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→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

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UPDATE



This past year was a turning point for Hand Up Ministries. It was a hard year, with prices on everything shooting to the moon. When that was coupled with the stranglehold of high interest with which the devil sought to

kill us, we were set up for destruction. However, God intervened and did what everyone said would never happen. He gave us the sensible mortgage loan that was supposed to be impossible, plus enough money to add up to 42 beds. That was a real “bummer” day for the devil, and it wasn’t a day too soon for us. Instead of destroying us, we “moved on up.” The devil’s purpose is spelled out in three words: STEAL, KILL, and DESTROY! See John 10:10. That is who he is, and it is what he wants to do to you. Thank God that Jesus came to give life and give it more abundantly. This is also in John 10:10. We get to choose who we serve. At Hand Up, we choose God. Do you know how many of Satan’s gates and footholds Hand Up is tearing down? He certainly knows, and he has given his all to destroy us before we can do him more harm. We are not ignorant to believe he has given up. As long as he has “Christians” doing his work for him, he will keep trying. We sincerely thank all of the

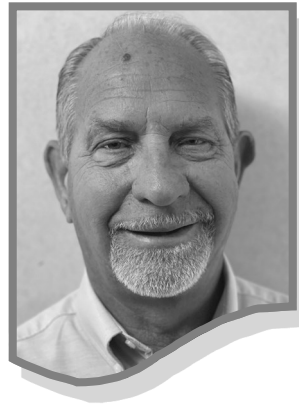
individuals and the two churches who have joined us in the fight. Those who help us are immediately shamed and criticized by “well-meaning Christians” who have bought into the devil’s strategy of false information and peer pressure in order to be accepted. Sin and evil have always been always been with mankind, which is why Christ came for us all. For the Christians to cut off any group of people as evil and unredeemable is the spirit of the anti-Christ. The devil wants to steal your compassion, kill your walk with the Spirit, and destroy your light which shines to the world. He wants us to be dead, ineffective Christians who think social issues are more important than His word and grace. Standing up for what is right (not who is right) is called righteousness. This results in persecution. See 2 Timothy 3:12. The carnal man wants to avoid persecution, but the godly man endures it. For any person who visits our campus, they go away wondering how this could happen in America. How can our society be so hateful of common mistakes made by the majority of people? I refer to a life sentence for fornication that was not rape, or touching certain areas of the body (maybe wanted, maybe not), or exposing certain parts (both men and women). A life sentence sounds very wrong when a murderer can get as little as ten years and then be accepted as cured and return to society and the church. What is really disturbing is the great number of mentally ill getting the same treatment, some of whom have the IQ of a six year old child. Without Hand Up’s help, most of these people will be forced to live on the street or be in prison for life. I am proud to help bear the cross of Christ, and I make no apologies for helping all human beings I can. They were created by God, and it is our duty to share the love of God (good news) to not just the good, but to all who will

receive it. God's love is much more than we can understand or imagine. We are now helping 35 men for whom we do not have beds. If we can't find a building, that number could be much higher. There are many homeless who don't want our help or our rules. We can't help those people, but there are multitudes begging for help. These people want to experience real life. Join us in sharing God's live.

— *David Nichols,*
President & CEO

The Bible teaches us, in one translation, to think about the "good report." In other words, there are many situations that could lead us into a negative thought life and be surrounded by nothing but problems. As believers, through Christ we have the ability to rise above those things and concentrate on the things that are working and not the things that are not working. Hand Up has always been a powerful tool in the hands of God to transform broken lives into something useful and wonderful. The "good report" is that God is very much alive and well at Hand Up, and He continues to rebuild men who have been broken by the tragedies of life. Sin can and will destroy the best people, and only God can restore life where only death has reigned. My own life reached rock bottom a few years ago, and, even though I called myself a Christian and loved Jesus, I did not fear God. That reverence and admiration had drained from my relationship, and I compromised a good testimony for temporary gratification. I love what God is doing at Hand Up Ministries. He is, as I have mentioned, still transforming men's lives. Many of these men are not wanted anywhere, and they are seemingly not loved by anyone. They find love and acceptance at Hand Up, and they are held accountable for their actions in a way that

can lead them to success. God is also bringing new people with great leadership and management skills into our circle to help us move forward in a more efficient manner. I choose to concentrate on the "good report" of the victory that Christ, our warrior, is winning on behalf of the broken and downtrodden. May we suit up today and join our warrior King to fight the good fight of faith.



