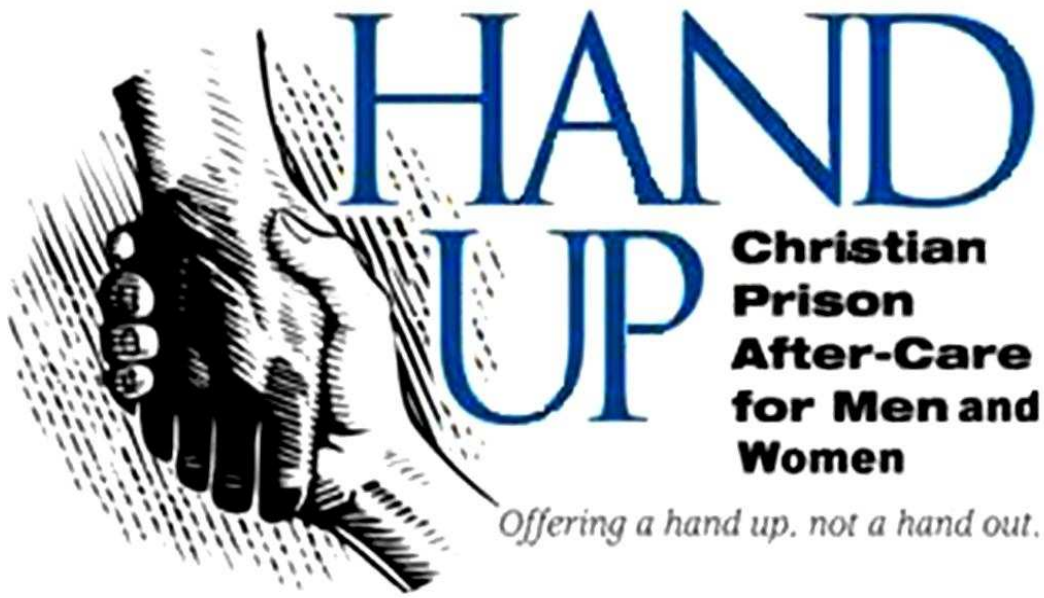


Giving Hope to the Hopeless,
A Home to the Homeless.



2130 S.E. 59th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73129

P.O. Box 2896
Oklahoma City, OK 73101

Office: 405.236.3349
Fax: 405.232.5871

www.huminc.org



*I will forgive
their iniquity,
and I will remember
their sin no more.*

Jeremiah 31:34



A Message

Founder, President, and Executive Director.
David Nichols

In the state of Oklahoma alone there are over 8000 men and women released from prison each year. Very few of these have the resources, money or the right influence needed to be successful in starting life over and reintegrating into society as a productive citizen. Sadly, a large portion end up returning to prison.

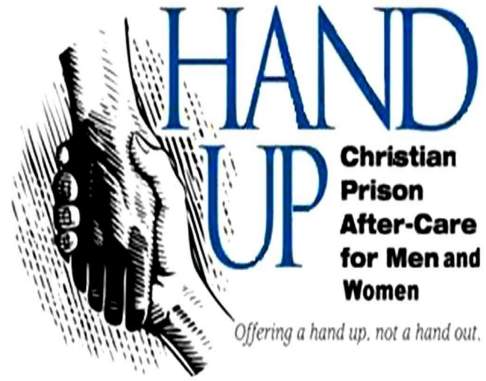
Since 1996, Hand Up Ministries has provided assistance to those most likely to return to prison because these individuals are forgotten... discarded with no one to help them. Our ministry embraces the "high risk" individuals, recently released from prisons, "on-the-streets" and homeless with miraculous results.

Those taking advantage of the program long enough to really help, the return rate goes down to one in twenty which is far below state and national rates. Our program is volunteer and the individuals are free to choose their involvement in our approach to moral and legal living. Our participants have chose to reside at Hand Up Ministries when even during their time here they were threatened with jail for living here because of ineffective residency laws. If law enforcement and the Department of Corrections were actually interested in "stopping the cycle" who could guess the level of successful results.

