

Meet Ruth Haynes

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By Paula McCambridge –

The room lights up when Ruth Haynes, 81, walks in. She stops to greet each person, often with a hug. It's the way she treats both co-workers and clients she meets through The Salvation Army Service Extension in Paso Robles, Calif., where she has volunteered for 45 years.

While raising [Haynes](#) her own five children alongside her husband, Vern, a Baptist minister, Haynes returned to school to earn a teaching credential. She taught elementary school in Paso Robles, Calif., and says The Salvation Army found her.

“Pastor Paul Brown at the First Baptist Church came to my home to talk about it; it was just getting organized here at that time,” she said. “I told him I had a little child, a little baby not yet in school. He came back and said, ‘You can bring her with you.’ We were meeting at Crocker Citizen Bank at that time.”

That was the beginning, around 1969, which led to a 45-year career donating time to the Army.

“Ruth is so kind, and I don't say that about many people—she's so beautiful inside and out, very kind to the clients,” said Beth Quaintance, service extension representative. “It is amazing to have Ruth still volunteering as an interviewer once a week...Ruth is soft spoken...She cares so much for people and is driven by her beliefs to help those around her. She has made a difference in each and every life she touches.”

But Haynes is slow to take a lot of credit for her work. Instead, she credits fellow volunteers like George Stoltenberg who she met toward the beginning of her volunteer experience.

“He was a big part of The Salvation Army,” she said. “Talk about him, not me. He had creative ideas about helping people in need.”

There is no question that Stoltenberg's work was meaningful, but so is Haynes', though she is humble.

“What makes me volunteer...,” she thought for a minute. “My husband knew the need of being hungry, so it was in my heart. I didn't want people to be hungry.”

The Salvation Army has awarded Haynes for her work over the years, and she looked on the awards with gratitude as she described the feeling of being recognized for her work.

“The awards, they made me cry,” she said. “I didn’t know anyone was paying attention.”

Betty Aikenhead, who has volunteered with Haynes for 12 years, said they go to the Community Care Ministries at Christmas and sing.

“Not with great voices, but we’d sing,” Aikenhead said. “This epitomizes what Ruth is—she’s a very special lady. I just adore this woman.”

Haynes also sings the praises of The Salvation Army and the difference it makes in the lives of others.

“The work I do here gives me a full feeling of love and helping people,” she said. “To me, it’s just helping people.

“I love the Lord, and I have much to be thankful for,” Haynes said. “Here, it’s about helping people in this environment of teamwork.”