

March 2019

→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

David Nichols — President (405) 613-3120
Dondino Melchorie — V.P. (702) 688-3165
Ron Minnick — Sec. Treasurer (405) 473-2378

UPDATE

March greetings, and may spring get here quickly. Then we can fuss about the rain or tornadoes. God is so good to us, and we are in His hand.

We are still waiting on the accountants to finish their part, but we have started the new process on our end. Like all other changes made in the past, this will reduce our ability to help some of our clients with their finances. Without our help in money management, the outcome for some may not be good.

Please pray for them, that they are not taken advantage of, get in debt to someone, or get sucked into the drug scene. Many of the homeless population are homeless because of the same issues, and our banking laws make it impossible for them to get help. It is a big issue, and one cannot explain it adequately here.

On the other side of the coin, things are going very well overall. We are housing around 250 clients with normal turnover and normal problems. We are working on rezoning for our main location so we can get started on some permanent buildings. Utility bill are sometimes disastrous with mobile homes and travel trailers. So the future will be toward more permanent buildings. The economy and job availability will determine how fast things move. As the

song goes, "God only knows."

We lose men every year to health problems and age. Recently we lost one our older men when he was crossing the street. It was early in the morning, not yet light enough to see well. He was wearing dark clothing and there was not at a street light. A driver did not see him and ran over him.

Another aging former maintenance man, "Doc", was in a car wreck and is in a nursing home rehab center after multiple injuries. His condition is questionable at best. He and his wife need your prayers.

A third resident was known as "Mr. Wilson." He had the most heavenly smile and attitude. He came to Hand Up with prostate cancer. He always said he came here to die, and after a couple of years it came to pass.

We have others with cancer, sugar diabetes, etc. While we know the body doesn't last forever, we also know the soul and spirit do. We also know that whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

John 13:35: By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love have love one to another.

There are no exceptions, stipulations, footnotes, or prejudice. My flesh doesn't like it sometimes, but we are supposed to love our enemies. That doesn't seem fair, but that is God's love. He loves us when we are unlovable. He wants us to love others when they are unlovable. If it were not possible, he would have told us so.

Romans 13:10: Love does no harm to his neighbor: Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

1 Corinthians 13:4: Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 John 4:12: No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Some people thrive on finding fault with everyone they are around. If you are around someone like that, recognize those people talk the same way about you behind your back and that it isn't love.

Practice love and become more like Christ. How is it we have peace within Hand Up when we have guys from every religious background? By loving the men where they are at. And preaching the good news as it is written, as it is applied to their need in love. We are not commanded to make disciples of us, but to make disciples of Christ.

— *David Nichols*

APPRECIATION

There have been a few of our readers and friends who have really stepped up to the plate financially. It came at a time really needed because of extra expenses. All of our donors are wonderful and have beautiful feet because they are helping spread the Good News. I consider every person a friend unless they tell me otherwise. But donors are more than friends. They are family to me and men and women of Hand Up. We love you!

On Sunday, February 24th, my

brother Roger and a group from his church came to Hand Up and shared their faith. We are so blessed to have so many friends. We have our main service on Sunday night in three army tents combined. Sometimes it's not even warm, and in the summer it can be pretty hot.

We had an attendance of 7,100 man hours of service in 2018, plus a total of over 8,000 man hours of small group "Genesis One" meetings helping our clients become accountable. We also had another 10% absent for different reasons. Our goal is 98% with in-house chaplains following through with house-bound clients. We have three chaplains and three counselors who visit people who miss.

We also have a Celebrate Recovery class and two Friday night church groups. These are not included in the above numbers. Pray for all of these.

— *David Nichols*

TESTIMONIES

I was born eons ago. The world was a different place. Television was black and white, and there were only three channels. Phones had cords. There were no mobile phones. Prayer was in school, and marriages lasted for decades. My father was in the Air Force, and we moved constantly. The longest I lived someplace was four years. It was hard to make friends and then leave.

My mother went to church, but my father and I did not go to church. My father was an alcoholic, and I started using drugs and alcohol when I was fourteen. I was beaten when I did wrong. I was punished worse than my sister and my two brothers. I thought I was adopted. When I was fourteen my mother told me my father was my step-dad. My birth father ran when my mom got pregnant.

