

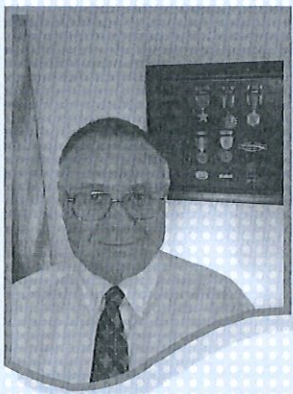
NEWS

October 2023

→ MINISTRY UPDATE ←

David Nichols — President
Main Office — (405) 236-3349

UPDATE



Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. So great is His power and glory that we only see glimpses of things he has made and things to come. Every time we think we know Him, more and

more is revealed to us, and we discover how small we are in His kingdom. We begin to realize the greatest of the kingdom. Jesus didn't wash the disciples' feet for a ritual. That was the servant's job. We should never grow out of servanthood. Jesus didn't call us to be important. He called us to serve with humility. We are not better than our neighbor. We are to be a servant to them. Religion unknowingly teaches pride of life. Do you see the least in the church sitting in the place settling disputes instead of lawyers? Although the Bible teaches it, it would cause a huge uproar to suggest it.

The same is true of judging people. Religion and most church people only want to help those who have a good record. Trillions of donated dollars are spent on good people and overnight patches and Band-Aids for those who are



Offering a hand up, not a hand out

Ray@huminc.org

seen as bad. Of course, that is what is left over after all the overhead spent to make that even happen. Very little is spent to permanently change people's lives. Christianity today believes it should all go to preaching or for information, and that should be enough for people to help themselves.

So the homeless population continues to grow. Theft grows. Crime rises with murder and all things associated with poverty and lack of families and a loving, caring relationship from Christians. The more I associate with religious people, the more I realize why God told me to do the ministry of Hand Up the way we are. For years now, the people who want and need our help have been able to pay the cost of their help through our program. All donations have gone to expanding the space needed to help more. Even the clients give donations to help others. It isn't about how good or bad the person has been. It is about what they want the future to be. Even with the many severely mentally ill, they find peace and happiness they have never had. The question isn't, "Can we make a difference?" We intentionally make a difference because we see the people as God's children and we are willing to be servants.

You may be in a religion, but you can do more than be religious. You can be a servant to mankind. If you decide to help us, great! Donations go to expansion, and if you can donate labor, that will work also. Wherever and whoever you serve, remember you will be judged according to how you judge. Be a real servant so people

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know you really care and they take notice.

I was religious for many years and I didn't realize it. What people think of me is not my problem. I choose to be a servant. Join me if you will.

-David Nichols

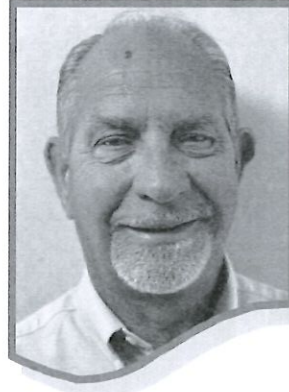
Greetings to all who receive our newsletter and support the work of Hand Up Ministries. We are continuing daily to develop our staff at all of our locations, and we strive to improve everything we do to give our residents a hand up as they try to negotiate reentry into society.

I was recently at a conference with others who are involved in providing services to those who have been incarcerated. The conference was about the barriers faced by previously incarcerated people. I was assigned to a small group to discuss barriers such as transportation, housing, employment, and taking care of legal responsibilities such as probation. The group I was in wrote down these and other barriers, and we discussed how we could help our clients with these things. The leader of the group singled me out and wanted me to add to the discussion. This became a powerful and proud moment for me as I looked at the list we had created, and it dawned on me that Hand Up Ministries was actively providing all the services had listed as barriers. I asked the group why these had to be barriers. Why are we waiting on the government or some foundation or agency to fix these things or become the savior? Hand Up Ministries is doing all of these things we had defined as barriers.

