



Here to Help

A new mobile health van is a source of pride for, from left, Bradley D’Gama, community services assistant; Joanna Dickinson, nurse practitioner; Kevin Dzisah, nurse; Linda Piccione, community services worker; and Marisa Prada, community services manager. The KHI Salvation Army partners with Support House to provide medical care to the underserved of Milton, Ont.

Being Prepared

Joanna examines Kevin inside the mobile health van before the morning rush at the KHI Salvation Army in Milton, Ont.



A Perfect Team

The Salvation Army in Milton, Ont., offers a safe location for the Support House’s mobile health van team.

by Jeanette Levellie

When Joanna Dickinson went back to university to earn a nurse practitioner degree, she wanted to help a particular group of people: the overlooked and underserved.

“I started out as a neonatal nurse, which was my original goal as a nursing student,” she says. “But by the time I decided to become a nurse practitioner, I had a family. I was out in the community more, so I saw the needs of people.”

Volunteering in her neighbourhood gave Joanna the chance to see first-hand how underserved many individuals are.

“I was drawn to working with this group,” she states.

After years of working with a mental-health and addiction focus, Joanna began working for Support House, an organization that helps people overcome barriers to housing. In March 2024, Support House received government funding to add a mobile health team for basic services, such as blood work, prescriptions and vaccinations. But there was one obstacle: they lacked a place to host the mobile health van.

“Helping People, Period”

After several months of searching for the perfect location, God led Joanna to Khi—A Community Church of The Salvation Army in Milton, Ont.

“The Army has the right fit for people with diverse needs,” she says. “We needed a spot where people who are underserved can feel comfortable and safe.”

Most of the clients who need medical care often lack in other areas, such as housing and food, she adds. This is why The Salvation Army was the perfect location.

“All the individuals who work there are committed to creating a welcoming environment, and to meeting as many needs as they can for every person they serve.”

The van offers their services by an interprofessional team, which includes addiction treatment and peer counselling, every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. One of Joanna’s patients, a homeless man, had not received any type of health care for 20 years. Now, he has a safe place to find medical help. And much more.

Joanna notes that The Salvation Army acts as a hub for many types of help.

“It’s the human connection,” she says. “You can’t address people’s needs with only one thing.”

She appreciates the way the Army reaches out to the underserved by bringing together many kinds of services, each playing a role in building community.

“They promote other organizations, too. They aren’t just about themselves. They’re about helping people. Period.”



Nurse at Work

Kevin in the fully equipped mobile health van

On-Call Duo

Joanna and Kevin are happiest when serving others. Here they pose with the mobile health van



The Perfect Team

Captain Ruth Hickman, corps and community ministries officer at Khi, feels honoured to host the mobile health van.

“As a Salvation Army pastor, I count it a privilege to journey with this diverse community as we endeavour to speak and show the love of God for all people,” she says.

Captain Ruth thanks God for the opportunity to lead ministry in a location that is becoming a hub of neighbours helping neighbours.

“Joanna and the team from Support House consistently bring their expertise and passion for well-being into Khi, allowing us to work together to offer supports for body,

mind and soul.”

Captain Ruth enjoys seeing the change in people they help.

“We often see neighbours coming in for one support, such as the food bank, and discovering that they can also talk about their burdens, pray with the pastors and be seen by a nurse in the same visit. It’s not unusual to see a physical change in a neighbour’s demeanour, having arrived weighed down by so much and leaving lighter and with hope.”

From medical care to mental health to spiritual encouragement, The Salvation Army and Support House’s mobile health unit make the perfect team to offer neighbours hope. *ff*