due to medical costs or because their illness requires longterm care. The loneliness is often more painful than the illness itself.



*“I believe compassion can bring light into places that feel very dark, and that’s what keeps me going every day.”*

*What forms of practical assistance does The Salvation Army offer to help them cope?*

**ANTHONY:** We provide food parcels, adult diapers, hygiene supplies, and occasionally help arrange transport for medical appointments. For those who are bedridden or have mobility issues, we deliver items directly to their homes. But beyond material support, we make time for conversations, prayers, and simply being present. Human connection is just as essential as food.

*Can you share a meaningful moment that reflects the value of this work?*

**ANTHONY:** One memory that stays with me is of a middleaged woman battling kidney failure whose husband left because he couldn't handle the medical responsibilities. When we brought her groceries and sat with her, she cried—not because of the food, but because someone cared enough to visit. She told us our presence gave her strength to keep fighting.

*What motivates you to continue serving despite the emotional challenges?*

**ANTHONY:** Hope. Even when circumstances are heavy, the smallest progress—a smile, a renewed sense of dignity, someone feeling valued again—makes a powerful difference. I believe compassion can bring light into places that feel very dark, and that’s what keeps me going every day.

# A Heart for Bintulu

## SUNDAY WORDS, WEEKDAY FOOTSTEPS

Major Francis Ng begins with presence: walking streets, learning names, and listening for what hurts. In Bintulu, he meets financial strain, loneliness, and empty cupboards with practical support—and a promise to show up again. His message from the pulpit becomes a weeklong practice of care.



### *What led you to serve in Bintulu?*

**FRANCIS:** When I received the appointment, I sensed a clear and unmistakable calling to be here. Bintulu offers a unique blend of challenges and opportunities, and I felt drawn to serve in a place where real needs exist and meaningful impact is possible. Stepping into this community felt like stepping into a purpose that had been waiting for me.

### *How did you start building relationships within the community?*

**FRANCIS:** My approach was simply to be present and available. I spent time walking through neighbourhoods, visiting homes, and introducing myself to families so they knew we were here to support them. By showing up consistently and engaging with people in their everyday spaces, genuine connections formed naturally—people respond when they see sincerity and steady care.

### *What needs do you encounter most often?*

**FRANCIS:** Many families are dealing with financial strain and the emotional stress that comes with trying to make ends meet. We also frequently meet elderly individuals who struggle with loneliness and truly treasure a simple conversation or visit. These needs remind us that support isn't only about resources—it's about compassion, dignity, and human presence.

### *What keeps you motivated in your ministry?*

**FRANCIS:** The resilience of the people here keeps me going. Even when they face difficult or uncertain situations, they continue pressing forward with courage. Journeying with them—seeing their strength, celebrating small victories, and helping shoulder their burdens—encourages and motivates me to keep giving my best every day.

### *How does your Sunday preaching shape your weekday ministry?*

**FRANCIS:** What I preach on Sunday must be lived out from Monday to Saturday. The message shouldn't stay within the church walls; it needs to become visible in homes, neighbourhoods, workplaces, and daily conversations. Preaching guides my actions, reminding me that ministry is a continuous calling, not a weekly event.

### *Can you share a moment that deeply impacted you, and what is your hope for the Bintulu Corps?*

**FRANCIS:** Visiting a family whose cupboard was completely empty moved me profoundly—their gratitude for even the simplest assistance reminded me how powerful it is just to show up and care. Moments like that reshape your perspective. My hope is that the Bintulu Corps will always be a place where anyone can find compassion, encouragement, and a genuine sense of hope, no matter their situation.

Hope takes time. It grows in the space between visits, across years of steady learning, and through friendships that don't let go. These pages capture moments on that long road: a first step, a brave decision, a restored smile. We're grateful to everyone who makes this possible—donors, volunteers, staff, and friends. Your presence turns resources into relief, and relief into renewal. Together, we can ensure that the next story begins with the same promise: someone will be there, again, tomorrow.



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