

Alaska Salvationist honored for community service

Carol Pitts is one of AWARE's 2014 Women of Distinction

By Karen Gleason –

Carol Pitts Alaska Salvationist Carol Pitts was recognized as a 2014 Woman of Distinction by AWARE (Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies), joining three other women honored at a celebration in March.



"I do not do this alone," said Pitts. "People work with me in different settings and in some I lead and some I support...I am humbled."

Much of Pitts' community service is tied to The Salvation Army, an organization she has been involved with most of her life.

"Carol is the right hand of The Salvation Army in Juneau," said Major Nila Fankhauser, Community Care Ministries (CCM) secretary for the Army's Alaska Division, who got to know Pitts while she and her husband were stationed in Juneau. "Carol has a larger-than-life personality."

Pitts' service with the Army includes coordinating the Thanksgiving dinner, Adopt-A-Family, Angel Tree and food distribution.

"At Christmas she is known as 'Mrs. Claus' as she is the force behind the Army's Christmas activities," Fankhauser said. "I have heard her say that her goal is to see that no child in Juneau goes without a Christmas gift."

Pitts ensures that children of inmates receive presents by transporting a toy store to the jail so the parents can select the gifts, which are wrapped and either mailed or delivered to the children.

"The child is innocent," Pitts said, "and their life is already being affected."

She also coordinated the first Operation Warmth in Juneau, distributing coats to community children.

As chairperson of advisory board, Pitts wrote the business plan for building the Army's Family Store. Active at the Juneau Corps, she has served as Junior Soldier Sergeant, Sunday school teacher and Girl Guard leader. Residents at Wildflower Nursing Home look forward to her weekly visits with the

CCM team. And when the corps officers are away, Pitts opens the building on Sunday, leads the meeting and preaches the sermon.

Pitts moved to Juneau in 1992 from Boulder, Colo. She has worked with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Services and the Department of Energy Alaska Power Administration. She began Orca Enterprises, offering whale watching and wildlife tours in Southeast Alaska, and is founder and president of Marine Education and Research of Southeast Alaska, president of Alaska Women in Travel and a member of the International Federation of Women in Travel.

“She attributes all of her success to the Lord,” Fankhauser said.

[PittsCarol02](#) Even though Pitts grew up in poverty, giving to others has always been part of her life. Her Salvationist mother taught her to share whatever she had, no matter how little that was.

“I didn’t know we were poor,” Pitts said. “I only knew we had to help the poor.”

Pitts has received other awards, including a Salvation Army community service award (“Northern Lights”), U.S. and International Woman of the Year, and the international peace prize, “Daring to Soar,” for providing inspiration and encouragement for youth.

“Carol is a woman of prayer,” said Fankhauser. “She has done a lot of things in her life but what stands out to me is her love of God, which she expresses by the way she lives and gives to others.”

Pitts does what she can.

“There is so much to do...I know I can’t help them all, but I will do what I can.”