Hand Up Ministries is not perfect, and we continue to identify areas where we can improve and get better. I am proud to say Hand Up Ministries is not only the largest of its kind as a recovery ministry in Oklahoma, but also the most thorough in

terms of the services we offer to our residents. We also network and partner with other agencies that provide services we cannot provide, and through these partnerships we can assist our residents in getting all the services they need, usually at no cost to the resident.

Thank you for your interest and continued support of Hand Up Ministries.



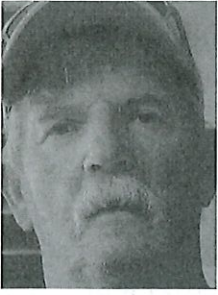
-Ray Riddle

TESTIMONIES

I spent the summer with my grandparents when I was growing up, and my grandparents taught me about God. We attended church every Sunday. My two brothers and I spent four summers at our grandparents' farm. I spent a total of 16 summers there. My grandma always told us about her experiences with God. I always looked forward to those summers. Our grandfather was a God fearing man. Those were wonderful years.

I became an Eagle Scout when I was 16. I started partying with my friends, and God was no longer my number one priority. I got married when I was 26, and my first son was born. I had already drifted away from God. I lost my marriage and my son because of my drug and alcohol use. I left California and returned to Oklahoma, where I got into trouble and went to prison. I still didn't turn to God for help. I thought I could do it on my own. I spent the next 30 years in and out of prison.

During my last time in prison I asked God to be my Lord and Savior. After I left prison, my probation officer told me about Red Rock, and through Red Rock I met a man who referred me to Hand Up. I have been at Hand Up for three months, and I like being here. I want to make this my home for the rest of my life. I have never been happier. Hand Up has helped my very much. They take to my appointments and to Walmart. Hand Up is a wonderful place to live. I look forward to the Sunday church service and the weekly Genesis One meeting. Steve Yanny, our park manager, has been a great friend. I want to thank Hand Up for allowing me to come



here. God had done all of this for me. I thank God, and I thank Hand Up.

-Michael Ediger

I don't remember much about my childhood, but the memories I have are bad. I was passed around from family member to family member, because no one could handle me. I was adopted by another family when I was 12, but they couldn't handle me, so they sent me back to my biological family. My teen years were the same way, because no one could handle me.

I was held back in school, and I dropped out when I was 19. I grew up in a very religious family. I was raised as a Christian, and we went to church on a regular basis. I have read the Bible cover to cover twice. I have always believed in God, and I have never gone astray. However, I became an alcoholic, and I got stupid. My alcoholism led to my crime, and I went to prison for ten years.

I didn't have a place to go after prison. I wanted to be in a sober living environment after prison. I had a friend who bunked next to me in the prison dorm, and he told me about Hand Up. I applied to Hand Up Ministries six months before I discharged from prison, and Hand Up accepted me. My life is now much better than it was before I went to prison. I am beyond busy. I am staring my life over, and I am staying legal so I won't go back to prison. Things aren't easy, but Hand Up had been a blessing. I would be back in prison or homeless if it wasn't for Hand Up. Hand Up helps me with rides, and Hand Up has given me a home. I live in a wonderful trailer, and Hand Up is teaching me life skills. God has blessed me in life to have a second chance to do right and build a wonderful life.

-Camron Williams

I was born in May 1978. I come from a small town in South Carolina. I was raised by my father and mother till my parents divorced when I was five. My mother and I moved in with my grandmother, a lovely woman who was caring and fun. She didn't have a huge house, but she welcomed anyone and

everyone into her home. There could be anywhere from six to ten people living there at any one time. Even though my grandmother didn't work, we never lacked anything. She always made a way.

My mother was in and out of my life, and sometimes I felt left out. I would stay by myself most of the time. When I did hang out with other people, it was mostly with my family. I had a few friends outside of my family, but the only time we hung out together was at school. This was the way it was till I graduated from high school. I joined the military after I graduated from high school. I did this because I thought it was the only option I had. I didn't know anything about student loans, and no one explained anything to me about college. The military helped me grow into the man I am today. I served 13 years in the military, and I made it to the rank of staff sergeant. I got married in 1998, and my daughter was born in 1999.