My drug use was bad after high school. I joined the Army, and I was sent to Germany. My drug use skyrocketed, and I became a full blown alcoholic. I was released on a drug discharge. I went through girlfriends and wives, because I preferred alcohol and drugs to them. After my last big crime I planned to kill myself. I drew up a plan to do it, and I put the plan in my pocket. I decided to get one last beer before I offed myself. I was drinking the forty ounce beer in a

parking lot, and I heard and felt God speak to me.

He said, "You don't need that anymore." I felt an amazing change in my mind and in my body. I poured out the rest of the beer, and then I went home and gave my life to Christ. On the very next day I started attending Alcoholics Anonymous. I also found a church to attend, and then I turned myself in to the police. By the grace of God I have been clean and sober for over ten years.

— *John Peabody*



I was born in Tulsa, but I remember very little of my life in Tulsa. My aunt lived next door to us. She always walked around in her bra. I guess she did this because it was hot. I have memories of my family living in different places, but I don't have memories of my father and mother in any of these memories.

My parents split up, and I remember living in an apartment with my brothers and my mother. My mother had a night job, and she was always sleeping. The only time we saw her was when she was sleeping on the couch.

We did things together. I remember going

to see Sesame Street on Ice. My brother and I were afraid of Big Bird. It was when we moved to Altus that my parents' separation became real to me. We stayed with my great-grandmother. At the time I thought she was my grandmother.

When I was an adult I learned she was my great-grandmother. My father's absence wasn't an issue, because that house was very busy. I have never lived in a busier house. We kids got a lot of attention, and it was the happiest time of my life. That house was the hub of our entire extended family. Even after all of the kids moved out we spent most of our time there.

It was around that time my mother began to drink a lot. She never missed work, but she never missed an opportunity to drink. She started dating and marrying abusive men. I think she wanted a male role model for her four boys, but I spent most of my early teen years listening to my mother being abused in the next room. I couldn't do anything about it, and I felt helpless.

I started skipping school and trying to be cool. I was stealing, smoking (weed and cigarettes), drinking, and getting into trouble. The police finally got involved. My mother sent me to live with my dad, but it didn't work. I disrespected him and his wife, and he realized it was too late for me. He sent me back to my mom. I joined the Army soon after I returned to my mom's house. I thought the Army would turn me into a man, but I failed at that.

I started drinking heavily, and on my 21st birthday I found myself in the worst trouble of my life. I got drunk, and I went out with some friends. I don't remember much of what happened that night, but I do remember waking up facing charges of unlawful entry and assault on a minor. This happened in Germany. I served 11 months in prison.

I always say that was the worst day of my life. I have been in and out of prison most of my life (mostly in). My latest crimes were burglary and concealing stolen property. I served five and one half years on a 15 year sentence. All of my troubles were fed by my addiction to drugs and alcohol.

Hand Up offers a safe, clean, and structured living arrangement. I would be on

the street if it wasn't for Hand Up. God has brought me safe thus far. He gave me my freedom, and He gave my son back to me. AMEN!

— Charles Martin



I was born in a small Oklahoma town called Clebit, which is about 40 miles north of Broken Bow. The year was 1946. In 1952 our family moved to Mount Hermon, Oklahoma. I started school in Mount Hermon when I was six years old. We didn't go to church. None of my relatives went to church. We moved four times, and we eventually settled in Antlers, Oklahoma.

I occasionally attended church when I was a teenager, but my heart wasn't in it. I worked different jobs from the time I was 15 until I was 21 years of age. I still didn't know the Lord. I got married in 1967. My wife came from a family which didn't attend church, and my wife and I didn't attend church. This changed when I was 32 years old. My wife, my sister-in-law, and I went to church one night.

My wife gave her heart to the Lord that very night. By that time we had three sons. One night my wife said to me, "If anything happens to me, I want you to keep the boys in church." I said I would do that. It was soon after this that I asked Jesus to come into my heart.

My boys grew up, left home, and got married. After this I committed the crime which for which I went to prison. In the county jail they were giving me the wrong medication for my diabetes, and this nearly killed me.

God came to me in a dream, and He said, "You will not die in prison." God told me to relax. He said his grace was sufficient for me. That was when I started trusting God.

I spent five years in prison. I got knocked around some, but I survived. I received an acceptance letter from Hand Up Ministries, and I have lived at Hand Up for four years. I broke my foot on the day after I arrived at Hand Up. It took six weeks for my foot to heal. Every day I thank God for Hand Up Ministries. I can't get around well, but I thank God for what I can do.

I have read the entire Bible 64 times.

— James White



We appreciate all our partners and donors. It is your support that enables us to assist individuals back into society as new brothers and sisters in

