

April 2020

→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

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# UPDATE

We pray everyone is well and healthy. We are living history that is not so good for most. It is just a reminder of how little control man has over life. It should also remind us how short life can be and what the important things in life should be. It should also remind us God's Spirit is even more powerful. It spreads by contact all over the world. Instead of bringing destruction to your life, it brings healing, wholeness, joy, and all things good. Satan destroys. God rebuilds.

Our men at Hand Up have not been hit by the virus yet. At least 10% could not survive it, so we continue to pray for our protection. We do what we can to protect. God does the rest. Since I am 70, everyone tries to protect me. It is hard to protect a man whose mind is 50, but his body is 70.

Our books are finally perfect, and we are ready to roll. With this virus thing, we will see what happens. We are working on increasing our space by ten at Chandler. We want it to be worth more when we sell to purchase something better.

My wife and I are still in the process of moving (downsizing) after 32 years in one home. I'm sure I'll get used to it. Hey, life goes on.

We are making progress on the paperwork for the Arkansas Hand Up. It is a process to do it correctly, but we will get there. Here in Oklahoma we have grown

10% per year for the last three years. I expect that to double soon. We still have nearly 500 living homeless in the woods, and 1,200 to 1,500 not registering in Oklahoma. God's heart aches when people hurt, and so does ours. If you want to join us by giving, send your gift to P.O. Box 2896, Oklahoma City, OK, 73101. We will soon have an address in Arkansas to give to.

We love those no one will love. We help those no one will help. We pray for those everyone hates, and we put hands and feet to our prayers. We may not be helping the masses yet, but the hundred plus we help each year becomes a total makeover. That means having a life and a family. It means paying taxes instead of wasting your taxes, and relying on God instead of being jerked around by Satan. That means learning how to give instead of failure. We are not a "maybe this could happen" place. It is a record of fact. This is happening now, every day. We don't receive a dollar of tax money to make it happen. Give God the glory He deserves. .



God's Spirit spreads by contact all over the world. Instead of destruction, it brings healing, wholeness, joy, and all things good.

— *David Nichols,*  
*Executive Director/President*

These are days none of us have been through before. The threat of Covid-19 has changed all of our lives. Policies and procedures have caused daily, and sometimes hourly, changes for most of us, especially here at Hand Up Ministries. We have had to address issues we thought we would never face. Social distancing has been a challenge, as well as trying to keep tabs on all of the residents who are elderly, have diabetes, compromised health, or breathing issues. The staff of Hand Up has been very resilient and has risen to every challenge that has presented itself. The residents have also pitched in to make sure the basic needs of all new residents are met. Some have taken from their own pocket to help others, especially to assist the new guys who have come in during the last two weeks.

Perhaps the greatest challenge we will face is yet to come. In the weeks to come, Hand Up could find itself in need of help. The challenge of the virus has caused many to be laid off from work, and this puts a strain on the collection of program fees, which are the lifeblood of keeping Hand Up in business. Many of the new residents have come to Hand Up without the necessary documents that allow them to go to work quickly. The effects of Covid-19 have slowed down the process for obtaining documentation to a crawl. In the past, we could get a new resident to work within two weeks. Now, it is an eight week process for those without a birth certificate.

I am not stating these things to complain or be negative. I want to give our supporters an understanding of the challenges facing Hand Up in these difficult days. Certainly, these are hard times for us, and maybe even for you. First of all, I fully trust God to bring us through these times as He has always done in the past. Secondly, I appeal to our supporters who

may still have sufficient resources, as well as a desire to help Hand Up Ministries, to please consider a special donation for these challenging days which will surely be ahead. We are tightening up here to make sure we are not wasting resources, and we are being good stewards. Pray, and see if God is calling you to help us in these days.

I am glad to report that the spirits of the residents are high. It is thrilling for me to see residents coming to staff and asking how they can help. Blessings on you and yours .



Hand Up staff have been very resilient and have risen to every challenge that has presented itself.

— Ray Riddle,  
Assistant Executive  
Director

## TESTIMONIES

I had a great childhood. My parents divorced when I was four years old. I lived with my mom during the school year, and I visited my dad and my grandmother on my days off. Everyone I was around taught me about God. When I was six, my dad started teaching me how to lay tile and carpet. My teen years were the same. It was school, work, and riding dirt bikes with my dad.

I was coerced into robbing a store when I was 18, and I was caught and went to prison. After I got out of prison, I started hanging out with the wrong crowd. These people were living with my dad and grandmother, which was where I was living. I chose to stay there, which was dumb. I went back to prison one and a half years after I got out. I spent four years and five months in prison.

I went to Hand Up Ministries in 2014. I got a job, and I got off supervised probation. I moved to Stratford in 2017. I lost my job, and I worked two other jobs before I was arrested again. I was released on probation, and I moved to Norman. I couldn't find a job, and I slept by the river. I had a GPS monitor, and I couldn't

keep it charged because I didn't have electricity. My probation was revoked, and I went back to prison.

Hand Up allowed me to come back in March, 2020, which was a blessing from God. I feel as if our Creator has been by my side since I was conceived. God has been on every side of me to protect me and help me learn.



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— *Joseph Pearce*

I was born in Haleyville, Alabama, and I had two younger brothers. My mom was 15 years old when I was born. My parents divorced after two years of marriage. My mom met my step-dad when I was four. We moved around a lot during my childhood, but we became more stable during my teen years. My step-father taught me about a good work ethic, and he taught me about earning money. He also exposed me to drinking alcohol, parties, explicit talking, and dirty films before I was ten. The rest of the family was decent and respectful.

