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Giving
Hope
Today

TERRITORIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT IN CANADA AND BERMUDA

WINTER 2025/26



Manjita Biswas personally thanks farming leaders in Liberia.

SOWING SEEDS OF CHANGE IN LIBERIA

By Manjita Biswas
and Kyle Mangio



Over the past three years, the Sustainable Agriculture in Liberia (SAIL) project has transformed the lives of farming families across Mount Barclay and Cotton Tree districts. What began as a pilot response to the Ebola crisis has grown into a powerful model of community-driven development, equipping smallholder farmers with tools, skills and hope for the future.

From the start, communities were at the heart of the project. Local leaders and volunteers helped identify project participants, guided planning and encouraged farmers to embrace new practices. More than 200 farmers received essential inputs—seeds, fertilizers and tools—that enabled them to increase production. Training in conservation agriculture and crop management

improved yields while protecting the environment. The introduction of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) opened doors for women and men alike to save, invest and grow small businesses.

The impact has been remarkable. Families are producing more food, selling directly in local markets and seeing their incomes rise. Women have stepped into leadership roles within VSLAs and farmer groups, strengthening both households and communities. Some young farmers are even using their earnings to support education or start small enterprises, planting seeds for the next generation.



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Christmas reminds us that light shines brightest in the darkest places. Around the world, we see this truth lived out in powerful ways.

In Liberia, farmers are moving from surviving to thriving as seeds of hope bring both food and dignity to their families. In Zambia, children at Petauke Community School look forward to clean water and safe sanitation, a simple gift that will change their future. In Paraguay, young learners are discovering courage and creativity through Curious and Brave, where every child—like Christopher, once on the margins—is now celebrated. And in Thailand, families displaced by floods have been met with comfort, food and the reassuring reminder that they are not alone.

As Mother Teresa once said, “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” Each of these stories reflects that truth—small acts of compassion and generosity multiplying into transformed lives and renewed communities.

This Christmas, you can help write the next chapter of hope. Pray for those in need, give generously to support ongoing ministry, or volunteer your time to bring joy to others.

Together, we can share Christ’s love in both word and action.

Sincerely,
Lt-Colonel Brenda Murray
Director of International Development

The story of SAIL is one of resilience and partnership. By combining local ownership with international support, this project has helped families move from surviving to thriving. As the community continues to build on these foundations, the harvest of hope will extend far beyond the fields of Liberia.

CURIOUS AND BRAVE: *From Foundation to Future*

By Kyle Mangio

When Curious and Brave first opened its doors in 2021, the vision was simple yet ambitious: to give children in Paraguay a safe place to learn, grow and dream beyond the limits of an overstretched school system. Over three years, that vision became reality. Phase 1 of the project has now ended, leaving a legacy of stronger students, empowered families and more resilient communities.



Across the four centres—Rayito de Luz, Viñas Cué, San Lorenzo and Capiatá—more than 120 children each year received daily tutoring, nutritious snacks and opportunities to explore creativity. The results were remarkable: more than 80 percent of students improved their grades, and nearly 90 percent of those with learning difficulties advanced to their grade level with the help of tailored support. Beyond academics, children discovered confidence through festivals, environmental projects and family workshops that turned learning into a shared experience.

For Christopher, an 11-year-old at Viñas Cué, the program was life-changing. Diagnosed with autism, he was first admitted on a trial basis. Today, he is fully enrolled and thriving. “Here, Christopher is not just welcomed—he is celebrated,” his family shares. His inclusion is a testament to the program’s spirit of acceptance and hope.



Phase 2 is now underway. Building on the foundations of the first phase, the program is expanding to support older children, strengthen family involvement and deepen its impact in each community. As Curious and Brave moves forward, one truth remains: children who once struggled are stepping into the future with courage, creativity and hope.



BRINGING RELIEF AFTER THE FLOODS

By Major Elaine Locke

In 2024, devastating floods struck parts of Thailand, displacing families, damaging homes and leaving communities in urgent need of support. Across the country, nearly 250,000 people, including 100,000 children, were affected. The hardest-hit areas included the Chiang Rai region and Mae Sai and Chiang Mai districts.

The floods and landslides caused widespread destruction that disrupted livelihoods and destroyed critical infrastructure. Health facilities, schools, water sources, major highways and bridges were among the losses, cutting families off from essential services and worsening the humanitarian need.

The Salvation Army responded quickly, mobilizing teams in Chiang Rai and surrounding areas to provide immediate assistance to those affected. Working closely with local leaders and volunteers, they delivered emergency aid that extended well beyond initial expectations. Families received essential supplies, such as rice, cooking oil, noodles and safe drinking water, to sustain them during the crisis. Buckets and other supplies allowed families to prepare and store food safely.

Household items, such as blankets and cooking utensils, helped restore a sense of normalcy for those who had lost so much. Beyond material aid, The Salvation Army visited displaced families, offering words of encouragement and comfort. The community's resilience, combined with the swift and compassionate support, made a remarkable impact during this difficult time. What began as a rapid emergency intervention grew into a co-ordinated effort that strengthened community spirit and provided hope for the future.

The response to the Thailand floods in 2024 stands as a testament to the power of partnership, preparedness and compassion. Thanks to the generosity of supporters and the dedication of volunteers, families were reminded that they were not alone in their time of need.



CLEAN WATER AND SAFE SANITATION FOR STUDENTS IN PETAUKE

By Major Heather Matondo

In the eastern region of Zambia, The Salvation Army Petauke Community School welcomes more than 200 students every day. From pre-school through Grade 7, the children are eager to learn and grow. While the classroom plays a central role in education, access to safe water and hygiene facilities is just as vital to students' health and overall well-being.

Since the school's opening, students have relied on pit latrine toilets, which have deteriorated over time and become unsafe and unsanitary. Recognizing the urgent need for improvement, a new ablution block is now under construction, thanks to funding from Gifts of Hope-Water and Sanitation. This new facility will include flushable toilets and proper handwashing stations, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: Clean Water and Sanitation.

Once completed, the school will be equipped with 12 toilets for students and staff, significantly improving hygiene conditions at the school.

In addition to improved sanitation, the project also includes vital support for female students through the provision of sanitary pads. Across the global south, studies show that girls often miss one to three days of school each month, or even drop out entirely, due to a lack of menstrual hygiene facilities, which include access to running water and safe disposal options. By addressing these needs, the project also contributes to SDG 5: Gender Equality, helping more girls stay in school and reach their full potential.

Thanks to support from the Gifts of Hope program, The Salvation Army Petauke Community School is proud to offer a safer, healthier learning environment for all students, where they can thrive, learn and dream big.



Gifts of Hope



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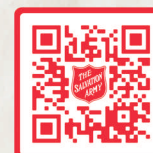


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