We believe it's possible with the right cooperation from state agencies, municipalities, and organizations we can to reduce our recidivism statistics to one in forty or even better. OR—, if you prefer, you can keep growing the prison system. If you want to talk, my number is 405-613-3120

“Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering”

Hebrews 13:3



Contents

- I. Our Purposepg 1
- II. What We Dopg 3
- III. Our Success Resultspg 4-9
- IV. Other Study Resultspg 10-12
- V. Laws Surrounding The Issue ..pg 13-15
- VI. Our Partnershipspg 16, 17
- VII. Conclusionpg 18



Our Purpose



Hand Up Ministries is an IRS approved 501(c)(3) nonprofit faith based organization formed in 1996 as a prison after-care program for men and women recently released from prison. We offer a “Hand Up” not a “Hand Out.” We help by empowering ex-offenders to take control of their own lives. Through support, coaching and mentoring we help individuals begin the process of reintegration into society while continuing to provide an adequate level of support and supervision. We provide housing, transportation, food, clothing and other services most needed by our residents. Most importantly Hand Up Ministries provides a structured environment to help these men and women adjust to re-entering society.



The program at Hand Up Ministries offers addiction recovery and support with weekly group meetings and individual counseling. Residents attend classes twice each week to strengthen character development, life skills and positive attitude direction. Residents are encouraged to attend the church of their choice weekly. The ideal is that felons will establish community roots, obtain and maintain employment and comply with the requirements set forth, so as not to return to a life of criminal activity.

We assist residents in securing permanent employment. We also assist in securing benefits for those who are unable to work due to their disabilities, and veteran’s benefits if they qualify. Our goal is to assist the residents toward the ability to support themselves. We charge a nominal weekly program fee after a resident secures permanent employment or other support has been established.

Most of our residents would be homeless if it were not for our ministry. Hand Up Ministries was born by a man with a vision inspired by God to fill a need. The need to give the hopeless, hope; give the homeless, a home; a new beginning for a forgotten society. This ministry has grown to accommodate over 150 current residents, including both men and women. Our program has a proven history of success in guiding our residents to becoming self-sustaining, productive and valuable members of society.



What We Do



Defined as a prison after-care program we fill a desperate need in today's society. The correctional system releases offenders back into the community with little more than a bus ticket and some pocket change. Offenders are expected to make as many arrangements as they can from prison with most issues being left up to the offender after returning to the community. While this approach makes the offender accountable for transition in reentry and stabilization in the community, it is built on three basic assumptions: 1) the offender can return to his/her place of residency with ease; 2) the offender can make meaningful arrangements in prison; 3) the offender can make the transition from dependency (having all decisions and movements controlled by the prison environment) to independence instantaneously (literally overnight).

New restrictions in the employment and housing arena has made it more difficult for offenders to stabilize in the community. Barriers limit the prospects of offenders to be employed and to live in a crime- and substance abuse-free environment. The facts are that if it were not for Hand Up Ministries most all of our residents would be homeless and on the street. The reintegration process involves making connections without falling into the same old traps of the past.

Hand Up Ministries assists initially in several areas. These are the necessities required for an ex-offender to reintegrate back into society:

- Provide immediate housing, food and clothing.
- Provide transportation.
- Obtain State Identification and Social Security cards.
- Assist in securing employment.
- Provide a safe, clean and sober living structure.
- Provide daily coaching and mentoring.
- Provide spiritual encouragement and motivation.
- Collaborate with government agencies, (police, probation/parole, courts) to help ensure compliance to requirements and restrictions.



What We Do contd.



As our residents continue in our program we introduce higher level life skills to help ensure their success. We teach financial management and require our residents to live on a budget and save money in their trust account. We coach them on the importance in staying current in program fees, court fines and costs, child support, counseling and probation fees.

