

# NEWS



October 2020

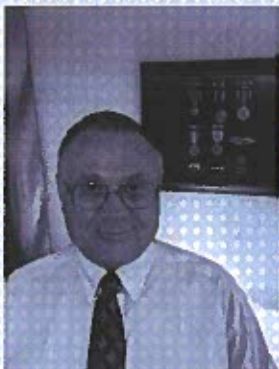
## → MINISTRY UPDATE ←

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# UPDATE

Praise to Him from whom all blessings flow. We are slowly progressing toward a solid financial foundation for our ministry. It has not been an easy road, but one someone had to travel for the kingdom's sake. Nobody likes to suffer, and I've had all that I could handle. However, if need be, God always gives me what I need to handle the task. I still have the drive. It's the patience I lack, but God is still my source.

Due to having surgery on both eyes, I'm going to have to make this short. I am disturbed about many things, and I am excited about many things. Please pray for the poor and those in need. God has prepared Hand Up to help some, but not all. If you are inspired to give, 100 percent of your money will go toward another bed space. God's grace be upon you!



God always gives me what I need to handle the task.

— David Nichols,  
Executive Director/  
President

## THE GOOD FIGHT

Most days, I wake up very excited about beginning my day and participating in the work we do here at Hand Up. I look forward to seeing the staff at the morning devotion time and sharing stories about the day before. I love my job, and I love the people with whom I work. Occasionally, there are days I would rather stay in bed, not because I feel bad, but because I'm just not ready to face another day. This usually happens after I've had a difficult day or week of dealing problems which are difficult to solve and for which it is hard to find a good answer. This usually happens when I have had some negative conversations with a resident.

The reality is, "Life goes on," and there are people who are counting on me to be there for them; so, we can brainstorm and solve a problem by making a decision on a course of action. I'm sure you have days like that as well. The more responsibility we have concerning the welfare of others, the more often those days come around. What do we do when we face those times?

For me, the answer has been the WORD of God, the Bible. In this great book, we can find strength, answers, inspiration, direction, and correction. The Bible has passages like "do not become weary in well doing," and "be a good soldier of Christ." There are thousands of other great sayings as well. For me, the Bible is FLUID and living. Whatever the circumstance or issue, the WORD addresses it. The Bible is relevant for all seasons and all time.

I expect the residents of Hand Up



# NEWS

Ministries to keep fighting the good fight of faith; so, I must do same. The Bible says the faith we need comes from the Word of God!



Whatever you are facing, **KEEP UP THE GOOD FIGHT IF FAITH!**

— Ray Riddle,  
Oklahoma Director

## TESTIMONIES

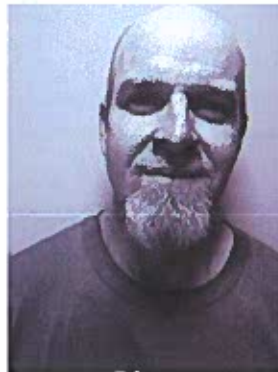
I was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma in 1977, and I was raised in Haskell, Oklahoma. I grew up in a twisted family. My uncle and my cousin raped my mom. My uncle flirted with every woman who came near him. We moved from Haskell to Muskogee after third grade. We moved back to Haskell after my sophomore year, and I finished high school in Haskell. I graduated in 1997, and I joined the Army National Guard.

I drank heavily, and I smoked like a freight train (cigarettes and weed). I had a gambling problem, and I was in bad shape. I got baptized at a Baptist church in Muskogee in 1999 or 2000. I had already quit smoking and drinking, but I met Christians who smoked and drank; so, I started doing both of those things again. I didn't really know the Lord at that time, even though I had accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior.

I met a woman in 2001. We got married, and we had a daughter in 2002. Our daughter was diagnosed with autism. I was working at a McDonald's in Choteau in August, 2014, and, after this, I got arrested.

I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior again when I was in the county jail. My life began to change at that time. One of my cellmates told me about Hand Up Ministries. He said Hand Up was a good place to go. I heard more about Hand Up when I was in prison. I applied to Hand Up, and I was accepted. I quit smoking when I was in prison. I had already quit smoking and gambling. I stayed in the Word, prayed, and attended church when I was in prison. I was baptized a week before I left prison.

I am now at Hand Up, and I will soon have a job. Hand Up goes all out to help felons in need of help. God was the one who made it all happen for everyone. If it wasn't for Him, we would have nothing. I thank God first, and I thank Hand Up for all they have done for me. God bless you all!



I have Christian brothers with whom I can socialize. I am thankful to Hand Up for providing this for me.

— Danny Carmichael

I was the second youngest of nine children, and my dad had nine other kids by his first wife. I lived on a farm in Kansas until I was twelve. I liked living on the farm. We never had much money, and my dad drank almost every day. He was drunk when he wasn't working. I started going to church when I was six. The preacher would drive six miles to the house. My sister and I went to church every Sunday and every Wednesday for three years. I think the pastor moved away. My parents never talked about the Lord. I don't know if my dad believed in the Lord. He got sick, and he passed away when I was 12. We had to move from the farm, and my life changed immediately.

My mom had never worked, and she had to go on welfare. She found a house in a small town about 30 miles from the farm. It was a shock to move to a town where I could go to a store any time I had money. When we lived on the farm, we went to town once a month. We

were poor. We didn't have nice clothes or much food. I started school in fifth grade. I didn't like going to school. A lot of kids were mean. I quit school when I turned 16, and I got a job as a dishwasher.

