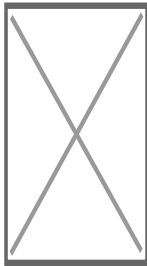


## 2005 – A Year for Children and Youth

*by Donald Bell, Lt. Colonel –*



As we begin a new year, we look forward to celebrating 2005—A Year for Children and Youth. The youth department, under the leadership of Captains Kyle and Lisa Smith, as well as the program department, under the leadership of Lt. Colonel Ray Moulton, have planned well

and now it is up to each of us to do our part to equip the saints and win children and young people to the Lord this year.

Do you remember my challenge last year in New Frontier's New Year edition? It was to win one person to the Lord and Army in 2004. If we had all done this, the Army would have doubled last year.

We want to positively affect the lives of the broadest possible number of children and youth under our care.

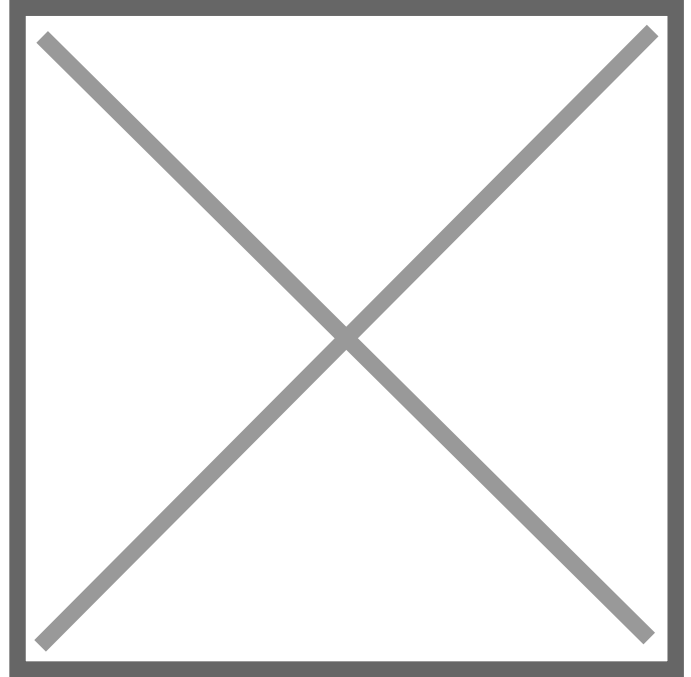
This will be achieved best by encouraging and emphasizing youth work on the corps and divisional levels but also by providing training and equipping opportunities for those who directly work with youth. This emphasis on training youth workers will increase the quality and effectiveness of the youth ministry throughout the territory. Here are our plans as developed by the youth and program departments of the USA Western Territory:

### **Boot Camp**

On the territorial level we are focusing on providing resources necessary to help corps succeed at reaching and discipling children and youth. The kick-off event is a territorial intensive weeklong youth workers' "Boot Camp" to be held January 26-30 at Redwood Glen in California. To make sure no corps misses out on this opportunity, the territory is offering to sponsor both the registration and transportation costs for one youth worker from every corps. Boot Camp will have inspirational and educational components, covering topics like relational-based youth ministry philosophy, child discipline basics, and program planning and preparation techniques.

In addition, it will offer specific practical training in starting and executing Salvation Army youth programs including Sunday school, Girl Guards, Sunbeams, Adventure Corps, junior soldiers, corps

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cadets, YPL (Young People's League), and HopeShare/SONday'S COOL.

### **Youth leadership training seminars**

A series of "train the trainer" seminars will be introduced for Salvation Army youth ministry to continue the training of youth leaders at the local level. Salvationists who are experts in their youth ministry field are writing these seminars. Corps, divisional, and territorial leaders will be trained to teach these seminars to local youth leaders at corps, regional, and divisional events.

### **Youth resource database**

To support youth workers in their endeavor to minister effectively to children and youth, an electronic youth resource database has been developed to facilitate access to youth ministry resources. At present, all officers in the territory have access to it through Lotus Notes. The database will be continually updated to include both existing program resources as well as any newly created territorial resources.

### **Linking social service youth with corps programs**

To better meet the needs of disadvantaged children and youth in our communities, a development specialist is working to create and promote systems and programs that will link the youth in our social service and community programs (i.e. tutoring and after-school programs) with our corps programs. Beginning now and throughout 2005, we will be promoting the HopeShare/SONday'SCOOL children's outreach program in order to reach these children with the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the intention of winning these children to Christ and assimilating them into the corps body.

### **Youth funding ministry**

After an intense application process, seven corps from across the territory were chosen to receive three-year grants to hire qualified youth workers. The grant is attached to a very intentional youth ministry job description with outcomes and accountability worked into the process. The grants are multi-year to allow enough time for the youth worker to have an impact in the lives of children and youth.

### **Youth Councils 2005 theme**

The Youth Councils theme for 2005 is "REVOLUTION." The theme will not only emphasize ministry to children and youth, but also the ministry of children and youth. Youth Councils will be focusing on empowering the youth of the territory to go out and do something for Jesus that will cause a revolution in their lives and the life of their corps and communities.

### **Service Corps**

Service corps will continue to provide opportunities for college age young people to minister in less developed countries and the youth department is looking at the possibility of bringing young people from our partner countries to minister in the USA.

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## **Commissioning**

Commissioning will provide an opportunity to emphasize and encourage the ministry of children and youth, as well as celebrate teens who are committed to learning the Word of God. Plans include the following events during the commissioning weekend:

### **a. "KIDS Live'05"**

We are going to enhance our traditional biennial Territorial Singing Company Competition by expanding it into a festival which will include Singing Companies plus one other children's performing group or soloist from each division (i.e. a Junior Brass Band or Hula Worship Dance group).

### **b. "Bible Bowl"**

The Territorial Youth Department has put together and distributed everything needed to hold divisional and territorial Bible Bowl competitions during 2005. Bible Bowl is a competition based on the understanding and memorization of scripture from a selected book or books of the Bible. The top divisional teams will play off at Commissioning. The Commissioning event itself is not the exciting part of Bible Bowl. The process leading up to this final competition makes this program an effective discipling tool as many youth from around the territory spend hours and hours reading, memorizing, and studying God's word.

## **Christian education and spiritual formation emphasis**

In order to strengthen our children and youth discipleship programs (Jr. Soldiers, Corps Cadets, and Bible Bowl), the Territorial Youth Department will be conducting a promotional campaign for these programs during 2005. This will be launched through specific practical training at the January Boot Camp, as well as following up on the divisional and local levels with promotional materials and accountability.

## **Local observances**

On the local level, each division and corps has been challenged to emphasize ministry to youth and children in their own local communities in 2005. They will not necessarily be adding new programs, although in many cases they may. Instead, the focus will be on developing ways to emphasize and strengthen the programs they already have to reach more children and youth with the message of the Gospel, bring them to maturity in Christ, and engage them in mission as young soldiers of The Salvation Army. I know you will do your part. In 2005 let each of us win a young person for Christ.