We assist developing abilities in basic skills such as housekeeping, laundry, personal hygiene and grocery shopping. Everyone is expected to keep our park clean and are required to serve eight hours a month in community service at Hand Up Ministries. Even those residents that may be disabled, mentally or physically, are required to work as they can. Work is important for everyone. It instills self-esteem provides a sense of ownership and pride in who they are and where they live.



Our Success Results



SUMMARY

Oklahoma must do a better job in reducing the rate of repeat offenders returning to prison, and faith-based initiatives can offer viable programs to help lower the recidivism rate. Inmates need spiritual guidance, but these faith-based programs are supposed to help offenders reintegrate themselves into society, spiritual guidance is but one element of the over all-need. Churches need to deliver real help, not just words of faith.

("Faith-prison partnerships need equal guarantees, House bill seeks to reduce recidivism rate." The Muskogee Phoenix. Mar 06, 2006).

The recidivism rate for prisoners released **nationwide within one year is 44.1%**; this **number rises to 67.5% within three years** of being released from prison. Sixty-seven percent of the people who were arrested were charged with 750,000 new crimes, which include property offenses, drug offenses, public-order offenses, other offenses, unknown, and over 100,000 of these crimes were violent crimes. Of the new violent crimes committed, 2,871 were murder and 2,444 were rape.

(Bailey, Kristen. "The Causes of Recidivism in the Criminal Justice System and Why It Is Worth the Cost to Address Them." Nashville Bar Journal. Dec 06/Jan/07. (April 21, 2009).

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections defines recidivism as the percentage of all offenders released in a given year who have returned to DOC incarceration at the end of **three years** later. This corresponds with the definition used by most other states, the federal government, and academic research and is the most commonly cited measure of correctional success or failure. **For those offenders released in FY 2005, DOC's overall recidivism rate was 27.8. Approximately 40% will return to prison after four years.** Oklahoma's incarceration rate ranks 4th for males and 1st for females in the United States. *(Published: www.doc.state.ok.us/newsroom/publications/RECIDIVISM)*

Hand Up Ministries has made an impact on the recidivism rate for Oklahoma. The Ministry has served over 1000 individuals over its history. The mission is to provide the homeless, (priority on ex-offenders), who are willing to live clean and sober with living facilities and training necessary to be productive citizens in society. This prison after-care program shows significant success by the excellent reduction of recidivism rate for men and women who have participated in the program.

Statistical Highlights:

Of the 1000+ participants; when a resident participates at least 3 to 6 months, the recidivism rate is **3%**. If over 6 months to 12 months it drops to **1.2%**.

When a resident participates over 12 months the recidivism rate for non-sex offenders drops to **0.7%** and **0.7%** for sex offenders. (It should also be noted that more than one-half of the **0.7%** of sex offenders re-offended for failure to comply with registration regulations.)

(Note: The recidivism rate used in our statistical analysis is for ANY re-entry into the prison system regardless of time after release.)



Hand Up Ministries Recidivism Report



Hand Up ministries recently completed a study of recidivism rates for it's residents in June 2009. We were able to gather complete records on 1027 men and women who have participated in the program at Hand Up Ministries. More individuals have participated in our program, unfortunately some records of former residents have been mistakenly lost or destroyed.

As stated earlier in this publication, a component of our ministry is to provide housing. Most of all who had participated in the program would have been homeless. On August 20, 2009 the Oklahoman newspaper reported that the homeless population in Oklahoma City has grown by 4 percent since 2008. Dan Straughan, Director of Homeless Alliance was quoted in the article, "Just being housed saves money that we're otherwise spending in our emergency rooms, our county jail, our police department." He went on to add, "But money aside, homelessness is a moral issue. How difficult is that to fix? What we need to fix it is just the political WILL to do so."