Three months later, I got a job in the oilfield, but I got fired after two months. I started drinking and using drugs. I also started getting into trouble. I went to live with my older half-brother. He was 50, and he had ten kids. I was 18. He got me a job in the oilfield. I always had beer and drugs. I started going to church on occasion. I worked in the oilfield for four years, but the work slowed down. I moved back to the small town in Kansas.

I went back to work in the oilfields, and I met my first wife in a bar. We both drank and used drugs. We went to church on occasion. We stayed together for six years, and we got divorced. I met another woman eight months later. She attended church, and she taught me about the Lord. I had a dream about being left alone when the Lord came back, and I got saved that night. We went to church for a long time, but then we stopped going. This was when Satan had time to lure me.

I got into trouble with the law, and I hurt a lot of people. Many people gave up on me. I went to prison. I gave my life back to the Lord, and I got closer to the Lord in prison. I repented and asked God for forgiveness. In prison, I met many people who loved the Lord. One of them was Dan. He always talked about the Bible.

Dan told me about Hand Up Ministries. I applied to Hand Up, and I was accepted. Hand Up has been a blessing. The staff and the people here are willing to help in any way they can. I have a place to stay and food to eat. There are people here who love the Lord.

I was born in Maryland in 1978, but I grew up in Michigan. I was raised by my mother and my stepdad, and I had a mentally unstable older sister. I was a loner who had very few friends. We attended church, but not regularly. I accepted the Lord in 1989, but it took a long time for me to act like it. When I was a teen, I would ride my bike at 2:00 AM and talk to myself. I enjoyed coasting down a long, steep hill on my bike. I was expelled from school in ninth grade for creating a disturbance in class.

I stayed home after I was kicked out of school. I was lazy. I committed a crime in 1997, and I went to prison. I spent 11 years in prison. I was put in protective custody in prison, and I was in a cell by myself for 23 hours a day. I had plenty of time to think about my past, and I came to understand the harm I had caused. I sought counseling and the help I needed to correct my behavior. After a few years, I had an opportunity to be released on parole, but I asked the parole board to not release me so I could complete my counseling. At this point, I was in general population. I read the Bible and attended chapel when I was in prison.

I discharged from prison, and a year later I moved to Stillwater, Oklahoma to take care of my mom. She was dying of cancer, and she passed away in 2010. I plead guilty to a crime in 2011, and I was sentenced to 20 years of probation. My lawyer told me about Hand Up Ministries. Going to Hand Up was a condition of release for my probation.

I have a few good friends here. I am grateful to God for providing this place for me and others in my situation, and I am also thankful to David Nichols for following God's will concerning Hand Up ministry.



Hand Up is one big Christian family. Nothing can stop you when the Lord is guiding your life.

— Sam Smith



Hand Up has given me a home and a church. I am grateful to God for providing this place for me and others in my situation.

— James Beardsley



I was born in 1981. My mother was very young when my sister and I were born. My mom worked three jobs, and my dad worked construction his whole life. My mom went to church, but my dad didn't go to church. I don't remember much about my childhood.

I was raised going to church, but I never lived a Christian life. I became rebellious when I started driving at age 16. I didn't do drugs, but I drank and partied with girls. I started living with women after I graduated from high school. I started looking at pornography when I was ten, and I became hooked on porn. The addiction became worse as I got older. I regret that I was introduced to porn at such an early age, and I still struggle with it to this day.

I have always prayed to God to help me with my struggles. My addiction caused me to go to prison. After I had been in prison for six years, I prayed to God and begged Him to help me with the thoughts which led me to prison. One morning I realized God had taken those thoughts away, and I felt a big burden had been lifted off of me.

I heard about Hand Up Ministries about a month before I discharged from prison. At first, I was skeptical, because I heard about all of Hand Up's rules. I now feel truly blessed to be at Hand Up. My life changed before I came to Hand Up, and now I feel like I have a purpose to help people with their struggles.



I am thankful for what I have learned at Hand Up. I know God still has a plan for my life. I thankful for what God has done for me.

— Joshua Dubois

My early childhood days aren't much to think about. I went to church a few times with my step-grandmother. My dad died when I was five, and my step-dad wasn't much of a dad. I grew up going to a Pentecostal church off and on through my

teen years. I never really got settled in church. It was just once in a while. My mom and step-dad didn't go to church. I think my mom didn't believe in heaven and hell.

I got closer to God when I was older, and I got saved when I was 23 years old. It happened one day when I was walking home after failing to get a job. I had walked three miles to get a job, and I learned the job was gone. I saw a church at the intersection of Blackwelder Avenue and southwest 25th street on the south side of Oklahoma City. I stood across the street by a little store, and I smoked my last cigarette. I was in a bad way. I was living in a ghetto type place with a woman who had three kids. I had no food and no money. We were living on welfare.

It was a hot July day. The church doors were open, and there were people working inside. I walked into the church, and one of the workers said the preacher was home just across the parking lot. I was going to ask him for a little help, but I decided against it. I left, and he came looking for me a few minutes later. I had already gone two blocks, and we went back to the church. We talked a little, and we prayed a lot. I was filled with the Holy Ghost, and the preacher helped me out.

I went to New York with my girlfriend. Her people lived there. I lived there 11 years. I had sex with a 16 year old girl, and I was arrested. My life now is okay. I only have a year and a half left on the registry. Hand Up Ministry gave me a place to settle down and live. I got right with God again, and I can see a better way of life. God has done so much for me. I thank everyone who has helped me, and I truly appreciate the help I have received. God is always in control of all things, including my life.

— David Moody

**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.**

