

Orange County Celebrates 125 Years



Majors John and Lisa Van Cleef (center) receive proclamations, presented by District Supervisor Bill Campbell and Tustin City Mayor John Nielsen. Photo by Kevin White

The Salvation Army celebrates its anniversary with baseball, a parade and memories.

By Lisa Van Cleef, Major

It takes an Army—an army of soldiers, board members, community leaders and friends—to celebrate 125 years of service and ministry, and that is what The Salvation Army of Orange County, Calif., did Sept. 21-Oct. 7.

The Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim kicked off the celebration when Advisory Board Chairman and Angels' Vice President of Marketing and Ticket Sales Robert Alvarado presented a check for \$20,000 to the Army during pregame festivities at Anaheim Stadium. The Tustin Ranch Band presented a concert before the game and junior soldier Nate Freeman was honorary bat boy.

The annual "Salvation Army Night at the Ballpark" brought out 300 board members, soldiers and donors, raising an additional \$21,000 for the Army.

With over 300 in attendance, the Tustin Ranch Corps' Community Birthday Party included bounce houses, glitter tattoos, a fire truck display, barbecue dinner and a live BMX show in the parking lot.

Territorial Leaders Commissioners James and Carolyn Knaggs joined the celebration at a civic breakfast, attended by Tustin Mayor John Nielsen and District Supervisor Bill Campbell, along with Lt. Colonels Doug and Colleen Riley, Southern California divisional leaders. The Board of Supervisors and the City of Tustin presented proclamations to the Army and Major John Van Cleef, Tustin Ranch corps officer, addressed work in Orange County.



Child enjoys a "hands-on" fire truck.
Photo by Kevin White

"We're thankful the community has recognized the work of the last 125 years. We hold our heritage as a sacred trust, knowing we must move forward to honor those who have gone before us," Van Cleef said. "With the help of our board and local leaders we have identified five strategic priorities to tackle in the years to come: human trafficking, homelessness, youth ministries, affordable housing for seniors and communicating to the larger community our desire to partner."

On Oct. 6, the Army, represented by over 25 children and leaders from the Tustin Ranch Corps, marched in the Tustin Tiller Day's Parade. Santa Ana Corps soldiers led by Majors Antonio and Aida Horta led the parade delegation that also included the emergency disaster services canteen.

Later that evening, the Tustin Ranch Corps held a celebration of music, featuring all its musical sections. The Singing Company (leader Joy Lee), junior band (leader Justin Lansing), cello choir (leader Sarah Koo Freeman), David Dunford on piano, songsters (deputy leader Joy Lee) and senior band (Bandmaster Ed Freeman) presented a breadth of Army music, from historic numbers to modern renditions.

Previous corps officers who served in Santa Ana/Tustin Ranch were recognized for their leadership and heritage, including Lt. Colonel Gladys Riley, Lt. Colonels Al and Sherryl Van Cleef,

Commissioners Joe and Doris Noland, Major Bill Nottle, Majors Rudy and Judy Hedgren and Majors Lee and Michele Lescano.

The celebration concluded with a reunion Sunday where long-service soldiers were recognized, some having soldiered for over 70 years.

The museum of nostalgia, set up at Tustin Ranch, displayed an array of photos and memorabilia reflecting the 125-year history.