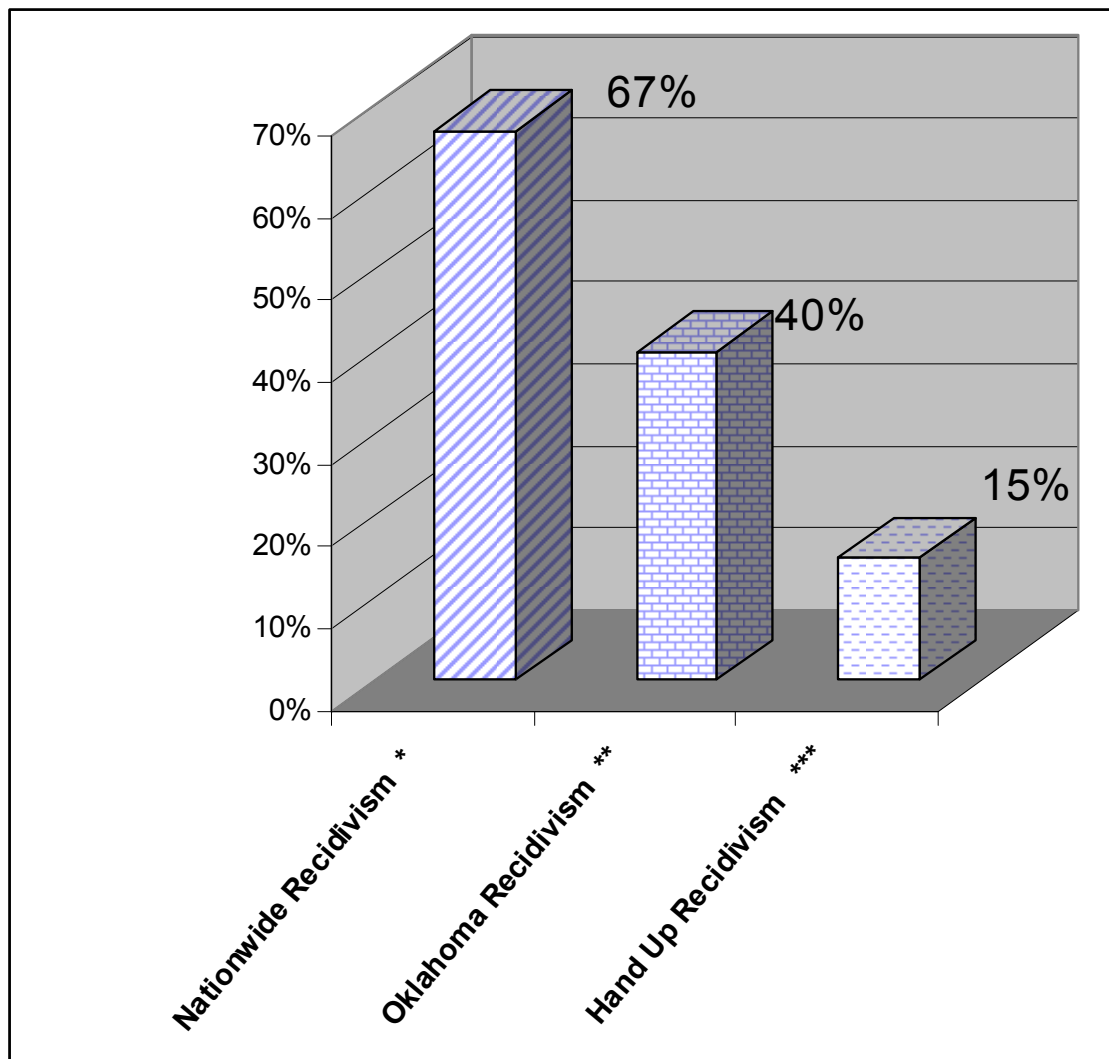
It costs Hand Up Ministries approximately \$5000 a year to house a resident. Compare that to \$40,000 and climbing, for the Department of Corrections to do the same. Yet, our goal is not simply to "keep them out of prison." Our goal is to assist in ALL areas one may need to successfully reintegrate into society; financially, mentally, educationally, and spiritually.

