

# NEWS

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## → MINISTRY UPDATE ←

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# UPDATE



Praise, honor, and glory to the only one, Jesus Christ, who by keeping His eyes on the results of His mission, endured the suffering, the shame, the pain, and the total separation from God, just to deliver mankind from this world. If Jesus depended on keeping His eyes on the good things ahead in order to endure all he had to go through, we should understand the importance of doing the same to overcome our own trials and problems. Jesus sent the Comforter to help us be able to do that. The Bible teaches us that our trials teach us endurance. We will endure if we keep our eyes on the joy before us.

Pray for the Hand Up men having to live in tents in this winter weather. At least we are able to take them to work and other appointments. We also need to pray for the hundreds of homeless people in Oklahoma City. The religious say the homeless deserve to be there or they wouldn't be there. Deserving or not, God loves them, and they will only know God's love when a person shows it to

them. We should remember, we will be judged just as we judge others.

We fluctuate around four hundred clients at the moment. That number will be rising. We soon will have seven beds at the farm (Love Foundation Campus 2). We will be working on building apartments there. As soon as the loan goes through, we will start working on our aquaponics gardening there, and that will grow to help a lot of people.

We are working on getting a bid on building our new office/chapel/shelter building. That will make a huge difference in everything we do here. It will also improve safety and improve our worship. We have had to use a tent for our services since 2008. We will be able to get just about everyone into one service. When I was young, tent revivals were common, usually in decent weather. I never dreamed it would be every year for 15 years, but a lot of men have found Christ. The renewal of minds has been continuous and effective. I have had the pleasure and privilege of serving unwanted and rejected people for almost 28 years, and I look forward to the years ahead, Lord willing. Will I be hated any less in the future? That is a good question. Anything is possible.

-David Nichols

## Testimonies

I was born in the summer of 1997. My dad was in the Army, which meant we never stayed in one place for long. I thought I had a normal childhood. I had both parents,

presents under the tree, and there were no drugs. However, I found out I lived in a very hateful home. There were beatings and a lot of yelling. I moved away the moment I could leave, but I wish I had never left. I left my best friend for a girl in Indiana. I wanted to get out of Oklahoma.

I grew up in a family that went to church when it was convenient for my mom. She read the story of Christ's birth each Christmas. We weren't allowed to curse. I don't think I ever knew God. The hypocrisy of church people turned me away. I thought there was too much negativity. I committed a crime because I felt so utterly alone. I didn't have anyone in whom I could confide. The people to whom I tried to talk were hateful and told me I was a monster for thinking what I was thinking. No one tried to help. In prison, I was part of a community of people who received me and helped me change my mindset. They talked to me like I was a person. They cared about me and my feelings, and they helped me care about how other people felt. It is because of them that I am confident I won't go back to prison.

When I was about to leave prison, I tried to find a list of addresses where I could live in Muskogee, but my case manager found Hand Up Ministries for me. I still feel trapped. I don't know anything about Oklahoma City. As I am writing this, I am suffering from a severe manic episode, and I have nothing to do with all of this energy. This is why I am writing this at midnight instead of sleeping, even though I have to be up by six to go to work. Hand Up has given me a solid foothold for my first week out of prison. They also helped me with legal stuff.

-Anonymous

I was born in Aurora, Nebraska. We moved around a lot when I was a child. I lived in Nebraska, California, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. I was raised by my mother. I didn't know my father until I was seven or eight years old. I was saved in a Baptist church in Monroe, Louisiana when I was ten years old. I also attended an Assemblies of God church in Welch, Oklahoma with my grandparents. I started drinking when I was in high school, and I didn't attend church very often after that.

I married my first wife when I was 19 years old, and we had two sons. We divorced after seven years of marriage. I married my second wife when I was 27 years old. We started going to a Baptist church in Miami, Oklahoma, and shortly after that I rededicated my life to the Lord. I went to prison in 2006, and I spent 17 years in prison. I was released from prison in 2023. I attended some church services in prison, but I never felt comfortable with any of them. I didn't lose my faith, and I felt God was in control.

I was told about Hand Up Ministries by my case manager and by some inmates who had been at Hand Up. Hand Up has helped me with the resources I needed to transition back to life outside of prison. They helped me with housing, transportation, and employment.



Hand Up has provided me with a church and a community where I feel safe. I feel God's presence in this place.

-Carl Glenn

I was born in Oklahoma City. I was raped, and so were my two sisters and my adopted brother. I grew up in a rough, low income neighborhood. It was full of drugs and gangs. I spent my teen years getting into trouble and running with the wrong crowds. I got involved in the drug trade when I was 13 years old. I was running from the cops and living on the streets. I had godparents who tried to steer me down the right path, but I never listened to them. I grew up going to church, but I never knew God.

I have spent most of my adult life in and out of jail and prison. I spent 10 years in

prison the last time I went to prison. I lost my houses and land as a result of going to prison. Hand Up Ministries gave me the right start in my new life. They gave me a place to live, and they helped me find a job. Hand Up keeps me from going back to the streets and my old life. I am just now getting to know the Lord. I have a job that I love, and I am starting to make amends with my family. My new life is going in the right direction. God has helped me get through hard times, and He is guiding me through my new life. God is pointing me in the right direction.

