

NEWS



February 2021

→ MINISTRY UPDATE ←

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UPDATE

With the leaves off the trees, there are many places around the city where you can see one or two-person tents where men and women are living. Who are these people, and why do they live in a tent? There is more than one answer, but there are two answers which can cover the majority of cases.

First, the mentally ill can't keep a job, even if they could get one. For most, the answer is no and no. They would be eligible for the social security minimum, but it takes someone housing them and walking them through the system, which takes from one to three years. No one but us is willing or able to do that for them. Right now, we are helping about 15 people apply or be reinstated. Some people are too bad off for even us to help. They are basically relegated by the state to live homeless or in prison.

The second group is just as big in number, and they usually have a certain amount of mental problems. These are those branded as sex offenders, and many times they self-medicate with drugs and alcohol. They can hold a job if you can keep them off these things and give them structure. Right now, we know of about 500 who are in the second group. The second group is homeless because there is no way out except Hand Up, and we have no beds. If you can help, now is the time to make your money count.

Also pray for our economy. Biden is making it a priority to make minimum wage \$15 per hour. It sounds good, but it would put

us out of business. We would have to double our fees. Inflation would be insane. Would the government double Social Security? I doubt it. Would donations double? Probably the opposite would happen.

World government advocates want the same minimum wage worldwide. Do they really think printing money doesn't have consequences? We are about to find out. It is my belief that man doesn't have the answer to the world's problems. I believe the world will get worse, and I believe we are getting closer to the return of the Lord. He alone can bring peace. Come quickly Jesus.

I want to thank each individual who stands with us in loving and helping us in our effort to help the castaways of our society. Thank God that some of us believe that Christ accepts ALL who come to Him. He himself spent His first days sleeping in a cattle trough, then on the run from a death sentence for a few years. Then he was trained to work on rock furniture in the family business.

It is reasonable to assume there was also wood furniture for wealthy clients. Maybe he met his first disciples working on boats? Since Nazareth was about seven miles from the Sea of Galilee, it is possible. I walked part of that trail. If you ever get the opportunity to visit Israel, do it. You won't regret it.



Thank you Jesus for coming to the lowly and poor to give us of your riches. Amazing is your grace.

— David Nichols,
Executive Director

NEWS

THE TIMES THAT MAKE IT WORTH IT

I have worked for or with ministries for 40 years, and one of the things I have learned is that some days are a grind because of misunderstandings, miscommunications, people who take advantage of kindness, and working with people who have gotten themselves into a trouble through a whole heap of bad decisions and then want you to get them out of trouble. It can wear on you and cause you to lose the joy that should accompany ministry.

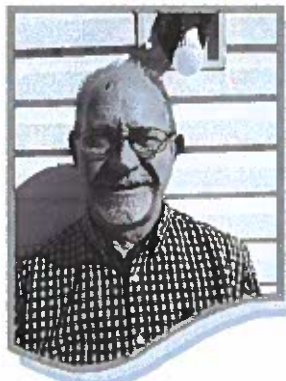
Although there are many days of disappointment and frustration, once in a while something comes along to remind you that the effort is worth every minute of toil and sacrifice.

Recently, one of our 59th street staff members took a personal interest in a resident and went above and beyond to help this resident find his way. The resident lost his place at Hand Up due to drugs, and he had to go to rehab and complete a program in order to be able to reapply to Hand Up.

The staff member gave the resident a ride to a rehab facility in another town, and he drove to the same town 30 days later to pick up the resident and bring him back to Hand Up. We welcomed him back, and we began to help him get on his feet again. The following paragraph is an excerpt from a letter his parents sent to us after the resident got settled in here at Hand Up for the second time. I am leaving out the names for the resident's protection.

"His mother and I cannot express to you enough how grateful we are for your help. We are thankful that God has put you in (resident's) life to help him find his way through this difficult and challenging time. We have spoken to (resident) once since he arrived at the (rehab program), and he seemed to be positive about the program. We will get to have a Zoom video conference with him this Sunday afternoon."

These kinds of nice words lift the spirits of all the staff and help us remember the work and sacrifice are worth all the effort. What a blessing to be part of so great a ministry! The ones who are grateful make it all worth it.