Here are some statistical facts that surfaced from our analysis:

- **Total recidivism rate for a HUM resident is 15%, compared to a national rate of 67% and a state rate of 40%. (Regardless of amount of time since being released from prison). Many published recidivism rates reported are based on a re-offend conviction if within three years.**
- **Recidivism rate for Non Sex Offender Residents is 10.7 %, (110 of 1027).**
- **Recidivism rate for Sex Offenders is 4.3%, (44 of 1027).**
- **Recidivism rate for Non Sex Offender Residents who completed at least 6 months to 12 months of program is .3%, (3 of 1027).**
- **Recidivism rate for new crimes, excluding registration, of Sex Offender Residents who completed at least 6 months to 12 months of program is .3%, (3 of 1027).**

The next few following pages, report in detail, the success as a result of men and women participating in the program offered by Hand Up Ministries.

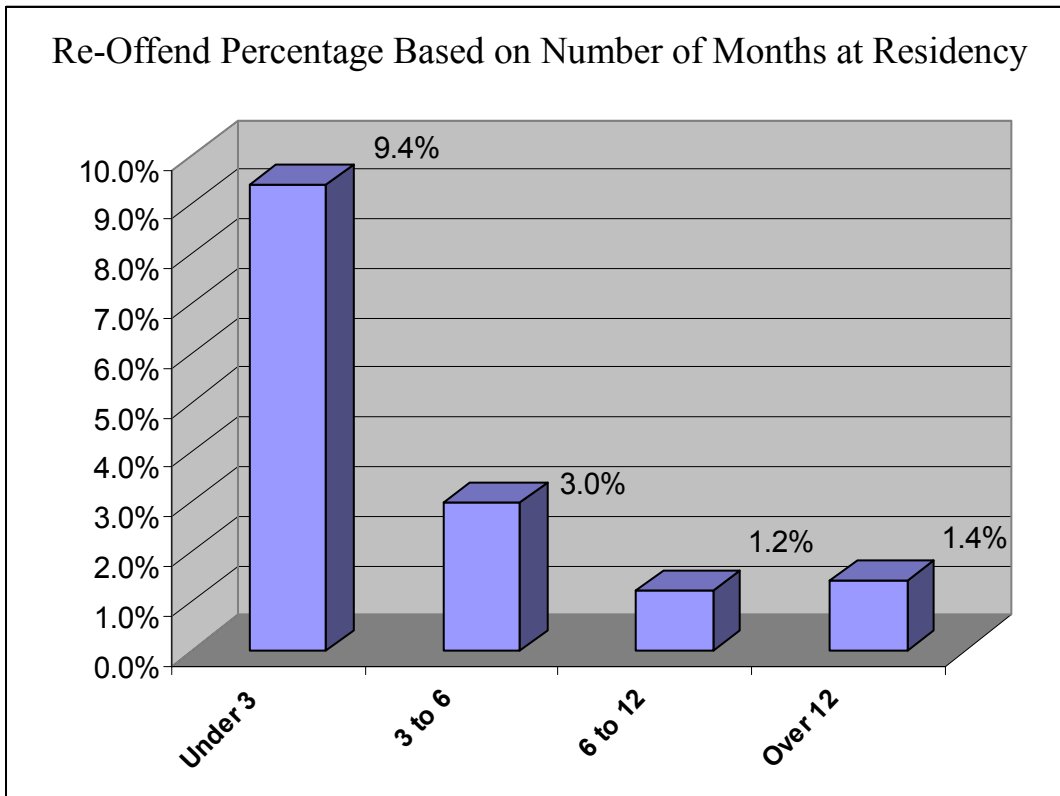
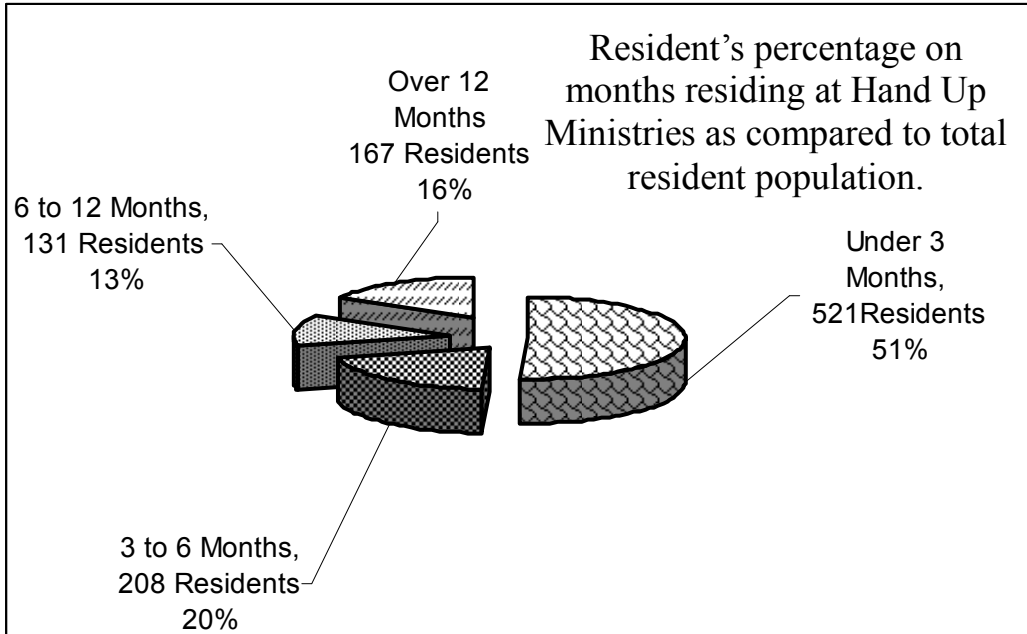
Hand Up Ministries Recidivism Compared To National and State Rates



