

General says “Hafa Adai” to Guam

General André Cox became The Salvation Army’s first sitting General to visit the Territory of Guam as he and Commissioner Silvia Cox, World President of Women’s Ministries, descended upon the largest of the Mariana Islands Oct. 13.

Guam is home to about 160,000 people. Because it is a U.S. Territory, it has its own governor and senators, but its presiding president is Barack Obama. English and Chamorro are both the official languages, and tourism is the top industry, thanks in large part to Japan.



The General, who’s traveled to 51 of the 128 countries in which The Salvation Army has a presence, said that of everywhere he’s been Guam has to be “pretty high up on the list. But despite the beauty, despite the fact that this is a special place, there are many people in society here who are suffering.”

Out of 44,663 households in Guam, 2,512 households—many with children—don’t have any income at all, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Nearly one in every four Guam households has income of less than \$3,000 to \$20,000 a year.

Also noteworthy, methamphetamine, specifically high purity crystal methamphetamine, poses a serious illicit drug threat to Guam, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. KUAM notes that roughly 59 percent of people in treatment in Guam use alcohol and 30 percent use methamphetamine.

The Salvation Army, which established a presence on Guam in 1992, served over 12,500 individuals in Guam last year. The Salvation Army runs one corps in Guam, which hosts weekly worship services and an array of other ministries. Nearby, The Salvation Army also operates the Family Services Center—which serves those facing financial crises, eviction, or homelessness—as well as the Lighthouse Recovery Center (LRC), a six-month program which helps men transition from homelessness, addiction or incarceration to self-sufficiency.



General André Cox takes in the Memorial Wall at Asan Bay Overlook, which lists the names of the 1,880 U.S. servicemen who died in the 1941 defense of Guam against the attacking Japanese armed forces and those who died retaking the island from Japan in 1944. Across the platform are the names of the 1,170 Guamanians who died and the 14,721 who suffered atrocities of war from 1941-1944.



Western Territorial Commander Commissioner James Knaggs leads prayer alongside General André and Commissioner Silvia Cox and a group of residents of the The Salvation Army's Lighthouse Recovery Center in Guam. The six-month program is one of Guam's three residential treatment programs. "The Captains are here. They will help you with your journey with God, and we'll make sure you get a Bible," Knaggs said to the residents. "And you'll be a part of the fellowship of The Salvation Army."



General André and Commissioner Silvia Cox and Commissioners James and Carolyn Knaggs take a moment to observe the lives lost in World War II during a wreath laying ceremony atop Asan Bay Overlook in Guam. "It's very fitting that as part of our visit to Guam that we can be here as a group of Salvationists to stop, pause and remember," Cox said. "The Salvation Army has a great history of service alongside military personnel. "I'm always moved when we come to places such as this and we think of those who actually paid the ultimate price," he said. "We should never forget that what we have and what we enjoy came at a cost, whether that was young servicemen laying down their lives or whether it is God reaching out to humanity...a price had to be paid, and that price was Jesus."



General André Cox is greeted with a “Hafa Adai,” or “hello” from a group of children at the Guam Corps Community Center.



General André Cox and Commissioner James Knaggs honor Dr. Michael A. Griffin at the Hope & Honor Gala Oct. 15, at the Dusit Thani Hotel Grand Ballroom. Griffin, a communications professor at the University of Guam, has been a longtime supporter of The Salvation Army’s work in Guam.