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— Ray Riddle,
Oklahoma Director

TESTIMONIES

I grew up in El Reno, Oklahoma, and I was raised as a Christian. I had a good life, but I couldn't stay out of trouble. I started getting into trouble when I was a teenager, and my mom kept grounding me. She always let me off the hook early, and I went back to getting into a mess.

I have always believed in a higher power, the Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit. I know the good Lord has always been with me, but there have been times when I let God down. Looking back, I see I was the only one to blame. I am not a bad guy. I just got involved in drugs. My involvement with drugs was off and on for a long time. I thought I needed drugs to make me feel better, but I always came back to reality.

My case worker told me about Hand Up Ministries when I was in prison. I came to Hand Up in 2018. Hand Up is a good place if you chose to work the program, but I smoked weed when I was here the first time. I couldn't pass a drug test, and I was removed from Hand Up. David allowed me to return in 2021, and I am going to give it my all this time. God has opened my eyes to many things in life. He allows me to wake up each day, and he gives me good health.

I am 49 years old, and I still get around every day. I am able to work, and I am very thankful to Jesus for dying on that cross for all of us sinners. God Bless.



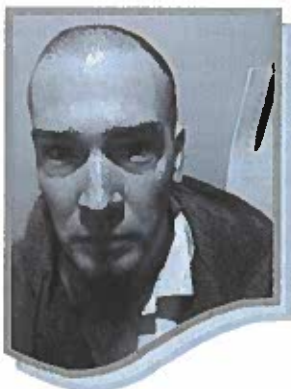
I feel good about Hand Up. There are a lot of good people here, and they are always willing to lend a helping hand.

— Shannon Hunt

I was born in Tulsa in 1989, and I was an only child. My dad died when I was six or seven, and I had rough childhood. I was raised by my grandfather and my mother, but my mother wasn't there some of the time. She was an alcoholic and a drug user. I ran the streets and got into trouble, even though my grandfather tried to steer me in the right direction. I went to church when I was younger, but I never really got into it. I got into using drugs when I was a teenager. This caused me to loose contact with my family, but I reunited with my family before I went to prison.

I went to prison when I was 22 years old. Before I went to prison, I learned I had a half-brother on my dad's side. This was very emotional for me. I still haven't met him. My mom started to talk to me more when I was in prison, and I developed a better relationship with her. I spent eight and a half years in prison, and I started attending church when I was in prison. God showed me the right path. I read the Bible and prayed a lot.

A prison staff member told me about Hand Up Ministries. He said Hand Up would be a good place for me. I applied to Hand Up, and I was accepted. Because of the nature of my crime, I was a little nervous when I got out of prison. I arrived at Hand Up, and I felt safe. Hand Up has been a blessing. The staff has helped me get on the right path.



God has blessed me the last few years. I now have hope. People here care about me.

— Henry Ross

I grew up in Honobia, Oklahoma and in Talihina, Oklahoma, both of which are small towns. I was a quiet person, and I kept to myself most of the time. I didn't like to hang out with other people. I preferred to be by myself. I played football, basketball, and softball in school. When I got older, I started drinking beer and whiskey. I hardly spoke to my dad, but my mom and I spoke a lot. My mom cooked meals for us, and she made us get up and go to school. She also made us go to church and Sunday school.

When I was older, I stayed with my mom most of the time. I helped her around the house. I cleaned the house, mowed the lawn, and fixed

things. My mom made us go to church, and I grew up knowing the Lord. I got old enough to drink, and I started getting into fights. I went to jail a lot. I eventually went to prison.

I heard about Hand Up Ministries when I was in prison, and I thought I would give it a try. Hand Up has given me a second chance. I have place to live, and I am looking for a job. God is the best. He will help you. When I was in prison, I prayed every night and every morning. I want my family back. I miss my wife, my daughter, my grandsons, my brother, and my sisters. Without God, I wouldn't have anything. I want to thank Hand Up for giving me a place to live and for helping me get started again.



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— Matthew Meashintubby

In was born in San Leandro, California in November, 1982. My mom was in the military at the time. She discharged soon after I was born, and we moved to Louisiana after she honorably discharged. She immediately married an older guy. He was very physically, verbally, and mentally abusive toward me and my mom, and I grew up to despise him. He never did these things to my younger brother, who is his biological child. I started to feel shame and guilt for not being able to say or do anything about the situation.