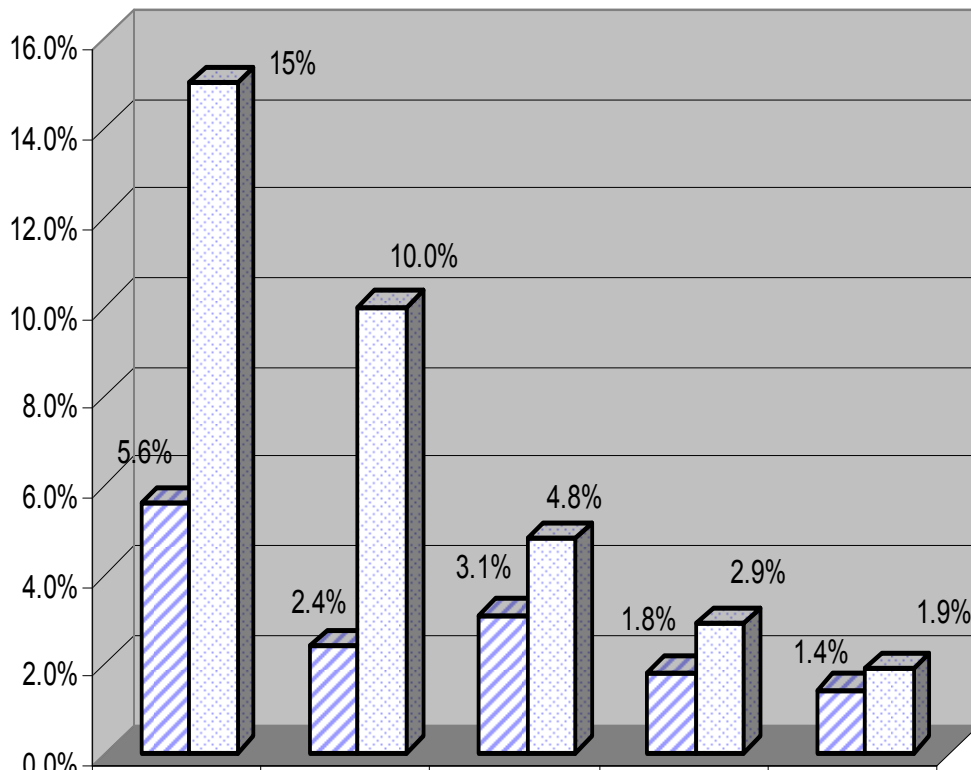
* Nationwide Recidivism: (Bailey, Kristen. "The Causes of Recidivism in the Criminal Justice System and Why It Is Worth the Cost to Address Them." Nashville Bar Journal. Dec 06/Jan/07. (April 21, 2009).