Both of my grandmothers went to church every Sunday, and they made sure my brothers, my cousins, and I went to church. That was when I started to know the Lord. I didn't go to church as often in my teen years. I was interested in girls at that time. I joined the Marine Corps after I graduated from high school in 1992. I met a woman through a Marine friend, and we got married in 1995. This was a big mistake, and we divorced three years later. Military life and my wife led me away from the Lord.

I left the Marines in 1996, and I transferred to the Army after I discharged from the Marines. I developed a large circle of friends in the Army. We loved to go to the clubs, and we loved to party hard. I was stationed in upstate New York, and the locals liked the way I spoke. I spent a year in Korea,

where I went to prostitutes and did a lot of partying. After a year in Korea, I went to Fort Sill in Oklahoma.

I cut down on the partying and drinking when I was stationed at Fort Sill. I also got married. It was 2003, and I was shipped to Iraq soon after we got married. I came home in one piece, and my wife got pregnant with my daughter. Two years later, I had to do a second tour in Iraq. This tour was longer than the first tour, and it took a toll on me. I returned from Iraq, and nothing was right after that. Arguments and stress, along with work, were tearing me down mentally. Finally, my plate was full, and the dam broke. My thought process was no longer right, and I committed a crime. I turned myself in to the police in July of 2008. My chain of command escorted me to the police station.

I served four and a half years in prison, and I had five years of probation. I learned about Hand Up Ministries at a Genesis One meeting in prison. I applied to Hand Up, and that gave me something to look forward to when I discharged from prison. I came to Hand Up in February of 2013, and Hand Up welcomed me with open arms. I had a roof over my head, and I started working soon after I arrived at Hand Up. I have been attending Genesis One meetings and church services for seven years, and I am thankful for the blessing Hand Up has been. I couldn't have accomplished any of these things without having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and brothers to which I can turn for help and advice.

— *Jerime Frost*

I was born in a small town in Texas. The population was 3,000. I can't remember much of my childhood, except that it was violent and dysfunctional. I thought everyone lived that way. My grandmother raised us most of our lives. I can still remember that two room shack with a living room and a kitchen, but no bathroom. It was my older brother, two younger brothers, and me.

We went to church a lot. My grandmother was a God fearing woman. She was a woman of faith who believed and read the Bible. She taught us to call on the Lord, and she told us that prayer changes things. We went to a holiness church which believed in

laying hands on the sick, casting out demons, and being filled with the Holy Ghost. My grandmother prayed over food, situations, circumstances, sickness, and everything else. I truly believe I am alive today by the grace and mercy of the Lord and my grandmother's prayers. When I was a child, my favorite song was the one with the lyric "I shall not be moved, just like a tree planted by the water." I was a good and kind kid who loved Jesus.

The pain, the confusion, and the world got too hard for me, and I turned to alcohol. Alcohol helped until it didn't. My first wife put up with me for 17 years. I was in a car wreck because I was drunk. The car flipped five times and caught on fire. I was shot through my large intestines. I was shot another time with a .32 pistol. If it had hit me one inch over, it would have killed me.

After my fourth divorce, I turned to alcohol again, and I made some bad choices. I went to prison. While I was incarcerated, I had a lot of time to look back on my failures and mistakes. I learned a lot in the classes I took in prison. Most of all, I learned to accept responsibility for my actions. I lost everything, and I didn't know what I was going to do when I was released. I applied to Hand Up Ministries, and I was accepted. I thank God for Hand Up. I have a roof over my head, clothes to wear, and food to eat. I believe God has a plan for me.

I am 58 years old. My mother died of cancer in 2017. My sister was killed, and my aunt died of alcoholism. I am so tired of starting over.

— Calvin Menefield

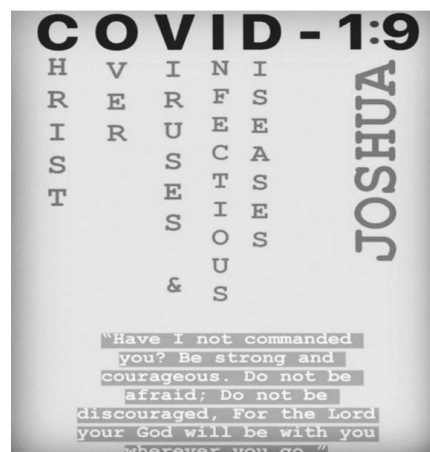
I was born in Wilmington, North Carolina in 1948. My mother abandoned her children when I was a baby. My father was a truck driver, and he was on the road at the time. A black lady found us in the house after we had been alone for three days, and she took us to her house. She was able to breast feed me because she had a daughter who was one month older than me. My dad came and got us. He sent my sister and me to live with our grandparents, and he put my three older brothers in an orphanage. My dad came and got us when I was eight years old. Shortly after that, my mom came and got my sister. This started my life of crime.

We lived by a river, and I stole a boat to go find my sister. I was raped by my brother when I was 11. I told my dad, and he beat me because he thought I was lying. I caught the school bus when I was able, and I got off at a crossroads and never looked back. I have been to prison 13 times. That is the subtotal of a man who has failed in life.

Something happened the last time I was in prison. I was in church, and I heard a song which had these lyrics: "For when he was on the cross, I was on His mind." This song changed my life. I now know that Jesus was always with me. He protected me through the bad times and good times. I started studying the Bible, and I have done 28 Bible studies. I am writing a Christian western (no cuss words). I am up to page 155. I have given my soul to God through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Hand Up has given me a place to live that is drug and booze free. I believe we all have our eyes on Jesus. They have church and programs to help. They keep things away that might tempt us. They took me from under a bridge and gave me a home. God has blessed me with all of this and more. He has blessed me with His Son.

— James Watson



**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 Christ.**

