

# LANCASTER NEW ERA

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METROPOLITAN ★★

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Capt. Timothy Lyle, commander of the Salvation Army here, is surrounded by children in the organization's latchkey program. The Salvation Army is beginning a fund-raising campaign to expand its facilities to care for more children.



The Salvation Army wants to buy these six properties on South Queen Street.



The Salvation Army plans to raise \$2.5 million to renovate and expand its South Queen Street building, shown here.



Kindergartners attending the Salvation Army's half-day class enjoy a snack. The organization supplements the half-day kindergarten provided by city elementary schools.

## Will raise \$2.5 million for project by Bernard Harris, New Era Staff Writer

Nine-year-old Obed Ayala's day begins at 7 a.m. with a cold cereal breakfast at the Salvation Army headquarters in the city.

It ends when his mother returns from her job at 4:30 p.m. and picks him up there. By then, he's been to school and already returned for help with his homework, played games or done crafts.

If he wasn't at the Salvation Army, he would likely be home alone, said his mother, Imelda Ayala, through a translator.

"If she didn't find this place, she doesn't know what she would do," the translator said.

Capt. Timothy Lyle said Obed Ayala is typical of the children in the Salvation Army's before and after school programs that serve low-income children on the city's south side.

"That's the kind of people that we help, and there is a big need for it, and there is going to be a bigger need in the next few years as people are forced back to work," said Lyle, the Lancaster corps commander, in reference to recent changes in welfare rules.

The Salvation Army programs serve 60 children between kindergarten and sixth grade, and has a waiting list of another 15 to 20, Lyle said.

The organization wants to serve those additional children — and more — but is confined by the walls of its 25-year-old facility.

"Right now, we're just tripping over ourselves," said Lyle. "Very simply, we don't have the space to do any more."

To serve the needs of the community, Lyle believes the Salvation Army needs to grow — and grow dramatically.

The organization will soon be announcing plans to raise \$2.5 million to renovate and expand its South Queen Street building and acquire six more adjacent properties, giving it control over half a city block.

The preliminary plan calls for:

- Enlargement of the existing building to provide more space for the before-school "Breakfast Club," and after-school latchkey and half-day kindergarten programs.
- Purchase and renovation of four rowhouses to allow for expansion of food bank and clothing bank operations and provide space for interview facilities.
- Purchase and renovation of a store property at South Queen and Farnum Streets to accommodate a teen after-school program, a Hispanic Center and construction

of a chapel for the Salvation Army's Hispanic outreach congregation.

Also, entrances will be added and enhanced in the rear of the buildings facing the parking lot, and the area will be landscaped to create a campus-like atmosphere.

Those programs, along with a senior-care program and a program for people suffering from HIV and AIDS, are jammed into the organization's present facility.

The expansion plan also incorporates the Salvation Army's purchase of 141 S. Queen St., a single room transitional-housing building now owned by Pro Development Company, which is headed by real estate developers W. Edwin Miller and Quentin Miller.

Pro Development, with offices across the street, at 120 S. Queen, owns five of the six properties under purchase agreement with the charitable organization.

"I think it is a natural fit for us," Lyle said of taking control of the transitional-housing program.

The capital campaign will formally begin next January and end in July 1999, said Lyle. Work on the projects could begin as early as the summer of next year.

The organization will be inviting community leaders to open houses at the building to show them what is done there.

Lyle thinks the Salvation Army goes largely unnoticed in the community. Its building sits back from the street and some people may only see a Salvation Army uniform during the Christmas season, when faced with bell-ringers outside of department stores, he said.

Along with the Salvation Army's plans, another major project has been proposed for the northern half of the 100 block of South Queen Street.

An appointed committee has recommended that the city construct a \$6.5 million police station on the site of the vacant Swan Hotel, at the corner of South Queen and Vine Streets.

City Council will meet Monday to hear the committee's recommendation, at 6 p.m. in Southern Market Center, across the street from the hotel.

The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which shares Southern Market Center with city offices and council chambers, and has taken no position on the police station proposal. But Chamber President Daniel C. Witmer said he believes it, along with the Salvation Army expansion, would enhance the block.

"I really think it is a decision that should be made in the best interest of the city, not what's best for the

Chamber," Witmer said.

Mayor Charlie Smithgall said he has made no decision about the future of the police station. He and the councilmen have taken tours of the existing building and recognize a need for improvements.

"Everybody agrees now, that something has to be done. It's very obvious that something needs to be done," Smithgall said. "What that is depends on where the money is."

The mayor will not make plans until after he has firm numbers from city auditors in May.

Lyle said the police presence would be good for the neighborhood, but the Salvation Army is unaffected by the proposal.

"We're going forward with our project. We had this under way even before the search for the police station began," Lyle said.

The Salvation Army's plans will come about gradually, he said. The expansion of the existing facility and renovation of the century-old rowhomes would be done in three phases over two or three years, he said.

Similarly, the programs would also be expanded gradually. The before- and after-school programs, for example, would likely be increased from 60 children to 80, then 100 children, he said.

"There is definitely a need for this. I get calls everyday," said Linda Rhoads as she stood in the lower level of the Salvation Army building Wednesday, surrounded by children doing homework, preparing food in the kitchen and doing craft projects. Rhoads, who has taught kindergarten and has been assistant director of the program for five years, said there is always a long waiting list.

Lyle said the demand for all types of services has grown steadily over the years. The organization has tried to respond by expanding programs, hiring staff and recruiting volunteers.

But taking a visitor through his facility recently, he pointed out the cases of corn flakes stacked against the walls of the gymnasium and the clothing bank, which is little more than a large closet.

"Some people just need clothes for their kids to go to school. Theirs are very simple needs...others have very complicated needs, like a drug or alcohol problem, or a person with HIV and AIDS, that's a long-term need," said Lyle.

"We try to handle as many needs as we can, but this building can only handle so much."