

# The Salvation Army Celebrates 125 years in Saint John

by Jane Barry, The Greater Saint John Community Foundation

For over a century, The Salvation Army (TSA) has been synonymous with the true spirit of giving to others in Greater Saint John and other Maritime Ministry Units.



Photo: Captain Darren Wiseman of The Salvation Army's Corps and Family Services and Major Carson Durdle, Executive Director of their Booth Residential Services invite the community to mark the 125th anniversary of the arrival of the Salvation Army in Saint John on April 18, 3-4pm at King's Square.

Captain Darren Wiseman Community Services Director and Corps Officer of the Saint John Community Church and Major Carson Durdle, Executive Director of their Booth Residential Services are extending an open invitation for April 18, 3-4 pm at King's Square to all local places of worship, their clergy and the community, as they prepare to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the arrival of The Salvation Army (TSA) in our community. "Please join us, and keep us in your words and prayers. Spread the word so we may celebrate with the community we serve." Durdle states. The occasion is being marked this year at other Maritime Ministry Units as well.

The plan is to actually re-enact the arrival of the Salvationists, complete with Saint John Police Force officers, as it took place in 1885. The ceremony will be based on records from a book relating the S.A. history in Canada, entitled "What hath God Wrought", written by their own General Arnold Brown. "The fire (referring to TSA) reached New Brunswick chief seaport, Saint John." The Saint John Daily Sun reported it as an "invasion.....the pioneers resorted to the bandstand in King's Square... five policemen stood, in significant attitude, with the Salvationists " for their first public meeting. In 2010, short passages from the historic tome will be read and music provided. The Mayor and other dignitaries are invited. The ceremony will be followed by refreshments including an anniversary cake at the TSA hall on Prince Edward Street.

Through Community Church Ministries, Christmas Assistance, Community and Family Services, Addiction and Rehabilitation Services, Family Tracing Services, Services For The Homeless, Correctional & Justice Services, Emergency and Disaster Relief, Recycling & Thrift Stores, Child Care Services, Chaplaincy Services, the Christmas Kettle Campaign and Turkey Drive, Services to Seniors and War Services Remembered, The Salvation Army has been serving communities since 1865 and are active in one hundred and twenty countries, all provinces of Canada and twenty seven communities in the Maritimes.

In Saint John, The Salvation Army operates two Thrift Stores, as part of a national recycling program. Community and Family Services is located on Waterloo Street. The Friendship Room, 27 Prince Edward St. offers daily companionship and refreshments and mid-week chapel services. Next door, The Salvation Army Community Church is a place of regular worship each Sunday at 10:30. Captain Wiseman stresses that sometimes the community overlooks the fact that in addition to the social services they provide, the Community Church offers services which include singing, traditional and contemporary music plus fellowship for people of all ages, regular bible studies, seniors', women's and youth groups.

Merritt Keith Chairs the Salvation Army Advisory Board and believes TSA is tops on the list of community agencies which provide for the basics of the most needy in our community but also for anyone affected by a disaster or when an urgent situation strikes. Anne Timms heads The Salvation Army Booth Residential Services Community Council and is a staunch supporter who calls them "unsung heroes who go about their work providing food, shelter and spirituality quietly and efficiently". Dr. Ed Doherty, who represents the South End in the legislature, echoes her description, adding that he welcomes opportunities at Booth Residential Services events, where residents meet and mingle with guests, keeping us all grounded in the real world. The late Connie Erb led the drive to form an Auxiliary, a helpful supporter of TSA local causes. She believed in the work the Army does and the power a group of community leaders could bring to enhance this work. Since 1999, TSA Auxiliary – Saint John has raised over \$150,000.00 for TSA programs and services.

Booth Residential Services (BRS) on St. James St., has been providing accommodation and support to almost eighty individuals at that location for over a quarter century, many on a long-term basis. The BRS Community Housing Program has been providing the life's basics while promoting physical, psychological, material, social, spiritual well being and reintegration into society.

Greater Saint John is fortunate to have a place for those who may be down on their luck, without financial resources, vulnerable, marginalized and would otherwise be homeless or simply have nowhere else to go. Thanks to The Salvation Army and other community groups, this has not been a high profile community issue. They have generously and quietly gone about their valuable work with society's least fortunate, asking for very little but to celebrate their 125th anniversary.