

NEWS



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→ MINISTRY UPDATE ←

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

UPDATE

Praise God, who is in control of all things. He will fulfill his purpose and His plan. Regardless of what comes our way, we will praise and worship Him, for He will come again. Hand Up continues to grow, and God continues to provide. We are on the verge of something so much bigger than our own mind can conceive. I am still not free to express all I want to express, but God is always preparing our way and guiding our steps.

Being a Christian is so exciting, and to think I could still be alive at His coming is so exciting. I exhort Christians not to get caught up in all the world's drama and division, for we are not of this world. Rejoice that your redemption draweth nigh. I can say we are working on two new locations, and we are getting calls from others who, like in the Book of Acts, are saying, "Come over here." We hope we can help as many as possible. We are giving hope to people who have no hope. May God help us do more.

I want to say how great it is to work with a team of leaders who love what they are doing and are good at what they do. It is a joy being their brother as well as their CEO. Let me remind everyone that we accept donated vehicles. We also need plywood and lumber, shower bases or stalls, motel type A/C's, sheetrock, and sheet metal – 26 or 29 gauge. Call Mike Lower to arrange pickup.

Our ministry grew another 10% this year, even with Covid-19. We very well could double by next year if things go well. Do you like the testimonies? Write us and let us know how we are doing.



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— David Nichols,
Executive Director/
President

GROWING PAINS

It seems Hand Up Ministries is almost bursting at the seams. Every campus is working hard to make room and accommodate all the applications we are receiving for Hand Up. The requests just keep coming in. God has truly blessed this ministry to meet a real need. The time has come, and Hand Up Ministries has proved itself to have a system that works for those who truly want to improve their lives and situations. Now that the system has been proven, we have to adjust to the phase of growth, and this presents its own challenges.

Personally, I have to adjust and discover better ways to provide leadership to the goals of Hand Up. This is a great opportunity for me to grow as a leader and be

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a part of something big which God is doing. Let me invite you to consider being part of this great ministry. If you are already assisting Hand Up in some way, let me say we are grateful. Keep this ministry in your prayers, for God truly has great plans for the work this ministry had undertaken. .



This is a great opportunity for me to grow as a leader and be a part of something big which God is doing.

— Ray Riddle,
Oklahoma Director

TESTIMONIES

I grew up not knowing the Lord. I went to a Lutheran school when I was younger. I started getting into trouble when I was in fifth grade. I thought I was being cool. I heard of the spiritual word all of my life, but I never experienced it. I had a recognition of light when I was 15. I was at a rehabilitation center, and the instructor wrote "know God" on the dry erase board. After this, I continued to be lost. I was always able to see the brighter side of things with logic.

I thought the world was all about me, and I had multiple arrests in my teens. I was a good worker. When I was in my early twenties, I moved to southeast Houston with my family. I started selling drugs, and I met a dancer. I also got involved with heroin. I eventually bottomed out, and I went to live with my dad to get structure financially. I started going to the methadone clinic with my girlfriend, but she got tired of her family's rules, so we moved back to southeast Houston with my family.

She and I broke up, and I moved to Lawton, Oklahoma. This was near Fort Sill, where my brother was stationed. I moved back to Houston after two months.

I walked two miles to work, and spirituality took effect in my life at this time. My boss noticed something different at work. I wanted to make more money and have a more comfortable life, so I moved to Oklahoma. I started making good money in Lawton, but my drinking was constant. My last job was at a bar and grill. I started seeking help. My boss sent me to a psychiatrist. Things got worse, and I eventually walked out. I didn't have the following month's rent, and I got depressed. I found a knife placed in my apartment, possible by a co-worker, and, out of frustration, I decided to act with it. The judge sentenced me to ten years, and I found God in prison. My mother told me about Hand Up Ministries.



Hand Up Ministries took me as I came. My life now is better with no drugs or alcohol. I talk to God all day, every day, and my life is getting better and better.

— Jason Denny

My childhood was a little rough. I didn't have a father most of the time. He was on drugs, and he was often in trouble with the law. He went to prison. My mom kept me away from my dad for fear of putting me at risk of using drugs or worse. I was abused by my dad when I was five or six. This might be why my mom kept me from him.

When I was 12, my grandma had a little diner in the small town where we lived. My family and friends worked there. We had our ups and downs, as any family owned diner would. I was an outcast as a teen, and I didn't have many friends (maybe five). I worked, and I bought my own school supplies and clothes. I grew up fast, not really being a kid. I didn't know it would hurt me in the long run.

My father reached out to me when I was 18 years old. He had been out of prison for two years. We talked about everything, including the abuse I suffered as a child. I got married shortly

after that, but the marriage only lasted six months. I moved to Wichita Falls from Abilene. Most of my family lived there, and I lived with my mom for two months. I worked all kinds of jobs. I had a heart attack when I was 23.

I grew up knowing the Lord. I went to Bible study courses when I was little. I memorized the Ten Commandments, and I had a wonderful time doing it. As we moved around during most of my childhood, it became harder to stay focused. I lived in fear of moving again and again, and I eventually stopped going to church. I started hanging out with the wrong people, and I began smoking marijuana, taking opiates, and drinking alcohol. I was working a dead end job when I was 24, and I was unhappy with my life. I woke up during that time, and I heard a voice in my head. I thought I was crazy, but I quit everything in one day. Deep down, I was tired, and I asked the Lord to take it all away. I didn't want to be that person. God answered my plea for help, and I have been grateful since then. I was blessed with a handsome little boy.

