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→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

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UPDATE

Sometimes, we question why things happen so slowly when the need is so great. I'm not going to try to answer that question. I do know that it seems to happen faster when we join together with one purpose and seek His guidance. We must trust in His will with only His agenda in mind, and we must believe He will accomplish it with our obedience. It is no secret He does so with the help of people who can work together. If something doesn't get done, it isn't because God couldn't do it. It is because man wouldn't do it. Are we obedient partners, or are we selfish partners with our own agenda?

We now have 14 men living in tents at HUM 1. There is no way we can build apartments fast enough. We desperately need another facility. We are working hard to get another facility, but only God can solve this problem. We do want to thank the parents of a former resident for a \$10,000 donation. This donation was very timely and very helpful, but we are asking God for more like \$10,000,000. Is this impossible? No! To our Father, this is pocket change, and He is very generous and compassionate. Nothing is too great for Him.

We have some very good possibilities available. We pray for God's guidance and provision. There is a big change on the horizon, and it will be good. Through Christ, all things are possible. I finally got the shoulder surgery, and I can

barely write. Now the eye surgery has to be redone. Please pray it will succeed this time. It would be better if I had both eyes.



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— David Nichols,
President & CEO

CATCHING UP ON WHAT IS NEW

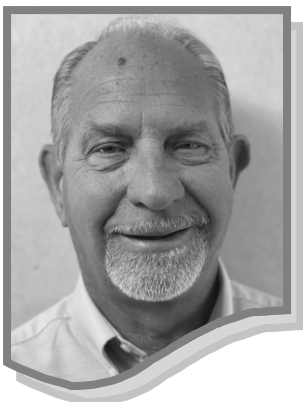
It seems like there are a lot of new things happening at Hand Up Ministries lately. The campus on 59th street has been cleaned up, and some dirt work is being done to level out low spots. Members of our staff have been cross-training in one another's assignments so we can become well rounded in our knowledge of what we do and be prepared in case someone is out sick or on vacation. We are preparing for new classes and activities that will be available to our residents starting in January. All of these things bring a sense of busyness and excitement about the ministry.

Another new thing going on at the 59th street facility is the recent hire of a new office manager and park manager. Joseph Costa has taken over both of those responsibilities. Joe has lived at Hand Up for several years,

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and he is well educated and well-spoken. He has taken to the new responsibilities with a lot of zeal and enthusiasm. He is a self-starter and a forward thinker. He has already taken many tasks off of my plate, and I now have more time to devote to the other facilities connected to Hand Up Ministries. Everyone is pleased with the job Joe has been doing, and I believe things will improve with time and experience.

Other things going on are the new partners we have developed in recent weeks. Three state senators have joined in communication and in support of what Hand Up is doing, and we believe they will help us fix some of the inequities that have become barriers to Hand Up Ministries' success. We have been in discussions with other organizations with whom we will partner in the near future. Some of these future partners are Goodwill, Volunteers of America (veterans employment) and OCARTA, an organization that provides help and services to many in our city. We have been partnering with Operation Hope and the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for a year. Both of those partnerships have yielded more contacts and doors of opportunity. Networking with other organizations will only improve the outcome of all of these ministries together. We are stronger together than we are when we are separate.



We look forward to more success in the near future. Success for Hand Up Ministries always means being able to help more people.

— Ray Riddle,
Oklahoma Director

I was born in Pennsylvania, and I moved to Oklahoma when I was two years old. I graduated from high school in Oklahoma. I went to church when I was younger, and I was in a group for young boys called Royal Rangers. I knew of the Lord, but I actually didn't know the Lord. I grew distant from the Lord when I was a teenager, and I started doing things I shouldn't have been doing. I was hanging out with the wrong people.

I was admitted to a mental hospital because of my anger and ADHD, but it didn't help. I got married right after high school. I did it to disobey my dad, and it was a big mistake. The Lord wasn't in my life or hers. My family was close to the Lord, and they went to church often. My dad is still involved in prison ministry. My adult life was very different from my teen life. I had a son and a daughter. My son is 17, and my daughter is 14. I love my kids with all of my heart.