My grandmother made us go to church, but I didn't go to church when I stayed with my father. I knew of God, but I didn't know Him. I went to church less and less as I got older. I gave my life to the Lord in October 2011, and I continue to grow in Him. My case manager in prison told me about Hand Up. My life now is good. God blessed me with a job after being at Hand Up for two weeks, and I am rebuilding my relationship with my family. Hand Up Ministries has supported me and guided me by helping me meet all of my legal requirements after leaving prison. Hand Up provided me with a place to stay. I got off of supervised probation early, and God blessed me with a good paying job. My relationship with the Lord is not where it should be, but I continue to lean on Him more and more every day.

-Anonymous

I am a 37 year old father from Griffin, Georgia. I have been battling a drug and sex addiction for quite a while now. I served 10 months in the Oklahoma County jail, and I was released in May 2023. I am currently serving ten years of probation, because I was falsely accused of indecent exposure. I took the ten years of probation so I could be released from jail and start rebuilding my life

and return to my children. When I was in jail, I realized I had a sex addiction. I have been battling with my drug addiction for 14 years. I started using marijuana when I enrolled in college in 2005. I started using ecstasy in my early twenties, and this became a habit. I loved women and partying. I was introduced to meth in my early thirties. I started using meth with a friend and his mom, but I became addicted and started using meth by myself.

When I was incarcerated in the Oklahoma County jail, my cellmate was an older man who helped lead me back to Christ. I redirected my life to Christ, and I started studying God's word. Those ten months helped me get clean and sober, and I was able to renew my mind. God took my drug addiction away from me, and now he is helping me fight my sex addiction. I learned about Hand Up Ministries from a new cellmate I met during my last month in jail. I believe meeting him was divine intervention. I wasn't from Oklahoma City, and I didn't know where I was going to go after I got out of jail. I needed to be stable with a roof over my head so I could handle my responsibilities as a father. I thank God for providing, and I thank God for using David Nichols in such a caring way. God has used Hand Up to help me reconnect with God, society, and family. For that I am humbly grateful.



-Randrick Coggins

I had a pretty good childhood. We moved to California when I was three years old. My dad worked on aircraft. My mom was hit by a drunk driver, so we moved back when I was 10. I dropped out of high school when I was 16, but I got my GED the same year. We have a small family, but we are close. We don't get together as much since my grandmother passed away.

My adult life has been good. I had my daughter when I was 20, so that made me grow up fast. I have always been a hard worker, but it is more important when you have a child. I didn't grow up knowing the Lord. We only went to church a couple of times. We didn't talk about God in our family. I was saved by the Lord when I was

in prison, and it has changed my whole life. My dad and mom have also been saved.

I committed my crime out of lust. I was just lonely, and I wanted to talk to someone. I spent 40 months in prison. Prison saved me from myself and the road I was going down. It made me realize I wasn't alone if I gave myself to the Lord. I learned about Hand Up when I was in prison. My cellmate was in Genesis One, and he was going to Hand Up when he got out of prison. I got out and stayed with my cousin, but I had nowhere else to go, so I came to Hand Up. Hand Up saved my life.

My life now is blessed. I have a good job, and I can give back. I have a good relationship with the Lord. My daughter is going to college soon, and both of my parents are in good health. The Lord has truly blessed me. Hand Up has not only given me a place to call home, but this ministry has also shown me that anything is possible if we come together in the name of the Lord. The Hand Up staff is very caring and nice. I don't know where I would be if Hand Up hadn't helped me. I hope I can bless someone as Hand Up has blessed me. God has done everything for me. He has given me faith, friendship, family, a place to stay, and a job. Without God, we have nothing. With God, we have everything.

-Toby Blackwood

Isaiah 53:4-5

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

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.