-William Dean

I was raised in a Christian home, so I knew and learned about God and Jesus from an early age. My family attended church and Sunday school on a regular basis. All of us kids were involved in youth groups and church activities.

I was never in any trouble with law enforcement until my arrest in 2018. I had turned away from God by then. This happened after the death of my parents and my two brothers. I got involved in online activities, and this led to my arrest. I completed Bible study courses in jail, and I recommitted my life to Jesus. In prison, I attended church services until the lockdown due to COVID. I continued to read my Bible and stay close to God.

A friend told me about Hand Up Ministries. I got an application from my case manager, and I was accepted within a few days of it being faxed to Hand Up. After being a Hand Up's Oklahoma City location for two months, I moved to Hand Up's Chandler location, where I was welcomed with open arms and love. I am thankful every day for Mr. Nichols, Ray, and the guys here. I eventually began driving the ministry van to help the men get to where they need to go. Hand Up provided me a place



to live so I wouldn't be on the street. I am forever thankful for this ministry.

-Stephen Cash

I was born in July of 1965, and I was the youngest of seven children. Both of my parents worked, so I was raised a lot by my older siblings. We never had a much, but we knew that we were loved. We went to church, and I was saved at the age of ten. I joined the Army when I was 18. I was involved in a car explosion shortly after I joined the Army, and I was burned over 22% of my body. The doctor didn't expect me to live, and I was read the last rites. I began to improve, and I spent 29 days in the hospital. I was deployed to Germany after I recovered, and I met my wife in Germany. We had a son in 1987. I spent three years in Germany, and I finished my service at Fort Hood. I moved to California, where I worked in a solar energy plant for one year. We moved back to Germany, where I lived for 20 years. I moved back to Arkansas, and I met my second wife.

Work brought me to Oklahoma, and we adopted two beautiful kids. I found myself in trouble with the law in 2000. When I was in prison, I found God once again, and I relished what was missing in my life. I heard about Hand Up Ministries when I was in prison. I applied to Hand Up, and I was accepted. I have been at Hand Up for about three years. I am thankful for David Nichols and the men at Hand Up. I have been truly blessed since I got out of prison. I have met some very nice people here. God has blessed me over and over again.

-Craig Hooper

I grew up in a very rough family. My step-father was very abusive. My mom tried dealing with both of us as best she could, but she had issues as well. It was no better in school. I felt since I couldn't win at home with my step-dad, I acted out on the bullies at school, and I fought a lot. I got dope from the people with whom I got along. I was 13,

and my use of dope led to an addiction that lasted until I was 50 years old. By the grace of Jesus, I quit dope. I have been clean for almost three years.

I went to prison for the first time in 1990. I was a pagan. My religion was paganism, and I practiced this religion every day. I got out of prison in March 1991, and I went back to prison in July of 1991. I got out of prison in 2008, and I had all new addictions. I went back to prison a year later. I got out and went back again. I spent 12 years in prison this time.

I joined Celebrate Recovery in 2016. By God's grace, I got clean. I am still in Celebrate Recovery, and I am on the leadership team. Here at hand Up, I am learning to put away my past and get forgiveness for the wrongs I have done in the past. I know life for me will never be easy, but through the Lord I can do all things as long as it lines up with Jesus' plan for my life. My goal is to go back into prison as a Celebrate Recovery volunteer and give to others what was given to me.

-Harold Newman

I grew up not knowing anything about God, because much of my life was spent in state custody. I didn't have a family growing up. I spent 16 years in prison. I was told about Hand Up Ministries when I was in prison. I live my life day to day, and at times I don't feel like I have much of a life. Hand Up has given me a roof over my head. I have no family and no real friends, or anywhere else to go. I am doing the best I can to change my feelings on life and learn who Christ is.

-Kevin Bailey

I grew up as a country boy. I enjoyed hunting, fishing, swimming, and camping in my early years. I never knew Jesus until I was 25 years old. I thank God for Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I was in prison for 12 years, and God was with me in prison. I thank God for Hand Up Ministry. I am warm in the winter and cool in the summer. I have

cable. I appreciate David Nichols, Ray Riddle, and John Hider. God has blessed me in all kinds of ways at Hand Up Ministries.

-David Hagerty

I was raised in the church. Despite the church, I was abused by my parents, both physically and mentally. My mother died when I was 14 years old, and I was thrown into the street. I grew up with a hatred for authority, for family, and for the law. I spent much of my life in and out of jails and prisons. I finally went to prison for a crime I didn't commit. Instead allowing my heart to grow harder, I cried out to God, and He heard my voice and found me in the pit. God answered me and revealed Himself. I gave my heart to Him, and He rescued me.

I came to Oklahoma after prison to be with my sister, but I didn't have a place to live. I was thrown into prison again. I learned about Hand Up Ministries when I was in prison. I applied to Hand Up Ministries, and I was accepted. God provided me with a place to live. I have since learned how to love unconditionally and how to live with people. I am thankful to the Lord for providing me with a home at Hand Up. This is a place where I can grow in my faith.

-Mark Blake

**Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

**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.**