A fellow inmate told me about Hand Up Ministries. I was accepted to Hand Up, and my now is good. I have a job at a restaurant. I have worked there for three months. I like my job. I have friends at work and friends at Hand Up. I like the environment at Hand Up, and I like meeting new people and interesting people here. Hand Up gave me a place to live so I wouldn't be homeless.

God has done a lot for me. He kept me safe when I had surgery, and he healed me of having seizures. I haven't had a seizure since 2014. My thyroid was removed because it was cancerous. I have to take medication, but I would rather take medication than have cancer.

I am a changed man, and I have my head on straight. With the Lord's help, I will not go back to prison. I appreciate the Hand Up church service and the Genesis 1 group.

— Terry Estes

I don't want to talk about my family. I had food and shelter when I was growing up, and I got along with my family as best as I could. I went to school. I didn't know the Lord until I was 14 years old. A substitute teacher told me about salvation. I learned about the Lord through constant study of the Bible. I met people who wanted to make converts, but they were

ignorant of the Bible. They didn't teach discipleship. I didn't have anyone to mentor me, so I did the best I could to teach myself.

I spent most of my adult life traveling and having fun. I worked here and there. I had a lot of good times, and I have friends all over the country. My adult life was well spent. Now that I am sedentary, I really don't feel like I missed out on life. I was accused of a crime I didn't commit, and I went to prison.

I moved to Oklahoma from Kansas. I thought I could live with my family, but I didn't know about Oklahoma laws concerning sex offenders. I returned to Oklahoma in July 16th, 2011, and the police told me I could only stay at my mom's house till August 1st. A week passed, and my mom was looking through her address book. She found Hand Up Ministries' phone number. My cousin had been accepted at Hand Up a few years earlier, and my mom still had the number. We called Hand Up, and we asked if Hand Up accepted sex offenders. The answer was, "Yes, we do." We got an application online, and we took it to Hand Up the next day. I had to be out of my mom's house on the following Monday. They said I could move in on Monday. No one can tell me this wasn't God's doing. God is always on time.

I am trying to cut down on these delicious cigarettes and coffee. I am also consistently studying my Bible, and I order Bible teaching aids on the Bible. I am trying to educate myself on God's word. I have finally come to trust in my salvation. Hand Up has given me an environment free from drugs and alcohol. Hand Up has also given me a place to study God's word in depth.

God has done more things for me than I can remember. He accepted me when I was unacceptable.

— *Anonymous*

I grew up in Oklahoma City with my family, but I also lived in Sayre with my grandparents and other relatives. I liked living in Sayre because I could go fishing and hunting a lot more. I have known the Lord all of my life. My family taught me about God. They told me what the Lord did for us. I was baptized when I was five or six years old. I tried to follow what I had learned, but, like so many others, I fell off the trail. I started

drinking when I was 13 years old. First it was beer, and then it was whiskey. I drank my parent's whiskey without their knowledge. I tried pot when I was 16, and I liked it. I found myself going to church less and partying more. I knew the Lord was watching, and he saved me from death many times. I still partied, and it cost me a lot. I got into fights in bars, but I still tried to help people.

I went to prison. I decided to quit drinking when I got out of prison. I hadn't had a drink in four and a half years. I tried to find a place to stay, but no one wanted me. My brother-in-law told me about Hand Up Ministries. I lived at Hand Up for five years. I became a deacon at Love Street Ministry, and it was there that I met my wife. We got married in 2013.

I moved out of Hand Up to live with my wife.

We stayed at a hotel for two years, but our marriage didn't work out. I went back to prison. I was released from prison on March 16th, 2020. I tried to stay at the hotel where my wife and I had stayed before, but I wasn't allowed to register there because some new law. I had to live in the parking lot. It was cold, and I passed out from hypothermia. I called Hand Up, but they told me they didn't have room. I called David Nichols, and he made room for me that day. David saved my life, and for that I am forever grateful.

