

SALVATION ARMY

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the Salvation Army and highlight the wide range of services it offers to the people of the Northwest Territories.

As members of this House and of the general public are aware there are serious issues of homelessness and substance abuse in the North. Since 1981, the Salvation Army has been one group, of many, who attempts to address these issues in our community.

They provide a noon hour soup line and evening supper daily at the entrance of their Shelter. Free bread is distributed during office hours. The Emergency Shelter provides a secure sleeping place for people who would otherwise be left in hazardous situations. Activities and an evening snack are available to clients who are sober, or who are involved in transitional programs.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, people will not change their lifestyles until they make personal decisions to do so. Fortunately, when someone decides to make positive changes, the Salvation Army is prepared to help.

Caseworkers support clients with Withdrawal Management Services, followed by Life Recovery and Making Productive Choices Programs that deal with life skills, emotional stability and relapse prevention.

Staff and volunteers also provide assistance with resume writing as well as with job and apartment searches. They help address education and literacy needs. The Salvation Army also offers Budget counselling, emergency clothing vouchers to be redeemed at their Thrift Store, and family housing assistance.

The Salvation Army staff is extremely busy. Volunteer opportunities are available in many areas. Members of the public can make donations to the food bank, or participate in Christmas food hampers and the Adopt-a-Family program all coordinated through the Salvation Army.

Services are not exclusively for the homeless. They are available for any community members who are at serious risk. They do however, offer some programs targeted at specific groups. For instance, accommodation and Life Recovery Programs are available to men only. With the opening of the Bailey House, the Salvation Army hopes to better support men in transitional circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, if we ignore the issues of addiction and homelessness, more people will be victimized on the streets and we will experience more poverty and crime. The Salvation Army reaches out to help individuals, addressing a great need in our community. I would like to recognize and applaud all of the staff and volunteers of the Salvation Army and thank them for their dedication to the Northwest Territories. Let's remember their contributions and pledge our continued support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker