

## Silver Star Banquet honors parents, mentors

**Annual luncheon follow commencement ceremony at CFOT.**

*By Karen Gleason –*

18752932362\_13b645ddd0\_z

Commissioner Carolyn Knaggs, Western territorial president of women's ministries, welcomed guests to the Silver Star Banquet, describing it as "a smaller, intimate gathering where family and friends can share words of gratitude and love."



The annual event, which follows the commencement ceremony at the College for Officer Training (CFOT) at Crestmont, honors parents or spiritual mentors who have helped shaped the lives of the cadets, inspiring and encouraging them on the path to Salvation Army officership.

Originated by General Evangeline Booth in 1930 as the Order of the Silver Star, the Fellowship of the Silver Star remains to remind its members of their influence in the lives of officers.

18570148070\_db9e8dde5f\_z

In his invocation, Major Timothy Foley, CFOT principal, reinforced the mood: "There's a lot of love in this room today, a lot of memories."

Representing the Heralds of Grace Session, Cadet Yohani Ortiz spoke of the impact of both her mother and father on her calling. She said she wanted to become a woman, like her mother, who "works hard, shares the love of Christ and strives to make a difference."

Ortiz talked about a letter her father wrote when she was born about his commitment to Jesus Christ and to serving others in his name. Several months later, he was killed in an auto accident, and Ortiz knew him only through that letter. "God has used this letter to bring me to where I am today," she said.

She acknowledged all the parents and mentors present, quoting Proverbs 22:6: *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it* (ESV).

18137206533\_4a73ba9fa0\_zLt. Colonel Diane O'Brien, Western territorial secretary for community care ministries and veterans affairs, spoke to the assembly about Mary, the mother of Jesus, relating

her experiences with the young Jesus as he grew up to the experiences of the parents and mentors present. From the beginning, Mary accepted the gift and responsibility God had given her. In a sense, she said, Mary was the first Silver Star parent.

O'Brien, herself the recipient of two Silver Stars, said, "As parents, you're allowed the pride as you stand back and watch your child doing what appear to be miracles." She noted that their children may still call upon them when they need encouragement and spiritual support, emphasizing "the importance of those occasions when you stand with your child in difficult circumstances."

She spoke to the cadets: "Dear 'nearly' lieutenants, take care of the Silver Star parents residing near your appointment; there will be some nearby. Care for each other."

18731592436\_0acaa1f584\_z

O'Brien closed with the hope that everyone present know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Cadets of the Heralds of Grace Session then affixed the Silver Star pin to their loved ones' clothes, presented and read letters they had written, and presented the official Silver Star certificates.

For those cadets honoring a deceased parent, the Western Territory developed the tradition of the white rose of remembrance. Major Cindy Foley, CFOT director of special services, read the names of the cadet and their parent, and the appropriate divisional commander gave the cadet a crystal white rose—one that will last forever.

18137210153\_942551c702\_z

A cadet vocal ensemble led by Erin Riesebieter sang "This Day" (Lowell Alexander, Arr. Martin Hunt).

Territorial Commander James Knaggs offered a prayer of dedication, asking God to help the Silver Star recipients recall this occasion as their loved ones commence their ministry.

Colonel Sharron Hudson, territorial secretary of women's ministries, led the assembly in a closing chorus, "We Have Heard the Joyful Sound," and Territorial Chief Secretary Colonel Dave Hudson gave the benediction.

---

Want to see more photos from the Silver Star Banquet? Visit the [West's Flickr](#) to flip through photos of the 2015 Commissioning weekend and share with friends and family.