— *Ray Riddle,*
Oklahoma Director

TESTIMONES

I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1983. I grew up in an unstable home. There were addictions, and mental and physical abuse. My dad was a dope cook, and my mother was a dope whore. I have no siblings. I was robbed of a good childhood. We moved around a lot. I was told I would never amount to anything, and I was told I was not wanted. My parents were never married, and my birth was unintentional. I had a miserable childhood. My mom even sold me once. From the age of twelve I lived with friends from school. I went to Federal prison six months after I graduated from high school, and I spent three years in prison. I went three days before I was arrested again. I have been to prison five times. I did 13 years and seven months this last time. It was brutal hell. I have never been to a minimum or a medium prison. It has always been a maximum prison. My last charge was a 2005 crime in Oklahoma. I came to Hand Up in September 2022. I got a good job as soon as I arrived at Hand Up. Hand Up helped me get an ID. This is the first time I have ever had an ID in my entire life. I keep to myself. I am still trying to adjust to being free. I have a girlfriend in Little Rock, and I am returning to Little Rock when I get off of parole in January 2023. I have a job waiting for me in Little Rock.

-Anonymous



I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1980. I had a half-brother who was 33 years old when I was born. My father's first wife died of cancer, and he married my mom in 1979. My father was a World War 2 veteran, and he was a janitor at a factory. My mom didn't work outside the home. My dad was physically and mentally abusive, but my mom was caring. I had to read the Bible for two hours every night. I spent my childhood alone. I had no friends. My dad put me down a lot. I was made to go to church until my dad quit going to church when I was 17. I stopped my dad from hitting my mom when I was 21, and he had a stroke and died three days later. He was buried in Kentucky. I promised my mom I wouldn't do drugs anymore, and I have kept that promise until this day. I worked and took care of my mom until she passed away in 2008. I got married in 2000, but we got divorced in 2001. We had a daughter, but I haven't seen my daughter since she was six months old. Between 2001 and 2008 I bounced between jobs. I drank heavily. I met a woman in 2009. She had two boys, and we moved to Oklahoma in 2010 to help her mom after her dad died. We had twins, a boy and a girl. We lived in Purcell, and I worked remodeling houses. I went to prison in 2014. I spent eight and a half years in prison, and I have seven years of probation. A friend said he would pick me up at the bus station, but he didn't show. I didn't know I had been accepted at Hand Up. I called Hope, and they called Hand Up. I learned I had been accepted at Hand Up. I briefly worked a construction job, and then I went to work at a place that does laundry for restaurants. I would be homeless if it wasn't for Hand Up. I thank Hand Up for helping me. I would be lost if it wasn't for Hand Up.

-John Bullock

In Memoriam

Joe King came to Hand Up in 2005. He was our office manager back then. He served Hand Up in various capacities until his death in December 2022. Joe was dedicated to Hand Up, and he will be missed. We are sharing his testimonies as tribute.

I was born in Baltimore in 1958. I had four sisters, but we were not a close family. We moved to Alabama when I was five, and we moved to Saint Louis when I was 11. We moved to Pennsylvania when I was 13. I graduated from high school in Pennsylvania. My mother forced us to go to church on Sunday, but she was a Sunday Christian. She had a mouth like a sailor the other six days of the week. My first personal involvement with the church was when I was 15, and this was when I learned the hypocrisy of the church. The deacons thought I should have been paid for my volunteer work, but the pastor disagreed. The pastor took over my duties. I became an electrician after high school, and I worked as an electrician for about 15 years. I had some problems, and the union failed to support me, so I quit and became a truck driver. I drove a truck for five years, and then I became a dispatcher. I eventually became an operations manager. I got arrested on federal charges in 2002. I had minor brushes with the law before that, but nothing major. I ended up in Oklahoma City, and I came to Hand Up Ministries in 2004. I became the office manager at Hand Up soon after my arrival. Due to expansion, my position changed to business manager. I left Hand Up in November of 2007. I wanted to explore other options. I worked at Guaranty Laundry for a short time, and then I worked at the OKC airport for a while. I was having problems finding a place to live. I lived in a hotel room, but it wasn't in a place where I could legally live. I was arrested by U.S. Marshalls, and I spent another year in prison. I was put on probation, and I returned to Hand Up. Due to conflicts with probation and counseling, I left the state and went to Alabama. I was arrested in Alabama for a probation violation, and I served 10 months in prison. My dad embezzled \$10,000 from me during this time. After I was released, I returned to Alabama to confront my dad. He had a piece of property there, and I convinced him to sign it over to me to compensate me for the money he took from me. I lived on that property for five

