

# NEWS

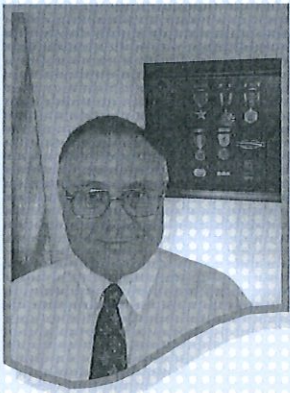
September 2023

## → MINISTRY UPDATE ←

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# UPDATE



Great is God's faithfulness, mercy, love and kindness to all who will receive it. To understand His love and compassion is so much more than the carnal mind can receive. That

is why man is always asking how God can love someone who has done this or that. People judge according to what they think God ought to do. However, when they are the guilty ones, they want God to forgive. Real love covers a multitude of sins. If it is our sin, we want people to forgive. The minute another person sins, our carnal nature takes over and we judge harshly. According to God's law, that means we will be judged harshly. God help us walk in His love.

Sometimes, our expansion plans have not worked out. However, that doesn't mean we don't keep moving ahead. We are still working on several things at one time. We still have 56 men in tents, and we have 40 more men who are released but can't come here until we have beds. We are striving as much as possible to get those beds.

One thing just happened



*Offering a hand up, not a hand out*

Ray@huminc.org

unexpectedly. A property we had wanted just became available again. This is the property we wanted for our Social Security and retired men. Most of these men are mentally handicapped. We bought 40 acres, and we will soon start the process of building on it. It is also perfect for our aquaponics gardening plan, among other things.

If you are in a position to donate some labor in any area, we can use your help. We are about to become overwhelmed with work. Brush hogging, framing, hanging sheet rock, electrical, plumbing, concrete work, painting, insulation, greenhouse preparation, aeration, septic work, bulldozer work, bobcat work, and landscaping are skills we need. It would be as good as cash to Hand Up, and we could get beds available much faster. Email me at [david@huminc.org](mailto:david@huminc.org), and then we can work from there. God will reward you greatly, and the results of your labor will last for many years.

We were able to obtain enough sheet metal to do all of our skirting at both parks. When that is completed, we would like to put metal roofs on all of our 125 mobile homes. We would like to use 26 gage R24 being 8' or longer. Used metal is okay. Our target is \$1 per foot, unless we can get it donated. I know that sounds unrealistic, but that is what makes it miraculous like the rest of Hand Up. When God gets involved, it is always miraculous. What a mighty God we serve!

Just to let you know, our staff is becoming a dream team, and to think that

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most companies wouldn't hire them. Figure that out! God is good.

-David Nichols

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

First, I need to reintroduce myself. My name is Chris Spears, and I am the lead chaplain at Hand Up Ministries. I have been at Hand Up for over a decade. While I strive to learn every day, it has been during my time here at Hand Up that I have been blessed the most. So, I thank each of you for the opportunity to serve. The literal meaning of ministry is to serve others, and that is why I try each and every day to help those who are here and encourage men to share with others the struggles they go through every day. This opens the gate to share God's Word them, as well as sharing what He has done in my life.

I wanted to do more for Hand Up than I was already doing, something that would make a difference in the lives of our residents. Looking back when I first got out of prison in 1996, I remembered how I only had the clothes on my back and no way to get anything else. So, I reached out to several companies to see if I could get anything to put into the welcome bags we give to new residents. I reached out to Bombas.

I was blessed with the opportunity to talk to the Bombas Giving Team. Kelley, Malina, Kerri, and Isabelle are great people and are very interested in our ministry. For those of you who do not know, Bombas started out as a sock company that gave away a pair of socks for every pair they sold to a ministry. Bombas has grown into a massive company, and they are thrilled to help

others. After a lot of talking on the phone, a lot of emails, and one Zoom call, Bombas sent us a donation of 3000 pairs of socks!!! Hallelujah!!! A lot of people would like to give me credit, but it is only because of God's blessings that this happened. We are now a giving partner with Bombas, and this allows us to not only get a donation every year, but it also allows us to bless others in our community with our overflow. I am looking forward to adding underwear and t-shirts to the donation next year.

I want thank Bombas and their Giving Team for being so generous. This donation has made an immediate impact on our ministry and the men who come to us for help. I look forward to our continuing partnership and achieving the goal of helping those in need. They are doing great work in communities in the United States and around the world. I pray this will be a long and lasting relationship for Hand Up and the men who come here.



—Chris Spears  
Lead Chaplain

## TESTIMONIES

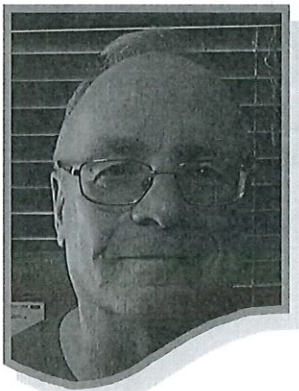
My early years were great for the most part. I was a happy child, and I was a quiet child. My family life changed when I was eight. My mother had a heart attack, and my parents began to have problems in their marriage. This led to my maternal grandmother being very active in our home. She was a nurse and a missionary to Native American tribes in Oklahoma. She was a big influence in my life, and I accepted Jesus into my heart at the age of eight.

