

My first year



By Diana



Danielson, LT.

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...”

Charles Dickens could have been describing our first year of officership with his famous opening to “A Tale of Two Cities.”

Our adventure began as we made our way out of the auditorium after commissioning. These were the first words we heard: “Do not unpack—the quarters needs work.”

When we arrived at the quarters in Eureka, Calif., we understood what this meant. Luckily, we could not unpack even if we wanted to because our belongings took the scenic route to our new home—making their way to Montana before reaching Eureka. All the while the promise of better things to come and the knowledge that God was on our side were what got us through our first six months.

Although we are both California natives, this is our first time in this part of the state. The city of Eureka sits on the largest deep water port between San Francisco and Coos Bay, nestled behind “the redwood curtain.” The weather is mild—a typical day begins with dew in the morning, sunshine in the afternoon and fog at night. It’s quite beautiful and a treat for us; we’ll definitely take the mid-50s over the 100 degrees we experienced in Fresno!

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Meanwhile, I was expecting our sixth child—well into my first trimester—but this didn't slow me down. Our first day at the office we hit the ground running. In our minds, we had prepared ourselves for an appointment to a small corps that we would have to build up. Instead, we were sent to a corps that was already well established, and we have had many great learning experiences.

As we prepped for Thanksgiving and kettles we held our first Turkey Bowl to collect donated turkeys for families in need. Soon kettles began and health challenges arose. I was taken off "work" for the remainder of my pregnancy, which significantly limited my time at the corps. Our superb staff and volunteers spent many hours helping with everything that defines The Salvation Army holiday season.

As we came to the end of our first Christmas here, the holiday transformed into a twofold joyous occasion in our home. A sweet blessing that made our first Christmas here even more special was the arrival of our son—Solomon Emmanuel—who was born at 4:48 p.m. on Christmas Day. This precious little guy made sure his brothers and sisters were able to open their gifts before making his grand entrance into the world—two weeks early.

This has been a year that we surely will never forget! With moving three times (to Eureka, into a rental, and back to Army quarters) and caring for six children—along with ministry—our first year has been quite a task.

My life verse from Crestmont still resonates loud and strong today. It is found in Isaiah 40:29-31: He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Through it all God has been ever faithful. Now more than ever, we know that officership is God's plan for our lives. He has seen us through so much this year—how could this not be his plan? There is no better life for us than to serve full time through the ministry of The Salvation Army.

Each day, God provides subtle reminders of his presence. Our dear Silvercrest neighbor, Ann, gives us a thumbs up whenever she sees us. This affirmation may not sound like much, but it lets us know that we are making a difference in at least one person's life.

Praise the Lord—he has surely kept our family in his hands throughout this year.