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→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

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UPDATE

I know that for several years I have hoped and proclaimed we are getting closer to being refinanced. The biggest problem we have encountered has been getting a bookkeeper to spend the time to get the books more similar to large companies' books so bankers can understand them. For several years, it has cost us around \$15,000 a month in interest charges by not having a business loan. I believe we should be able to file for a loan before the next newsletter.

We still have clients in tents, but they are able to work every day. Without Hand Up, they would have no job. This means these men are paying taxes and staying out of trouble. We have about a dozen men waiting to get Social Security, and we currently have two men who are unemployed. About 170 of our Campus 1 residents are working. They all go to church, and they all meet in small groups once a week. Half of them have cars, and many of them have renewed relationships with family. Some have become spiritual leaders. A few men have been put out for failing a drug test, but many of them are not the same as when they came here.

I ask you to pray for the men who are in wheelchairs and those who are suffering from various diseases. Some people would say they deserve these things or worse things, but He shares His kingdom with us because we are His

children. His love for us is far greater than our sin. He doesn't add penalties for our past. We have created enough life problems to last a lifetime. His mercy and His grace are free. Let us accept what He has given us, and let us forgive so we can be forgiven. .



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— David Nichols,
President & CEO

THE DRIVE TO HELP



Last month, I introduced to you our new hire here at Hand Up Ministries' 59th Street location. Allow me to give you a more complete and proper introduction to Joseph Costa. Joseph is the office manager and park manager for our 59th Street facility. He

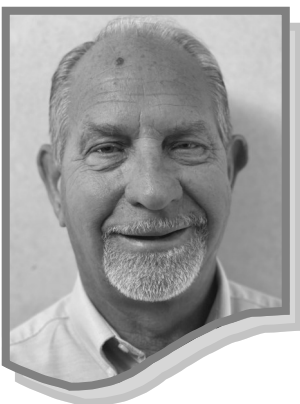
is 38 years of age, and he has been a resident of Hand Up Ministries since October, 2014. Joseph recently came to us and asked if he

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could help out with some things at Hand Up. We interviewed him, and David and I agreed Joe would be a good candidate to fill the staff position we had open. Joseph has stepped up to the plate and initiated some new ideas about how to handle certain matters. He has been instrumental in helping our residents take on more personal fiscal responsibility, and, by doing this, he has helped Hand Up's bottom line and enhanced the growth of our residents. He is a no nonsense manager, but he has a great heart, and he works for the good of the residents and the program.

It is a joy to work with Joseph, and having him on staff has allowed me the freedom to move on to other projects and get more things accomplished. I can report that our Chandler facility and our family facility on Shields in OKC are doing well under the management of John Hider and Jeff Wendel respectively. We are truly blessed at Hand Up Ministries to have a good staff made up of men who are dedicated to the betterment of this ministry and our residents.

I believe Hand Up Ministries is in good hands under the current staff members and capable leadership within Hand Up's structure. I also believe very good things are in the making for the future of this ministry.



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— Ray Riddle,
Oklahoma Director

I was born eons ago. The world was a different place. Television was black and white, and there were only three channels. Phones had cords. There were no mobile phones. Prayer was in school, and marriages lasted for decades. My father was in the Air Force, and we moved constantly. The longest I lived someplace was four years. It was hard to make friends and then leave.

My mother went to church, but my father and I did not go to church. My father was an alcoholic, and I started using drugs and alcohol when I was fourteen. I was beaten when I did wrong. I was punished worse than my sister and my two brothers. I thought I was adopted. When I was fourteen my mother told me my father was my step-dad. My birth father ran when my mom got pregnant.

My drug use was bad after high school. I joined the Army, and I was sent to Germany. My drug use skyrocketed, and I became a full blown alcoholic. I was released on a drug discharge. I went through girlfriends and wives, because I preferred alcohol and drugs to them. After my last big crime I planned to kill myself. I drew up a plan to do it, and I put the plan in my pocket. I decided to get one last beer before I offed myself. I was drinking the forty ounce beer in a parking lot, and I heard and felt God speak to me. He said, "You don't need that anymore." I felt an amazing change in my mind and in my body. I poured out the rest of the beer, and then I went home and gave my life to Christ. On the very next day I started attending Alcoholics Anonymous. I also found a church to attend, and then I turned myself in to the police.

— John Peabody

I was born in Lake Jackson, Texas. I have two sisters and a brother. I had a good childhood. We weren't rich, but we were middle class. My dad worked for a big construction company. My mother's parents lived next door to us. They attended the Assemblies of God Church, and we went to Sunday school and church with them. I knew of God and Jesus at an early age.

My parents divorced when I was 11 years old. My siblings and I moved to Lomax, Texas to live with our father. I did well in school until after

the divorce, and then I didn't care. I started acting up and getting paddled, as well as getting detention and expulsion. I stopped going to church in seventh grade, and my brother and I started drinking and smoking weed in eighth grade. I started shooting speed when I was 12.

We moved from Lomax, Texas to Louisiana, then to Oklahoma, and then to back to Texas. We all lived in Texas until my oldest sister turned 15 and moved back to Valiant, Oklahoma to live with my mom and my step-dad. My little sister also moved to Valiant to live our mother. My brother joined the Navy and left in 1980. It was just my dad and me, and I did whatever I wanted. I started going to bars with my dad. My dad died in 1984.

I always had good jobs. I lost and quit a few, but I always got a new job the next day. I went to prison in 2007, and I went to prison again in 2013. I rededicated myself to the Lord after I got arrested. I heard about Hand Up Ministries when David Nichols came to the prison where I was. Hand Up was there for me when no one else was, and I am grateful for Hand Up helping me in my time of need. They gave me a place to live, and I was able to get a job and become a functioning part of society again.