My youth and teen years were spent being very active in church activities. I visited nursing homes and hospitals, and I became a youth leader. I was a very quiet person, but I had boldness. I was very active in my church, even into most of my adult life. When I was 42, my sister got cancer, and she died in 2004. She left two daughters, one of whom

was a legally blind eleven year old girl. I found myself getting angry with God, and I started down a path that would eventually lead me to prison. I spent eight and a half years in prison.

I rededicated my life to the Lord in prison. A year before my discharge, I began seeking a place to live after leaving prison. Both of my parents passed away while I was in prison. My case manager suggested Hand Up Ministries. I filled out the Hand Up application, and I was accepted to come to Hand Up. I have been at Hand Up for a little over a week, and I feel great peace and purpose after my release from prison. The Hand Up staff and my neighbors are very helpful, and they care about me and my future. Hand Up will make a great impact on the remainder of my life. Hand Up has provided me with transportation to my appointments, and the staff has helped me with some very difficult tasks. I do not know where I would be if Hand Up hadn't helped me.

I look forward to growing closer to God and my fellow man. I thank Hand Up for giving me this chance. God kept me in prison, and He has kept me after leaving prison. God has been very good to me. I feel I have the best chance of a blessed life now and in the future.



-Harry Van Hopper

I never had a child's childhood. I was constantly seeking guidance from those around me. I had to grow up at six years of age. I was running the streets by age seven. I was doing drugs of any kind and sleeping under bridges. I ate maybe once or twice a week. That was my "childhood" up until I was 13. It was then that I started breaking into places to earn money. I started hanging around worse and worse people, and I started pushing drugs. I got kicked out of school when I was 16. I got a job when I was 18.

Things got better until I lost my job. I

started selling drugs again, and I went to jail. I was in and out of jail till I was 22. I was charged with a felony while I was incarcerated, and I went to prison. I am not an entirely religious person, but I know for a fact that God is real. He does forgive a person more than he deserves. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. I never expected to get a second chance like I did, and I am grateful for that.

-Anonymous

I was born in Tulsa. My family moved to Texas when I was two, but we soon moved to Collinsville, Oklahoma. I went to school in Chelsea, Oklahoma from kindergarten to fifth grade. I started playing baseball at that time. My dad was in construction, but he lost his business, so we moved back to Texas. We moved to several towns in Texas. I left home when I was 13, and I moved in with my brother. I went to work cleaning construction sites, roofing, and working in a convenience store. I went to tech school eleventh grade, and my teacher helped me find a good job.

I worked at night, and I finished high school during the day. I got married soon after I graduated from high school, and I bought a home. I got divorced after five years, and I sold my house. I met God when I was an adult. I was struggling with mental health and physical health issues. I am still having problems with those things. The only thing that got me through was being able to talk to God, even though I never went to church much. I continue to have a personal relationship with God unto this day.

I learned about Hand Up Ministries when I was in prison. Hand Up gave me a chance. I have only been out of prison for a month, and Hand Up gave me a place to live and the opportunity to go to church every Sunday. God is very important to me, and I am blessed to have Him. I still struggle with mental and physical problems, and I couldn't get through it without the Lord. I am very thankful to Hand Up for everything, and am extremely thankful to God for being there for me.

-Phillip Hamlin

I was a troublesome child. I had voices in my head, and my dad was a homosexual. I had friends who were like a second family. I played sports to stay out of trouble. I had a foster family. I grew up knowing the Lord, but the streets were calling me and I went astray. I learned about Hand Up Ministries in prison. Hand Up gave me a second chance to get my life in order.

-Adrian Crawford

I was born into a military family in Arkansas in 1984. We moved around a lot. I remember enjoying it because it always meant I would see new things and meet new people. We moved to Oklahoma in 1994. I moved from school to school in Oklahoma. I was raised in the church. We attended a Baptist church where I came to know Christ. I decided to go in my own direction in my teen years, and I started running from God.

I moved out and got married when I was 18, and that was when I started down an uncertain road. I got involved in things that would ultimately end my freedom. I was charged with a felony in 2008, and I spent 15 years in prison. It was in prison that I found Christ again. I started singing and playing in the praise and worship band, and I discovered who God wanted me to be.

I have been out of prison for three months. Even though I am not fully free, I am free. I have a good job, a place to stay, and a great family who supports me mentally and spiritually. Hand Up Ministries has done very much for me. They helped me get through the hurdles of getting an ID, and they helped me get groceries. They have given me a place to live when finding a home was difficult. Without Hand Up, I would be homeless. Hand Up helped find a job, and they have helped me with spiritual guidance.

God has done much for me. He gave me a great family and friends. Hand Up has



given me a revelation and a purpose to live a healthy and crime free life. Without Him, I would be nothing more than a lifeless soul.

-Travis Smith

My early childhood years were spent in foster homes and group homes. I spent my adult life homeless and living on the streets. I had a few jobs. I did not know the Lord. I spent my time drinking and chasing girls. I never went to church unless I was going there to eat a meal. I didn't go to prison the first time a got into trouble with the law. I served my time in the county jail. I still had to register. I went to prison for ten years the second time I got into trouble with the law.

I was told about Hand Up Ministries right before I got out of prison. Now that I am out of prison, I am around people who care if I drink alcohol or use drugs. These people care if I have a job, and they will help me get one. They helped me get my meds, and they are helping me get on SSI.

God has worked wonders in my life. I go to church every Sunday. I don't drink alcohol anymore. Although I still wrestle with cigarettes, I have cut back a lot. God is giving me the will to get where I can quit.

-Ruben Lewis

### **Romans 15:13**

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**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.**