I became very rebellious when I was a teenager. I found refuge in drinking, smoking weed, and having sex with women. I left home when I was 14, and I moved in with my grandmother. She was older, and she had no control over me. I had no positive male role models other than the men at church. They tried to take me under their wing and mentor me, but I couldn't open up to anyone. I also knew these guys were doing stuff they preached against, and I wouldn't take anyone seriously who wasn't leading by example.

Two days after I graduated from high school, I was hanging out with friends on a country road near three 20 foot oil tanks. These tanks exploded and one of my friends was killed on impact. I was burned on 45 percent of my body. I had third degree burns, and I went into a

coma. I was declared brain dead. I woke up a month later, and I was mad at the world. I became a psychopath.

I have over 30 arrests on my record. I didn't care about anyone I hurt, including myself. I just spent five years in prison in Oklahoma. This was enough to get my mind right. I have lost too much and gone nowhere in life by being foolish and not accepting help. I have decided enough is enough. It is now or never, because I refuse to go through hell again. There is a better life ahead.

I was referred to Hand Up by someone I met in prison. He explained what Hand Up does for people. I cannot thank this man enough right now. I would be homeless without Hand Up. I want to thank everyone at Hand Up for their kind words, loving spirit, and positive environment. I could not be more thankful for Hand Up's love and support.

— *Marcus McKinney*

I was beaten and molested when I was a child, and I became a ward of the state. When I was 11, I was adopted by a wealthy Lutheran couple. They had already adopted a girl before me, my sister Julie. I was different. Because of the violence and trauma of my childhood, I was untrusting of any adult. I was gifted in school, but I had trouble due to my attitude.

I left my adoptive family when I was 16. They were more worried about what people would think of my behavior than about what was really going on with me. The only one I could talk to on a regular basis was God. I was into everything when I was in my late teens and early twenties. I joined the Army when I was 21, and I served four years overseas. I returned home in 2006, but I had trouble fitting back into civilian life.

In 2010, I took the law into my own hands, and it backfired. "Vengeance is mine, says the Lord." My daughter was born in 2015. God blessed me. In 2018, my wife and I split up, my grandma died, my brother's wife died, and my sister was strung out on pills. I had a lot going on in my life, and I failed to register. I served a little over a year and a half for failure to register. I was homeless when I returned to McClain County. I was sleeping under an overpass. I got third degree burns from the sun, and I almost died of heatstroke. Hand Up Ministries came and got me. God answered my prayers. In one week, I had a roof over my head, food in my belly, and a job. God didn't care that I had a record. He put me in Hand Up's path. The Hand Up staff has been helpful and kind, and so have the residents.

From my childhood until now, I have walked through the valley of the shadow of death many times. I have been beaten, stabbed, shot

at, and strangled. I also fell down a mountain. I should have been dead many times, but God always had my back. God has saved me more times than I can count. If He can turn me around, He can help anyone. Knock and it shall be opened. God and Hand Up have opened a big door for me, and I intend to go 200% with it.

I will be helping others as I go. It isn't impossible. Your life is only ruined when you give up. I haven't given up for 41 years, and I am not about to start. Prayer works. I am living proof of that. I recite Psalm 23 numerous times a day. I thank God and Hand Up. May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

— *Michael Jochims*

When I was a child, I lived in Webster, Florida with my mother, older sister, and maternal grandmother. My parents were divorced, and I spent every other weekend at my dad's house near Orlando. I went to church with my paternal grandparents, and I fell asleep in church several times. We moved to Tennessee when I was in seventh grade. I graduated high school, and I did one year of college. College wasn't great, socially or grade wise.

We moved to Oklahoma for my maternal grandfather's health. His health was getting worse. I tried college again. It was better, but it still wasn't great. I wasn't in a good place mentally or emotionally. I was idle, and, as the saying goes, idle hands are the devil's playground. I started doing illegal things. I got a job, which I worked for about three months, and then I was arrested.

I heard about Hand Up Ministries when I was in prison. Going to prison was costly, but it was the best thing that ever happened to me. I saw a psychologist, got on meds, and attended Genesis One. I am now at Hand Up, and I am learning to become self-sufficient. None of this would have happened if I hadn't gone to prison, so it was probably God's plan. Life's hardships will make me stronger. God is helping me build a foundation.

— *Anonymous*

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.

