

NEWS



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→ MINISTRY UPDATE ←

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UPDATE

It is great to know we have a God who loves us and cares for us. There is no other god like our God. All other gods demand something, even Christian based gods. Some gods are just more demanding than others. Jesus never came demanding. He came giving, even to the point of giving His life. He didn't pick and choose who could drink of the water of life freely. His grace is for all.

My heart aches as I see the legalism in the church world today. Different groups have different sins at the top of their "worst sins" list, but all of them have sex offenses in the first two or three. Never mind that there are different sex offenses and that they carry many different degrees of punishment by law. The vast majority of people have added more punishment to what the court decides, so all the classes of sex offenders receive lifetime punishment. This lifetime punishment is also for anyone who helps the sex offenders.

Here is the real truth. Hand Up helps all offenders who are willing to obey the laws of society and the rules of Hand Up. We house 280 offenders who work this program. We very, very, very seldom have anyone who commits another crime. Because of what we do, we help the victims, the potential victims, the community, and the state, as well as helping the ones who committed the

crimes. The tax dollars, the child support, the counseling, and other benefits of what we do are amazing. Of course, there are also spiritual benefits as well.

Because of the hatred of the majority, many sex offenders have to live in tents among the trees. There are 500 homeless sex offenders in Oklahoma. Many eventually go back to prison for failure to register as a sex offender.



The Bible makes it plain that those who do not do the will of God cannot inherit heaven. What kind of person are you?

— David Nichols,
President & CEO

These are great times at Hand Up Ministries. As David Nichols told you last month, we completed our certification with OKARR, and we have been welcomed by many other ministries, recovery houses, and agencies offering assistance in Oklahoma. Now we are carefully looking at ways we can better our program through offering more opportunities for our residents to socialize and connect.

It seems the morale on our campuses is good. The credit on our other campuses goes to John Hider, our Chandler director, and Jeff Wendel, our director at our family facility in Oklahoma City. These two guys are doing a great job of managing these facilities.

NEWS

Several staff members, including me, are recovering from COVID-19, and the office is starting to function in a more normal fashion. Hats off to the staff members who filled in for us while we were sick.

I don't know that I have ever been more excited about Hand Up Ministries. Everyone is pulling together well. Changes are taking place, as they do in any ministry, and they are flowing very smoothly. The staff and residents have a great attitude.



The future for this ministry looks very good, and we are grateful to God for His hand on this ministry. .

— Ray Riddle,
Oklahoma Director

What does it take to run a ministry like Hand Up? It takes perseverance, and it takes a kind heart with a heavy hand. It takes determination, and, above all, it takes a strong belief in the power and grace of God.

As we quickly approach our 25th anniversary, these traits have become apparent in the leadership of those who help make the success of this ministry a reality. Think about it. This ministry has grown exponentially in these past 25 years, and it boggles the mind as to how this happened. There is no other explanation but the glory of God and His hand upon this ministry. This is a huge milestone for ANY organization, let alone a ministry which helps people who have made poor decisions in life. These bad decisions landed them in prison and caused them to be considered the dregs of society.

Throughout the New Testament, we read about how Jesus walked among the

sinners and healed the sick. He didn't preach to the righteous. He healed the sick and saved the souls of those who needed it. HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US! He was our Savior. Now, I am not saying that David Nichols is our second savior, but he does try his best to walk in the footsteps of Jesus in that he reaches out to those who have sinned and shows them how to live a better way. David has dedicated his life to helping people who need it most.

As a senior staff member, I see a lot of how this ministry has changed the lives of those who have accepted the ways of Christ. I didn't think some of them would make it, but they did and still do. Sometimes, I don't see how this ministry survives, because I see how much money comes into the ministry, and I know what it takes to keep our doors open. How do we do it? We are pretty much self-sustaining. We do have some regular supporters, and this helps tremendously, but I still scratch my head wondering how we do it. Our bills somehow get paid, and we continue to grow while operating on a shoestring budget. God has truly blessed this ministry. He keeps watch over us, and it is by His grace and His love for us all that we stay afloat.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40 (KJV)

This rings true in the purpose and mission of Hand Up Ministries. It is what drives us to continue doing what we do as we reach out to those in need and offer comfort and leadership. It is our job as Christians to show our residents what it means to live a Christian life.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13 (KJV)

This is another of my favorite quotes, and it reminds me that Christ gives me the strength to carry on in my daily duties. Every day I am required to make decisions which have a direct impact on this ministry, and I can't think, "What would David Nichols do or what would Ray Riddle, our director, do?" I have to trust in God and Jesus to guide me in my decision making. Sometimes, the smallest decision can have a

heavy impact on this ministry, so I can't take it lightly. It is a huge responsibility, but I am up to the challenge.



I will always remember what a wise man once told me, "There are no problems in life; there are only opportunities." This is what keeps me going each day."

— Joe King,
Campus One Manager

TESTIMONIES

I was born in Claremore, Oklahoma on March 4th, 1975. My father was in the construction business, and my mother was a beautician. I had an ordinary childhood. We were middle class. We had a nice four bedroom home with a swimming pool, plus nice clothes and toys. This lasted till I was nine. I didn't know my father was an alcoholic. It didn't occur to me at the time that sharing a beer with him was wrong. It was just what we did. I loved him, but he was gone for good when my parents divorced.

