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→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

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UPDATE



Another year is about gone, and opportunities have come and gone. While I get frustrated because we cannot take advantage of all opportunities when they come, I have to accept that we

did everything we could do. We were able to obtain a permanent loan to consolidate our assets. This actually prevented our assets from being taken over by hard money lenders. One such lender had every intention of taking our property by raising our interest rate by 6%. He already had us at 12.75%. We were able to save thousands per month, plus get enough money to add another 33 beds. We are making good progress on the first ten of those beds, but we still have 18 men living in tents. Even though they are in tents, they are not totally homeless. We provide food, bathrooms, jobs, transportation, and all of the other things they need to get back on their feet. Ten of these men will go into those ten beds, and by that time there will be ten or fifteen more men in tents. At some point, we must purchase a building somewhere or build one. God will provide – without all of

the self-righteous Christians in Oklahoma. In the meantime, we continue to reach the helpless, the hopeless, the unloved, the cast out, the cast down, the believing, the unbelieving, the physically disabled, the mentally handicapped, the unwanted, and the hated. I am continually humbled by the amazing grace God has given to these men and women who had no reason to hope again. With no earthly reason to believe there is a god, they have defied all odds and found grace in the eyes of God. Man will continue to try to destroy them until they die, no matter how godly they are. Hand Up is the light at the end of the tunnel for them, a light in the darkness. It is a place to escape the beatings and robberies, as well as a place to experience being wanted and cared for. It is a place to have a new family, a new hope, and a new life. The saddest part is that when these men need a nursing home or more, we are not equipped to help them, and there are few places that will help them. We pray God will provide for them also. Let me note that not everyone falls in line with the “political Christian churches.” We get some support from individuals who have chosen to listen to God’s voice. We also get support from two churches out of state. Those gifts have made a permanent difference in lives. This includes support from past board members. God bless each one who helps. Let us also pray for those who have lost hope because of the hurts that run very deep, sometimes from church experiences. Many of these people turn to drugs or alcohol to numb the painful memories. Holidays are usually the worst.

My vote is for Congress to put all holidays in two weeks, perhaps one in the summer and one in the winter. Just a thought!

— *David Nichols,*
President & CEO

TESTIMONES

I was born in Lawton, Oklahoma in 1976. I have a twin brother, plus two younger brothers and two younger sisters. My dad was in the Army, so we moved a lot. My parents split up when I was 13. My mom remarried, and she moved to Oklahoma. I went to high school in Tombstone, Arizona. I left home when I was seventeen. I went to Branson, Missouri and worked there for a few years. I was a line cook, but I moved to Carnegie, Oklahoma, where I got my GED. I tried to join the Army, but I didn't pass the test. I got a job detailing cars in Chickasha, Oklahoma, but I eventually returned to Carnegie. I met a woman there, but I later found out she was married. We stayed together for about a year and a half. I lived in Arkansas with my sister, but I was unstable. I got four DUI's in three years. I had a drinking problem. The state tried to put me in rehab, but I wasn't ready to quit. I worked at Tyson Foods. I had a good job at American Tubing, but I quit and moved back to Oklahoma. I moved to Texas to live with my twin, but I came back to Oklahoma. I got arrested for driving without a license. I went to Oklahoma City, and I was arrested for vehicle theft in 2000. I served eight months in prison. I knew about the Lord,

but I didn't know the Lord. I got a misdemeanor marijuana charge in Lawton in 2008. I was arrested for assault and battery in Salina, Oklahoma in 2010. My ex-girlfriend died in 2011. I was arrested for sexual battery in 2011. I was very drunk, and I blacked out. I woke up in jail. I spent eight months in prison. I went to Lawton to work, and I lived with my mom. I started drinking again, and I went to Georgia to live with an old friend from Tombstone. I was arrested for failure to register as a sex offender, and I was sentenced to ten years of probation. I left the state without permission. I crossed state lines without letting sex offender registration know, and the feds arrested me in Oklahoma. I came to Hand Up the first time in 2020, but I got drunk and took too much of my medication. I passed out in the woods. I stayed away from Hand Up for a few days, and then I went to my mom's house in Lawton. I stayed there for two weeks before I called my probation officer. I was arrested in



January 2021, and I went to prison. I came back to Hand Up in October 2022. I now have a good job, and I am sober. I am happy to be alive, and the Lord is watching over me.

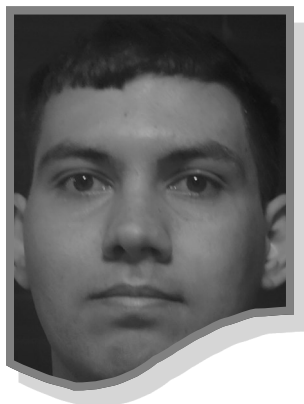
-Denny Casey

I was born in Phoenix, but we moved to St. George, Utah, where we lived for seven years. I don't remember much about my childhood years. My parents split up when I was seven. My dad fell in love with an older woman. My dad asked me if he should stay with my mom, and I told him to follow his heart. My mom was upset by the breakup, and she took the kids to Oklahoma City. My

dad called the police on her. They went to court, and my dad got custody of the kids. He had us during the school year, and my mom had us when school was out. My mother remarried in 2009. My dad stayed with our step-mom until I was 12, and then we got a different step-mom. She was a good step-mom. I usually got along with my sister, but, like most siblings, we sometimes fought. My brother and I got along okay, unless I beat him at Halo 3. He didn't like that. We played a lot of video games, and we also rode four wheelers, dirt bikes, and an ATV. I also had a half-brother, but we didn't get along. My half-sister was an angel. I grew up knowing the Lord. I fell away, and I ran from God. I later found the truth again, and I turned my life around. I went to prison, and I learned about Hand Up from a friend in prison. He had been at Hand Up before. Hand Up helps people,

and my life now is better than it was before. Hand Up gave me a place to live, a job, food, and clothing. God kept me safe when I was in prison, and I need God in my life.

