

## Learning Zone staff meet at national convention

By Christopher Vilevac –

### Northeast Ohio Division prioritizes after-school programs.

The Salvation Army of Northeast Ohio sent nine [Learning Zone](#) staff members to the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) convention in National Harbor, Md, along with over 2,000 after-school professionals to learn, engage, and connect with other like-minded programs.



“The convention was a great opportunity to learn about different afterschool tools and resources, but also an opportunity to engage with other directors and teachers about the impact that each Learning Zone is making in their community,” said Margaret Craig, the Cleveland Temple Learning Zone director.

The group representing the Northeast Ohio Divisional Headquarters and eight corps received funding through the Thomas Lyle Williams Grant to attend the three-day conference. As part of the projected outcomes for the convention, the division hosted a small networking event for staff to learn more about each other as well as how to implement Salvation Army initiatives into programs.

Dawn Sharp, Child Care and Literacy Consultant in the New Jersey Division, discussed Mission: Literacy and its effort to teach literacy skills through 30 Bible stories, helping children struggling to reach a third grade reading proficiency and building Scriptural knowledge.

“The Salvation Army’s Learning Zones have an incredible impact in helping school age students with completing homework and making friends,” Craig said. “In many cases it is a holistic program providing a safe place after school where they can engage in enrichment activities as well as talk about The Salvation Army’s mission through programs such as Mission: Literacy, Club 3:16, Sunbeams and Adventure Corps.”

The Learning Zone’s purpose is to provide meaningful opportunities for learning, resulting in academic, social, emotional and spiritual growth in children and their families. In the Northeast Ohio Division, there are over 15 Learning Zones.