

Friday 18 November 2022

TIS THE SEASON FOR SALVOS' CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE APPEAL

Donations can be made at Newcastle Permanent branches

With Christmas right around the corner, The Salvation Army and Newcastle Permanent are calling on Hunter locals to spread some extra holiday cheer by donating a gift to the Salvos for their annual Christmas Toy Drive Appeal.

Auxiliary Lieutenant Bernie Muendel acknowledged that while Christmas is often referred to as the most wonderful time of the year, for families struggling, without the help of The Salvation Army, this may not be the case.

"This year, we expect there'll be around 3,500 children in the Hunter who may wake up on Christmas morning without a present to open," said Aux. Lt. Muendel.

"Through the generosity of Newcastle Permanent and the community, we can help put a few more smiles on faces at this special time of year."

Jodi Stapleton, Chief Technology Officer at Newcastle Permanent, said Newcastle Permanent is deeply proud to support the Salvation Army Christmas Toy Drive Appeal, a 34-year-old tradition.

"The Salvos are expecting to donate over 6,700 gifts in the Hunter this year and our people will be volunteering to help the Salvos sort and distribute these gifts," Mrs Stapleton said.

"With around 1,600 Hunter families in need this Christmas, Newcastle Permanent's partnership with the Salvos allows us to band together as an organisation to help bring some Christmas magic to families who this year in particular, may be doing it tough."

"I'm so grateful and thankful"

Salvation Army volunteer Tracey Richards knows firsthand the impact the Toy Drive can have on a family at Christmas, having first come across the Salvos at a time she herself was doing it tough.

"I came from homelessness and domestic violence. I was on the pension and wasn't fit to work and the Salvos were amazing, helping with my daughter," Tracey said.

"The quality of presents in the Toy Drive are amazing, it was such a massive help.

"My daughter, who was 11 when we first started going to the Salvos, didn't even know we were doing it tough because of the help we were receiving, the love and everything that goes with the gift.

"It was always special for her each Christmas."

Through the help of The Salvation Army, Tracey was able to find a home for herself and her daughter, and was determined to give back.

“I volunteer in the [Food Market at Bolton Point](#) and the Community of Hope in Toronto to help with homelessness,” Tracey said.

“For the Toy Drive, I will be helping with the toys, wrapping presents with my daughter.

“Now she’s 20 and she’ll be helping kids who were in the same predicament she was.

“I’m so grateful and thankful. Forever I will volunteer and help – whatever I can do.”

More than just toys

While it is called the ‘Toy Drive’ appeal, Aux. Lt. Muendel said that donations can come in a variety of forms.

“Many children in need are teenagers, so we encourage the community to consider donating gift cards and other suitable gifts for older children.

“If you are able, please add a Salvos Toy Drive gift to your Christmas shopping list and drop it in to a Newcastle Permanent branch to help bring a smile to a young person’s face this Christmas.”

Gifts for the Toy Drive should be new and unwrapped. Ideas include vouchers, games, beauty products, fashion accessories, toys, clothing, books, and sporting equipment.

Donations can be made at any Newcastle Permanent branch from Monday 14 November until Friday 16 December 2022.

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