— *Kenneth Reel*

I was born in Hialeah, Florida in 1949. When I was five, I went to live with a foster family on Long Island. My foster mom was afraid she would lose custody of me to my biological mom. My foster parents wanted to adopt me, but they would have had to involve my biological parents. My friends and I built a tree fort. My foster parents were Roman Catholic, and they raised me as a Catholic. I can't say they didn't have a Bible, but I don't remember seeing one. I didn't understand the Catholic Mass, because the liturgy was in Latin. During my senior year of high school, I dropped out of school before I was kicked out.

I went into the Marines when I was 18, and I went to Viet Nam in 1969. I was a radioman, and then I was trained to make maps, so I wasn't in combat. I went to Iowa after I left the Marines. I met a stripper in

1972, and we got married in Kansas. I went to truck driving school in Omaha, but I didn't finish. We moved back to Iowa, and we got divorced in 1975. I went to prison for bad checks in Iowa in 1976, and I spent 18 months in prison. I came to Oklahoma in 1984, and I lived with my ex-wife.

I became a Christian in 1984. I went to Dallas, and I got a job as a painter. I spent six years in Dallas. I started drinking again when I was in Dallas. I went to North Carolina, and I spent three years there. I came back to Oklahoma in 1994, and I have stayed in Oklahoma since then. I stayed with my daughter for a while when I returned to Oklahoma. I went to prison in 1998, and I got out of prison in 1999. In 2002, I was arrested for failure to attend the counseling class I was required to take. I was released from prison in 2004. I came to Hand Up Ministries in 2006.

Hand Up gave me a place to live. I worked for Hand Up off and on for two years, and I started drawing Social Security in 2007. I wanted to be a good Christian after I came to Hand Up.

— *Paul Best*

My mother died when I was 11. She was in a Piper Cub when it exploded. I saw this happen. I almost ran up to the plane before it exploded, but something told me to stop. For many years, I blamed myself for my mother's death. I tried to stop her from getting on the plane, because I was afraid something was going to happen. After my mom died, I moved to Tulsa to live with my dad and my sister. In Tulsa, I was molested by a guy who worked at a convenience store. I was 13 years old when this happened. I told my dad I thought I was gay. He spoke a bunch of Bible verses to me, but he did this in a condemning manner. It was around this time that we started attending a Methodist church. My father remarried when I was 14.

I started smoking pot when I was 14, and I had girlfriend when I was 15. I was intending to have sex with her, but she told me her grandfather molested her, so I decided not to try to have sex with her. A woman who worked in a liquor store let me buy liquor when I 14, so I was the liquor buyer for my friends. When I was 15, my dad

busted my lip with a flashlight, and I ran out of the house while my dad was grabbing a rifle to shoot me. I ran to my neighbor's house, and the neighbors took me to the hospital. I refused to return to my dad's house, and I went to live with my sister in Arlington, Texas. I went to school there for about a year, and I bought a car. My dad said he had a heart attack, and he begged me to come back to Tulsa. I returned to Tulsa, but I only stayed at his house for one day. I couldn't live there, so I moved into an apartment.

I finished high school, and I worked in Tulsa till I was 19. I was still smoking weed and drinking. I moved back to Texas, and I got a job as a janitor at a school in Arlington. I did this for two years, and I became the head custodian at an elementary school. I returned to Tulsa, and I started using drugs (heroin, cocaine, LSD, PCP, meth, and pills). When I was 27, I was driving drunk, and I was in a bad wreck. My back was injured, and this still gives me problems today. I was busted for pot and a sex offense when I was 28, and I served three years.

After this, I got some minors drunk, and I had sex with one of them. I was arrested, and I served 16 years of 37 year sentence. In prison, I searched through different religions in an effort to find the truth. I learned Christ was the only way. I knew the only way to live is to let Christ live in me. I got out of prison, and I started smoking weed again. I got arrested for weed, and I was sentenced to two years of incarceration and six years of probation. I came to Hand Up Ministries in 2008. Hand Up has helped me to become stronger in my faith, and my walk with God is much stronger.

— *William Watkins*

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.