Committing my crime was the biggest mistake of my life. It changed my life forever. I am 29 now, but my mind is trying to be a teenager. This is because I didn't have a normal teenage life. Hand Up gave me a place to live as I try to become a respectful citizen.



God had a plan for me, and going to prison was part of it. Prison got my life back on track. Prison humbled me.

— Anthony Evans

I was born in Rock Springs, Wyoming. My early life was stable, even though my parents got divorced when I was young. I grew up in Kingfisher, Oklahoma. We went to church, and I was in a church youth group called Royal Rangers. We were having a revival, and the Ranger meeting was cancelled, so my friends and I went to play by

the tracks near the church. A church member thought we were ditching church, and he chased us into the park. I was around 12 years old, and I stopped going to church after that. I went astray from the Lord.

I started working in the oilfield after high school, and I was drinking and using drugs a lot. I met a woman who moved in with me. I got a house, and she got pregnant. We got married before our daughter was born. I knew about the Lord at this time, but I didn't seek Him unless I was in a bad spot. I left the oilfield and went into construction after our son was born. I did this so I could spend more time with my family.

My mother died in September of 2013. I became angry at the world, and my wife started distancing herself from me because of this. I began communicating online with a person I thought was a fifteen year old girl, but this person was actually an undercover cop in El Reno. I went to jail, and I was mad at everyone, including God. My cellmate handed me a Bible, and I started reading Job. I finished my GED in prison, and I started tutoring others. I attended church, and I took all of the classes they offered. I joined Genesis One, and I became a group leader.

I heard about Hand Up Ministries, and I decided to apply. I had nowhere to go. My wife had left town, and I rarely heard from her. I was greeted warmly by everyone at Hand Up. The people here actually care. I got a job five days after I was released from prison. I have been in touch with my kids. The Hand Up office staff has been awesome. They take the time to answer my dumb questions. I know people say bad things about Hand Up, but I have been here for two months, and I have nothing but good to say about Hand Up.



I know I can make it with God's help and Hand Up. I know God has good things in store for me. I just have to be patient.

— Eric Loftis

I was born in Oklahoma City 1978. I have an older brother. Technically, I died three times when I was a toddler. The third time, my brain was deprived of oxygen, and this affected my cognitive ability. I was the slowest kid in class. I played baseball when I was in elementary school. My dad coached the team. I was raised as a Catholic, but I left the Catholic Church when I was 18 years old. I was JROTC in high school, but I also got into trouble a lot. I was in in-school suspension when the Murrah building was bombed. My grandfather died in my arms when I was 26. I got back into church after that, and I attended the Life Church in Moore.

I worked at Tinker Air Force Base for five years when I was in my twenties. I was married for one and a half years, and I became an alcoholic and a pothead after my divorce. This cost me my job, because I missed too much work. I got sober after I lost my job, and I worked as a security guard for about ten years. I met the love of my life when I was thirty-five. We started dating, and the relationship became serious. Her kids started calling me "dad." I went to prison when I was thirty-eight, but my girlfriend stayed with me. The Lord opened my eyes more when I was in prison. I started studying the Bible more, and I did Bible studies with friends. I was released from prison on July 6th, 2020. I proposed to my girlfriend on the day I was released from prison. She said yes.

I learned about Hand Up Ministries from a friend who was living at Hand Up. I arrived at Hand Up on the day I discharged from prison. The Lord has helped me get a car and my license in the short time I have been out.



I would be homeless if it wasn't for Hand Up Ministries. I am thankful to the Lord and Hand Up for helping me succeed.

— Justin Duffy

My mother was 17 years old when she gave birth to me in 1984. I never knew my

father. My mother was arrested for drugs when I was eight years old, and I was placed in a foster home where I was physically and sexually abused for over 18 months. When I was ten, I was admitted to the hospital with a broken collar bone, a shattered eye socket, and a broken finger. Charges were brought against my foster parents, and one of them went to prison.

I was placed with an amazing couple who introduced me to God. They adopted me when I was 12. They took me to church twice a week. I loved what I heard at church, and I loved going to church. I did this for three years. I tried meth for the first time when I was 15, and it changed my life forever. I started getting high, and then I started drinking. I dropped out of school, and I forgot about God.

When I was 18, my parents threw me out because I was out of control. I bounced around from couch to couch, sleeping wherever I could. I started cooking meth, and I also began committing crime after crime. I would steal five cars in a week, and I was also committing robberies (both residential and commercial). There was a darker evil living inside of me, and, because of this, I was sentenced to ten years in prison in 2011.

Prison saved my life. It allowed me to slow down and take stock of my life. I began to address all of my issues. Prison allowed me to find God again. I began to realize how difficult it was going to be for me to go back into society with my kind of record. There were many requirements I had to meet. Both of my parents had passed away while I was incarcerated, so I had no kind of support whatsoever. My case manager told me about Hand Up Ministries. He gave me an application to Hand Up, and I was accepted three weeks after I turned it in to Hand Up.

— Mike Crockford

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.