-Nathan Rosado



I was born in Kentucky in October 1960. We rarely went to church, and I don't recall there being a Bible in our house. When I did go to church, I went with my grandmother to a Nazarene church. I attended Sunday school when I went to church, and I memorized 1 Corinthians 14:40 for Sunday school. I still remember this verse 58 years later, and I try to live by it. I quit school during my junior year of high school, and I got a job at Kentucky Power. I started drinking and smoking weed. After five years, I moved to Florida, where I lived for 13 years. I met a woman from Oklahoma, and she talked me into moving to Oklahoma. I

committed a crime, and I was sent to prison for five years. Just before my discharge date, I learned I was going to Hand Up Ministries. I started attending church services and Genesis One at Hand Up. I met people who made things go a lot easier for me. The Hand Up staff was very helpful. I have been at the same job for almost nine years. Hand Up has been a blessing for me. I am learning about the Bible, and I haven't been drinking or getting high. I have a roof over my head and food to eat. I am beginning to see things in a new light, and life is getting better. I just turned 62 years old, and, when I think back on my life, I know I am blessed to be alive. I have been shot. I have been run over by a truck, and I have been in several car crashes. I know in my heart that God is keeping me for a reason, and one day I will know why. For now, I am trying my best to do the right thing, because I know I have a purpose. I am blessed by God in many ways. I hope this testimony gives you a little insight into my life.

-Elzie Gene Collins.

I was born in St. Louis, MO, and my parents divorced when I was three years old. I have a sister who is four years older than me. I spent the majority of my time with my maternal grandmother when I was growing up. She was extremely religious, and she took me to church and Sunday school many times. Because of her efforts, I learned about Jesus. My home life was stressed. My mom remarried, and so did my dad. He adopted a boy who was one year older than me. My dad abandoned my sister and me when my mom remarried, and there were no more weekend visits. I never got along with my step-dad, and he was very abusive to my mother. He liked to embarrass me whenever he could. My mother and my step-dad were alcoholics. They drank all of the time. I started going to church on my own when I was in sixth grade. I went to church after school on

most days. I had a short relationship with God, because the other kids started picking on me. I walked away from God when I was in eighth grade, and I was mad that people from church always picked on me. My adult life was filled with turmoil, and I was never happy and frequently angry. I got married, but we divorced within two years. I remarried and moved across the country for work. I worked in the oilfield, a place where I felt like I fit. I worked for Halliburton for 12 years. I had smoked pot since I was 16, but I always managed it well with work. However, I began doing it too much when I was 41. I was arrested because of drugs. I managed to stay out of prison for three years, and then I signed a plea deal in April 2021. I spent 18 months in prison. I found God again when I was in prison. I attended church until the church got too crowded, and I quit going to church because of my anxiety. However, I did manage to read the entire Bible. I learned about Hand Up Ministries when I was nearing my discharge date. I couldn't go home to Mississippi, and I have no family in Oklahoma. God has allowed a sense of love and calm in my soul. I am still learning and growing, but I am somewhat happy now.

-Adam Sessions

I had a pretty good childhood, considering my parents were alcoholics and drug addicts. I started school in Lawton, Oklahoma, but we moved to Dallas when I was in first grade. My parents separated, and my mother moved to Winfield, Kansas with my two brothers and me. I went to second grade in Winfield. My parents reconciled, and we moved to Burns Flat, Oklahoma. I finished school in Burns Flat, and I graduated from high school in 1999. I was never forced to go to church. My parents didn't go, so I didn't go. I started experimenting with drugs at a very young

age. I started smoking marijuana when I was fourteen, and I started using meth with my dad when I was seventeen. When I was an adult, I lived in Clinton, Oklahoma with my girlfriend and her daughter. Since I was a drug addict, I had trouble finding and keeping employment, so I sold drugs to pay the bills and eat. I also had a bad gambling habit. My drug addiction started spiraling out of control when I started shooting up OxyContin. I stole pills from a good friend of our family, and that is how I came into contact with the law. I went to prison, and I didn't get out until 2022. Prison wasn't all that hard for me. I pretty much did what I wanted in prison. I came to know the Lord in prison. I quit using drugs, and I could see clearly for the first time since I was a kid. I heard about Hand Up Ministries two years before I discharged from prison. A lot of good Christian friends came to Hand Up after prison and are still here today. I would probably be homeless if it wasn't for Hand Up. I have been out of prison for two months. I recently got my driver's license, a car, and a trailer. I have my blood family and my Christian family behind me, cheering me on to continue to better myself. I thank God for all of the blessings I receive every day, and I thank Hand Up Ministries for the opportunity to have a place to live after my release from prison. I am surrounded by positivity and hope.



-Philip Helvey

Acts 20:35 NIV

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

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.

