

## Marian Pritchett School holds 50th graduation

### The Salvation Army school for pregnant and parenting teens graduates 11 teen moms.

Eleven teen mothers beat the odds when they graduated from The Salvation Army [Marian Pritchett School](#) for Pregnant and Parenting Teens in Boise, Idaho, on May 20.

Pritchett1“Some struggles are worse than others and fortunately I believe that our ‘struggle’ is an opportunity to learn and grow rather than a problem,” said student Hayden Lowe. “Just because we’re young mothers doesn’t mean that we can’t become great parents, awesome role models, and further our education to become whatever we wish to be.”



Not only do the students defy the odds, but so does the partnership between The Salvation Army and the Boise School District, which enables the faith-based Salvation Army and a public school to work together, helping to ensure a bright future for these mothers and their children. This was the school’s 50th graduating class, representing a successful collaboration.

The district handles the academics, supplying the curriculum and teachers, while the Army provides the facility and services of full-time social worker Lindsay Klein, who offers weekly classes in parenting or prenatal care, and life-skills seminars with local experts, covering everything from banking to custodial agreements to self-defense.

“All this, along with the in-house childcare, is what keeps these girls from falling into the 70 percent of pregnant teens who drop out,” said Major Rhonda Lloyd, Boise corps officer. “Instead, over 90 percent of Marian Pritchett graduates go on to postsecondary education, vocational training, or the work force and that’s something to celebrate.”

Prior to graduation, students celebrated motherhood and individuals who significantly influenced their lives at the “Springtime in Paris” luncheon. Idaho’s First Lady, Lori Otter, spoke at the event and interacted with the girls.

Acknowledging them for overcoming tremendous obstacles, Otter commended the young women for making the difficult decision to carry their babies to term. She challenged each student to continue making good choices as they take life one step at a time. She encouraged the teen moms and two teen dads to discover their own strengths, building on them to create a better future for themselves,

their children and the state of Idaho.

“Otter connected with the students in a profound manner—in the room of over 80 people one could have heard a pin drop,” Lloyd said. “Even the babies seemed to know it was a special moment.”

Since the event was as close to a prom as the girls get, the room was decorated in pink and silver with iconic images of Paris. Each student could have a photo taken with her child and mentor under the Eiffel Tower. Many also had photos taken with Otter.

Amid preparations for graduation and the luncheon, the school welcomed 11 new babies this spring—seven boys and four girls.