years while I was on probation. I sold the property after I completed probation, and I moved next door. My neighbor allowed me to put my camper next to his house. I spent the next year contemplating what my future would be. I accrued debt during this time, and I decided to leave Alabama and go to Nevada. I stopped in Oklahoma while I was on the way to Nevada. I realized my income would not support the cost of my trip to Nevada. I talked to David Nichols, and he allowed me to return to Hand Up. This has turned out to be a blessing. I am able to pay down the debt. Hand Up has always been there for me, and being at Hand Up has always helped me feel closer to God. My experience with churches has not been good, but Hand Up has always accepted me, regardless of my faults and shortcomings. My health is deteriorating, and I know my day could come at any time. It is time for me to get serious about my relationship with God. I know Hand Up will be there to guide me down that path. It is just simply amazing how God works in our lives. He gives us free will, and He allows us to make mistakes. No matter how big or how small the mistake, He is always there to pick us up, dust us off, and put us back in the race we call life. This has happened to me many times. I blamed God most of those times, and I turned away from Him. Now I know those mistakes were incorporated into His plan. It took some big mistakes for me to realize He expected me to learn and use those experiences to further my path and better myself. It boils down to that old saying, "If life gives you lemons, make lemonade." Now, that is what I do. Instead of feeling sorry for myself, I now ask Him for forgiveness and guidance. There are many other adages from days gone by which are just as effective today as they were back then. One such saying is, "Learn from the mistakes of others, because you won't live long enough to make them all yourself." God will always guide you down the right path as long as you let Him, but you MUST let Him. Don't worry, because He will always be there for you. The hard part is implementing His plan and guidance. That doesn't mean go out and make mistakes. As you grow in life, think about your actions beforehand. Think about the consequences of your actions. This was a struggle I dealt with most of my life. I only thought about what was fun and pleasurable. I only thought about ME. I didn't care about what harm I caused others. They didn't matter. My lifestyle was sex, drugs, and rock n roll. I searched for euphoria in every aspect of my

life. Now I have learned a new euphoria, and that is the love of God and my savior Jesus. I have learned a lot from my past. I learned computers. I learned management skills. I learned perseverance. I learned tactfulness and many other traits. In the past, I used these traits to manipulate people. Now, I use these traits as a way to help God in His works at Hand Up Ministries. I now realize these were gifts He gave me to use for His purpose, not for my own selfish desires. My family moved around a lot during my formidable years, which made it difficult to make friends. As a result, it was a difficult challenge to build relationships when I was an adult. This is probably the reason I never married. Looking back now, I see I sabotaged relationships because I feared they wouldn't last. I'm struggling with this, but I am getting better. My love for God and this ministry is helping me overcome that challenge. I still have a hard time SHOWING that love, and I'm sure many people see that. Sometimes, I overcompensate, and this has caused problems for me. Even so, God always gives me the guidance to see what I am doing, and He gives me the wisdom to manifest this into something positive. It is heartwarming to see how Hand Up has grown in the 16 years I have known about this ministry. It is awesome to see the work He has done here, and it is awesome to see all of the many lives which have changed. This ministry has been nationally recognized, and the potential for growth is astounding. I am happy to be here and see this growth, and I hope to be a part of this ministry for years to come. I frequently pray to God and ask Him to give me the strength and ability to remain here until He decides it is time for me to come Home.

-Joe King



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