

Bishop begins a new chapter

Corps status brings greater permanence to the Army in California's Eastern Sierras.

by Laine Hendricks



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Ten years of persistence and hard work resulted in a ministry miracle on Oct. 1, 2010, as the Bishop (Calif.) Ministry Center became the newest corps in the Golden State Division. On Oct. 3, over 70 people—friends, soldiers and former leaders—witnessed the presentation of the new corps flag, signifying the official transition from service extension to full corps status. Everyone celebrated the fulfillment of a dream as a ministry that started with a simple checkbook in the police station finally came to fruition.



Today, the Bishop Corps includes a thrift store, property to build a new corps center, and leadership by an empowered corps team—directed by Envoys Tim and Kim Brown, officers-in-charge—dedicated to meeting the needs of the community.

Golden State Divisional Commander Lt. Colonel Joe Posillico said, “The opening of the Bishop Corps has been a long time in the making. This new corps is the only physical Salvation Army center between Lancaster and Carson City on Hwy 395. Purchase of property was made possible by a \$100,000-plus gift from the new Corps Sergeant Major Jerry Gabriel and his wife. Four candidates have been sent to the College for Officer Training since the Ministry Center’s opening and one other couple has preliminary acceptance status. No quick decisions here—prayerful and careful planning have made this possible.”

Humble beginnings

The Salvation Army’s work in Bishop officially started in 2000, when Dwaine Breazeale, a minister and volunteer at the time, was approached by then Mayor Kathy Henderson and Service Extension Representative Dotty Nelson to provide oversight of expanded Salvation Army services in Bishop. With support from the Bishop Ministerial Association and other organizations, Breazeale obtained a storefront office and The Salvation Army began hosting a food pantry. Within a year, growth required relocation to The Salvation Army’s present location. Through phenomenal volunteer support and soon incorporating Dwaine’s wife, Debbie, the growth continued. Soon, The Salvation Army in Bishop was offering worship services, community breakfasts, mentoring, holiday programs, emergency disaster training, and other services.

At one point, however, discussion arose regarding ceasing The Salvation Army’s service in Bishop due to little community support. Henderson stepped in and helped generate over \$100,000 in donations within a year. The community has actively supported The Salvation Army in the Eastern Sierra ever since.

Expansion to better serve the community

In August 2009, The Salvation Army publicly announced its intent to expand in Bishop with a new, centrally located building that will provide more space for operations and, ultimately, a permanent home for The Salvation Army. The property will house the Bishop Corps and Family Thrift Store in one location in a 15,000-sq. ft. facility, reserving approximately 6,000 sq. ft. for the new Family Thrift Store location—more than twice the size of the current thrift store operation. The remaining space will be dedicated to social services and ministry, including a new chapel and worship center.

“By owning our own property in Bishop, we eliminate lease costs and increase the amount of funds available to serve the public through our programs and services,” Brown said.

Off to a great start

Since the dedication on October 3rd, seven corps members have entered into soldiership classes, discovering the meaning of service as a soldier in The Salvation Army. Additionally, the corps recently embarked on a 24/7 prayer challenge. Brown said the great response it both “amazing” and “encouraging.”

“These events have certainly changed lives and shaped the ministry of the corps,” he said.