God forgave me of my sins, and Jesus continues to be my Lord and savior. I thank God for being true to his word.

— *David Jones*

I have lived in Oklahoma all of my life. I grew up in the country with two brothers and a sister. I had loving parents who raised us the best they could. I went to church every Sunday until I was 11 years old. It was around this time that I stopped praying. My mother had a serious medical problem which eventually killed her. Dad had a hard time taking care of the kids and paying medical bills, and my siblings and I were sent to live with other family members. I thought God didn't care, because He didn't answer my prayers for my mother to get better, nor did he answer my prayers to bring my family back together.

I became a loner at school, and I didn't talk to people. My father and oldest brother became alcoholics and drugs addicts. It was

impossible to talk to my father, and eventually I was unable to love him. I moved out of my father's house when I was 18. I graduated from high school, and I got a job. I met a woman, and we married a year later. We had two beautiful sons. When I was between the ages of 21 and 24, I lost my brother to a car accident, and my dad passed away from a heart attack.

I started drinking heavily. I was trying to drown my feelings in a bottle, and this began to affect my marriage. It was during this time that I committed a crime and was sent to prison. My wife divorced me while I was in prison, and she took the boys. Family members stopped talking to me. It seemed I had lost everything I cared about.

I started reading the Bible again when I was in prison, and I also started attending church while I was in prison. I was released from prison in 2017, and I went to live with my step-mom and oldest son. Everything was good for a while, but then I started having problems. I couldn't find work, and they didn't want to take me to the places I needed to go. They eventually told me I needed to move out by January, 2019. I filled out an application at Hand Up Ministries, and I came to Hand Up in January of 2019.

I had a job three weeks after I arrived at Hand Up, and I am still employed a year later. I have a car, and I am getting on my feet. I believe the Lord guided me to Hand Up. He has given me a second chance in life, and I will embrace this blessing He has offered to me. I also want to thank David Nichols for providing a place for people who have no other place to go. I thank him for showing he cares for people and loves them with all of his heart.

— *Steve Gooden*

I was born and raised in the church, but my life changed after I graduated from high school and went off to college. I started to party and have fun. God was no longer part of my life. Drugs, alcohol, and sex were the center of my life. Later in life, I professed to be a Christian, but I would go to church on Sunday and return to my old ways during the rest of the week.

I did some things which hurt other people, and I am truly ashamed of these

things. My actions resulted in two failed marriages. It all came to a halt in 2002. I was arrested, and I spent 15 years in prison. I knew I had to reevaluate my life. Prison gave me time to find out who God truly was. I confessed my sins to Him, and I asked Him to change my heart and come into my life. My life changed that day, and I knew in my heart that God's grace was the only way I could truly change.

When I was released, I didn't know what I would do or where I would stay. A friend told me about Hand Up ministries, so I applied to Hand Up. I was accepted, and I knew God had my back, just as He had promised. I knew I had to continue to be faithful and obey and trust God. I found a wonderful, Bible believing church which helped me through the transition by helping me with both my physical and spiritual needs. This church has helped me know the Lord and who He truly is.

I have had so many wonderful blessings since I was released from prison. The most important blessing is the blood of Christ, for which I am very thankful. Without Christ's blood, I wouldn't have a second chance. I am truly happy and blessed more now than at any other time in my life. I still remember what my mom told me. She said to pray and hold onto God's unchanging hand.

— KP

I remember my mom taking my brother and me to church when we were very young. We stopped going to church, but, when I was 10, I went to vacation Bible school at my grandmother's church. My mother and I began attending that church around the same time, and I attended Sunday school there. My dad didn't attend church, and neither did my brother. My brother didn't want to go to church. My dad and I went to a local coffee shop one Saturday morning when I was 12. My dad had coffee with his friends, and I had hot chocolate. I asked my dad why he never went to church with us, but he didn't answer my question.

I was in a near fatal automobile accident when I was 15, and I ended up in an intensive care unit. My mom and dad were standing by me when I awoke after surgery.

My dad decided it was time to get right with God. It took a long time to fully recover from the accident. I gave my life to God during my senior year of high school, and my parents were there when I did. My father sold the farm, and we moved into the local town. I moved to Oklahoma after this, but I visited my parents. They were both up in years. We were having coffee on a Sunday morning when I was visiting them, and my dad said, "Son, get ready, because we are all going to church."

I got married, and my wife and I attended church. We had a special needs boy, and later we adopted a special needs boy. My wife had a daughter the same day we adopted the boy. My wife had an affair, and we divorced after 16 years of marriage.

Much later, I went to prison, and that woke me up. God told me He had a plan for me. During my morning devotionals, I got on my knees and asked God for forgiveness. I asked God to show me His plan. God said I already had the plan, and He said I should put it to use after I get out of prison. I got out of prison, but I went back to prison. I went to Hand Up Ministries after I discharged from prison the second time. I got a job working at the landfill for \$7.25 an hour. I had to pay court costs, probation fees, counseling fees, and program fees, and I also had to buy food. I was on probation for two years. I got off probation four months early. I had four different probation officers. The last one saw something different in me.

Thanks to David Nichols for accepting me and starting Genesis One at Hand Up. Genesis One is a great program. The reason I got off probation early is because I told my probation officer about Hand Up being a prison aftercare program with Genesis One accountability groups. at prayer meetings.

— Virgil Taylor

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.

