

Battling substance abuse, finding faith: The Salvation Army's role in the Mansfields' recovery

After achieving long-term sobriety through The Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC), Monte and Laura Mansfield began to pursue a life of serving others.

At 28, Monte Mansfield concluded a 10-year career in professional baseball for the Houston Astros and said he spent the following decade in a downward spiral.

"I was an absolute lost soul, and I was a far shell of a man who used to play professional baseball," Mansfield said. "I looked at my life and knew I had to surrender to God."

For Laura Mansfield, the stress of becoming a single mom and leaving an unstable former relationship led her down a similar path in San Diego. Homeless and alone, she said she would get sober for short periods, but nothing would stick.

"I was at a point where nothing was working," Laura Mansfield said. "I was lost to addiction."

Eventually, each would find their way to an [Adult Rehabilitation Center](#) (ARC), The Salvation Army's residential programs that provide spiritual, emotional and social assistance to individuals who are experiencing a variety of social, emotional and spiritual challenges, including issues relating to substance abuse. For Monte Mansfield, the San Bernardino ARC, and Laura Mansfield, the San Diego ARC.

Today, the Mansfields are ARC graduates serving as Ministry Assistants at The Salvation Army El Cajon (California) Corps. Their individual ARC experiences led to their connection and guided them to a position to serve others together.

"The Lord saved my soul and The Salvation Army saved my life."

Laura Mansfield

After graduating the program in 2020, Monte said he was eager to stay involved with The Salvation Army, and accepted the role of ARC Resident Manager in San Diego. He said he felt motivated to

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share his story with others, hoping to spark lasting change in them.

“I’ve been ‘saved to serve,’” Monte Mansfield said. “God has taken me on a road to where I can understand different aspects of life, and I can go and talk to pretty much anybody and be able to help guide them or share with them the good news of the Lord.”

Meanwhile, Laura Mansfield also remained engaged with The Salvation Army. After graduating from the ARC, she worked at The Salvation Army Thrift Store and resided at the ARC “Door of Hope” bridge house.

“The Lord saved my soul and [The Salvation Army saved my life](#),” she said.

She also supported women in the ARC program by offering guidance and providing transportation to recovery meetings.

“I became a leader for women in the program,” she said. “I encouraged the women to be present with their feelings and to surrender to God’s will.”

During this time, Monte Mansfield began delivering devotions during Sunday services at the San Diego ARC. During one of the devotions, Laura Mansfield was in the congregation. And as the saying goes, the rest is history.

“We saw that we had a lot in common,” she said. “We met and we just clicked, we balanced each other out well.”

They began talking and soon recognized their shared drive for supporting others.

“I wanted to be an officer [pastor] before I even met him,” Laura Mansfield said, recounting experiences ministering to others while she was unhoused and pursuing sobriety. “He wanted to be an officer before he met me. It just solidified our decision to be together and minister together.”

The couple married in June 2021 and the next year enrolled as Salvation Army soldiers, publicly expressing their commitment to Christ through the ministry and work of a local Salvation Army corps [church].

In preparation for [becoming Salvation Army officers](#), the Mansfields assumed the role of El Cajon Ministry assistants in early 2023. They experience hands-on ministry in many forms in this role, from managing drop-offs and pick-ups to the food pantry, the front desk, youth creative arts and junior church. They also provide assistance with administrative tasks for Salvation Army programs, from summer camp to the Christmas Angel Tree.

“It’s important for us to understand how to operate and help run a corps together,” Laura Mansfield said. “This is what we are potentially preparing for.”

She said their commitment to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ remains constant, even as their tasks vary each day of the week. Monte Mansfield said no matter his schedule, he makes it a point to pray with at least five individuals a day.

“People will come to Monte and I, and they know we won’t judge because we most likely have some level of understanding of what they’re going through,” Laura Mansfield said. “Just knowing we can help and provide support means a lot.”

It’s their [journey to sobriety](#) through the ARC, she said, that has positioned them where they belong, in a position to help others.

“My whole motivation is now I wake up, and I know exactly why I’m here on this planet,” Monte Mansfield said. “And that’s to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, not only through my voice but through my actions as I serve others.”

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- Did you know The Salvation Army served some 24 million Americans last year fighting hunger, homelessness, substance abuse and more? Where can you help? [Take our quiz](#) to find your cause and learn how you can join in today.