My mother worked hard, and she provided us with the things we needed. She eventually remarried, and my step-dad did a good job of making sure we were happy. I was an athlete in school, and I made decent grades and went to parties. I went to college after high school. I was always missing God. I occasionally went to church with my friends, but my family never talked about God.

I drank a lot when I was in my twenties. I had a very good job, and I made a lot of money. I got married, and I stopped drinking for ten years. Life was good. We adopted four kids, and things were good. I started drinking again after 12 years of marriage, and I also started having extramarital affairs. We got divorced, and I stopped caring. I was working and drinking, but I wasn't living.

I didn't know Christ at all when I was growing up. I knew of Him, but I never took the step. I got saved early in my marriage, but

I really didn't have faith. I feel like I truly came to the Lord while I was in a program at John 3:16 Mission with a pastor named Steve Whitaker. We had daily Bible studies, and I felt like I had finally found what I was searching for. I started drinking again, and I allowed the devil to lead me astray.

I was in a drunken haze one weekend, and I put myself in a bad situation which led to me being arrested and sent to prison. My case manager told me about Hand Up Ministries. I am very thankful God directed me to Hand Up. I am sober and I am working. I am living how Christ wants me to live. Hand Up helped me find a job, and Hand Up provided clothes, food, and transportation.



God has changed me, and He has filled a hole in my life.

— Douglas Chaney

I was born in Dallas in 1979. My mom left when I was five, and I was raised by my mom's boyfriend. He adopted me when I was in sixth grade, and I have no siblings. I had a middle class upbringing. He was great dad, but I was a troublemaker. I had behavior issues, and I started doing drugs when I was 15. I didn't stop using drugs till I was 33. I was arrested my junior high school. My friend and I stole an 18 wheel truck and drove it into the side of a 7-Eleven. I got my GED in juvenile prison (I have three GEDs).

I moved to Oklahoma after I got out of juvenile prison. I got kicked out of high school, and I joined a carnival. I had sex with an underage girl when I was 21, and I got arrested in Indiana. I spent a year in prison, and I moved to Alabama after I got out of prison. My mom lived there. All I did was get high for the next 20 years. I worked in a shipyard, but I went to prison for meth in 2012.

I didn't have place to go when I got out of prison. I applied to Hand Up Ministries. I was accepted, but they didn't have a bed at

the time. I lived in a motel in Mobile for five months. The Catholic Church paid for the first month, and my dad paid for the other four months. I came to Hand Up in April, 2017. Everything has gone great since I came to Hand Up. I have a good job, and I am sober.



I pray every day, and I thank God for helping me. I would be homeless in Alabama if Hand Up hadn't helped me.

— Daniel Byrd

My parents took us to church when I was a child, but they never practiced what they heard in church. My two sisters, my brother, and I knew the Lord's name, but we didn't know anything about Him. We didn't know of His wonderful works and love. Since I didn't know the Lord, I rebelled. I began using drugs and alcohol. I committed crimes, and I went to prison. I studied theology in prison, and this was when I learned about Hand Up Ministries. I found God in prison, and my life changed.

My life now is amazing. I have learned what God desires of me, and I walk with Him every day. Before Covid-19, I went to two church services on Sunday. Hand Up has given a sense of purpose and a clean environment. Hand Up gives me strength to live and not go back to prison. Hand Up teaches me the Christian way, and I have good Christian friends at Hand Up. God provides all of my needs. I have money for food and paying my bills. God bless.

— Anonymous

I was emancipated at age 14, and I got a job on a tug boat. It was good money for a kid. I met a couple who took me in. I started liking the daughter of the man who owned the trailer park, and I had to move out. I moved back to Texas and stayed with a friend. I started smoking marijuana there. I got arrested for selling marijuana to an undercover cop, and I got probation. I met a

man named Dennis, and he introduced me to cocaine. I got arrested possession of stolen property, and I went to prison.

I spent 22 months in prison, and I got into many fights in prison. I was 20 when I got out of prison. I was using drugs and selling drugs. I was shot in the stomach when I was 23. In 1986, I was arrested for possession and delivery of cocaine, and my wife left me. I spent six months in prison, and I moved to New Orleans when I was released from prison. I was arrested for possession and delivery of cocaine, and I got probation. I went back to Houston and started selling drugs and running prostitutes. I got a job driving a horse and carriage in downtown Houston.

I stabbed a man who attacked me on the street, and I went back to prison for seven and a half years. I got into many fights in prison. My brother died while I was in prison. I moved back to Louisiana after I was released from prison, and I got a job on an onshore drilling rig. The money was very good. I met Linda, who had gotten a huge settlement after her husband was killed in an accident.

I went back to prison after I was accused of a sexual crime. I gave my life to God in prison. A friend invited me to church, and I accepted the Lord. I was sent to a facility where they had better medical treatment for my medical problem. I started feeding birds there, and I became known as the bird man. I got out of prison, but I went back for failure to register as a sex offender. I came to Oklahoma, and back to prison again for failure to register.

I was accepted to Hand Up Ministries in 2021, and I arrived at Hand Up in April of 2021. Hand Up is a door to a better life. .

— 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.

