

## Cadet Allison Struck speaks at Commencement



*Cadet Allison Struck spoke for*

*the Friends of Christ Session at commencement June 8. Below is an excerpt from her message.*

Educational background in the Friends of Christ Session ranges from master's degrees to GEDs. Yet, in 2010, we were similar in our response to our callings, even if not in personal histories or experiences. After 668 days we now have far more in common.

We sat in classes and seminars, worked on brigades and lived and worshipped—all together. Our academics taught us skills to serve as Salvation Army officers: Bible knowledge, writing sermons, Salvation Army history and doctrine, and creating and keeping a budget. We exchanged ideas and learned techniques for dealing with difficult ethical decisions and received a foundation for counseling hurting individuals. The academic lessons taught us about deadlines, accountability and time management.

Our academics also provided framework for other lessons, lessons that cannot be measured by a grade: the invisible yet powerful lessons, such as submission, perseverance and tolerance—learned through practical assignments. We learned to submit to the authority of our leadership, even when we disagree; that many assignments and tasks may not be fun, but must be pushed to completion; to share different perspectives and tolerate ideas don't always match our own. But perhaps the most profound lesson we learned during our time together is that of relationships.



First, the success of our ministries is directly proportional to the strength, of our personal relationships with God and we were exhorted to give these relationships top priority. We were urged to find those to keep us accountable and walking in favor with God. Second, our family relationships matter. We learned we are called to a life where our time is not always our own and to share our callings with our spouses, children and extended family. We learned that God is concerned about our families and will help us serve them as we trust him to lead us. Finally, we learned to be successful in the relationships with the people God places before us.

For 22 months we were a session, not always an easy road to creating successful relationships. Group assignments in and outside class, house duty crews and brigades created many group opportunities. We learned we are all fallible and that we have the ability to hurt each other. We confronted, defended and forgave each other. We learned how to encourage and strengthen one another, how to hurt together during loss and celebrate during times of excitement. We learned that relationships worth having take a lot of determination and commitment.

We go out knowing that God designed us to be in and develop relationships with those we are called to serve. We believe that the relationships—friendships—we build as officers have the potential to lead people into a relationship with Jesus.

As we sit here today, we share a calling, history, education and memories. Most importantly, we share a commitment to win the world for Jesus as Friends of Christ.