

Salvation Army honors Roma Downey

Actress uses platform to benefit The Salvation Army

[The Salvation Army Southern California Division](#) honored actress and producer Roma Downey at the 2015 Sally Awards for her commitment to serving others.

Salvationists, advisory board members and friends of Downey filled the JW Marriot at LA Live Thursday night to celebrate both Roma's accomplishments as well as The Salvation Army's in its 150th year of service.

The Pasadena Tabernacle Songsters kicked off the event with a performance and after a few friends attested to Downey's giving spirit, a live auction to benefit The Salvation Army got underway.

Several past and present beneficiaries of The Salvation Army delivered brief testimonies. Among them was [Kent Buckner](#), a formerly incarcerated resident of the Bell Shelter.

"When I was in prison, [The Salvation Army] visited me. When I was homeless they housed me," he said. "They led me back to God, Jesus and a real life."

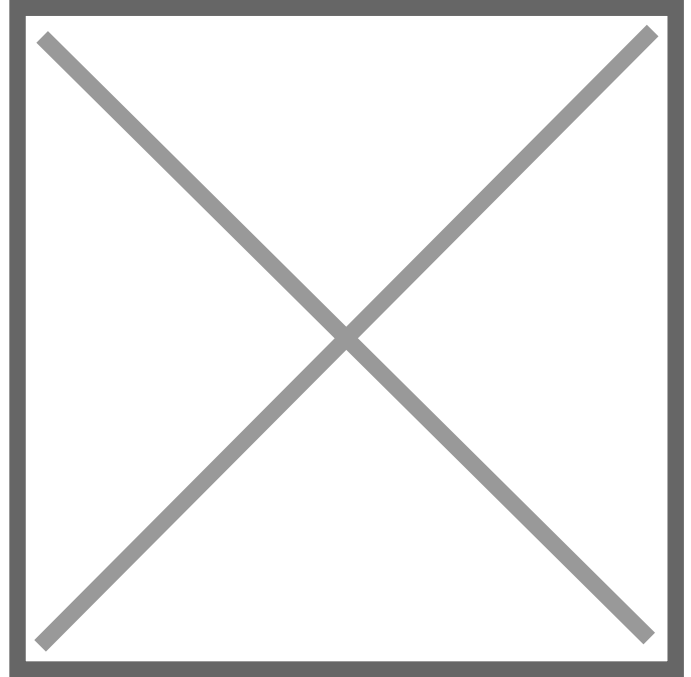
Buckner, now officially sober for three years, became a soldier at the Bell Lighthouse Corps last year. He said he owes much of his new life to The Salvation Army.

"The difference is that now I'm dependent on Christ," he said. "Before, I was dependent on myself."

Several of Downey's friends, including Rick Warren, Cindy Crawford and Diogo Morgado, delivered video messages to Downey, sharing their appreciation for her dedication to helping the less fortunate.

Outgoing Southern California Divisional Commander, Col. Doug Riley, described Downey as "genuine, kind and a bright light."

"She has put her faith in action and as a result has changed lives all around the world," Riley said.



Also in attendance was Downey's friend and singer, Della Reese, who shared an account of how Downey comforted her and helped her through the loss of her only daughter years ago.



[View image | gettyimages.com](#)

"I'll never forget when she said, 'If you want to talk about it we can talk about it. If you don't want to talk about it, I know how to be quiet.'" Reese said of Downey. "She stayed with me. She stood with me. She is forever giving."

Aside from her passion for service and warm spirit, Downey has also produced some of the most popular television and movie entertainment in recent memory, including "The Bible," which drew 100 million viewers, "AD," "Little Boy" and "Ben Hur."

Previous Sally Award recipients include Cecil B. DeMille. Bob Hope, President Ronald Reagan and Dame Angela Lansbury.

At the end of the night Downey took the stage, thanking The Salvation Army and everyone who participated in the event.

"I feel so touched and humbled," Downey said. "I'm sure William and Catherine Booth couldn't have imagined the impact of their work not only in their own time but over the past 150 years."

She addressed the victims of the mass shooting at Oregon Community College in Roseburg, Ore., urging those in attendance to pray for the community and look upon their neighbors with more grace.

“We live in a world full of hurt, and sometimes we can feel overwhelmed,” she said. “We wonder if we can make a difference, but we can...And we can start by seeing the face of God in everyone we meet.”