

How faith guides a St. George volunteer's service and purpose

Despite health challenges, a volunteer brings hope and connection to others.

Each week, some 200 people turn to [The Salvation Army St. George Outpost](#) food pantry for help. With every visit, they're greeted with kindness and given food boxes to help feed their families. For many, it's more than a meal; it's a source of support and connection.

And occasionally, tucked among the canned goods, bread, and produce, there's something else: a Bible.

It's the signature move of Salvation Army volunteer Alex Guzman, a St. George resident who has spent the past year serving the community through the food pantry and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone he meets.

For Guzman, volunteering has [deepened his sense of purpose and connection to the community](#) as he copes with serious medical challenges that limit his daily activity.

"I know God still has plans for me," he said. "I'm still fulfilling my purpose."

Guzman was born with a hole in his heart that keeps the lower chamber from functioning at full capacity. The condition reduces the flow of oxygen-rich blood to his other organs and increases his risk of strokes, heart attacks and other life-threatening complications. He is currently on the waiting list for a heart transplant.

He said he takes it day by day, often resting at home in between hospital visits and doctor appointments.

"When I'm feeling well, I spend my Monday afternoons helping out at The Salvation Army," he said, explaining that volunteering has kept him involved and engaged with the community. "I'm 36, and I've never been able to work, so this keeps me busy."

Each week, husband-and-wife volunteers Jeff and Amy Zemke pick up Guzman and bring him to the St. George Outpost, where they all volunteer together.



The trio met at a local church, and after learning about Guzman's situation, they invited him to join them in volunteering.

"We started talking and praying with him at church and learned it's not easy for him to get out and do things," Amy Zemke said. "We asked if he wanted to accompany us, and he's loved helping serve the community ever since."

"Even when life feels heavy, I've learned that sharing hope and love can lighten the load not just for others but for me too."

Alex Guzman

Zemke said that while she and her husband help distribute food, they also make an effort to connect with the people who come in. When things get busy and it becomes challenging to talk with everyone, Guzman steps in to spark those conversations.

"Alex started bringing Bibles as a way to share his faith," Zemke said. "He reminds people that the Lord loves them and often invites them to church at The Salvation Army."

By sharing words from the Bible, Guzman aims to [spread encouragement and hope](#) to those he meets. He said he's always open to discussing his health as a way to show that even in difficult times, faith can provide strength and comfort.

"I'm blessed by the Lord to still be here," Guzman said. "My life journey is to share his love and hope with others, no matter what I face."

He said when he meets someone going through a tough time, he listens with care and shares a Bible verse to offer encouragement.

"He always uses his weakness and illness to share the hope that he has," said Jeff Zemke.

After one recent conversation, a young man was inspired to attend church for the first time and later told others, "Alex is the reason I came to church today."

With volunteers outnumbering staff at the outpost, Guzman's contributions and uplifting spirit play a role in fulfilling The Salvation Army's mission, leaving a lasting impression on most people he encounters, said St. George Outpost Officer Major Bob Schmig.

"His attitude and desire to help others are remarkable considering the things he's going through," Schmig said. "He never lets it get to him. Instead, he focuses on uplifting those he crosses paths with."

People often recognize this and leave inspired by Guzman's strength and resilience, Schmig said.

Guzman believes serving the community brings him as much fulfillment as it provides support to those he helps.

“Even when life feels heavy, I’ve learned that sharing hope and love can lighten the load [not just for others but for me too,](#)” he said.

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