** Oklahoma Recidivism: (Published: www.doc.state.ok.us/newsroom/publications/RECIDIVISM)

*** Hand Up Recidivism: (Results report June 2009.)



Statistic Comparison for Residents Who Complete at Least Three Months in Hand Up Program as Compared to Total Resident Population.



Re-Offend Rate for Three Month +

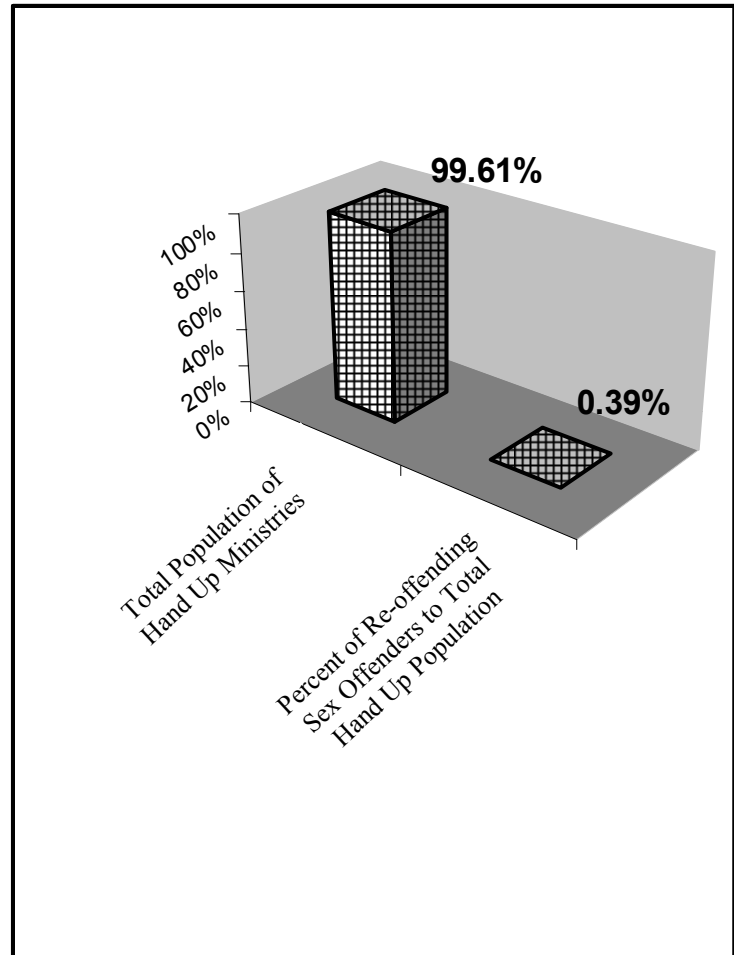
Total Residents	Total Re-Offend Non-Sex Offenders	Total Sex Offenders Re-offend	Total Sex Offenders w/ Registration	Total Sex Offenders Re-Offend Other
5.6%	2.4%	3.1%	1.8%	1.4%
15%	10.0%	4.8%	2.9%	1.9%

Re-Offend Rate for Total Resident Pop.

Recidivism Rate for Hand Up Ministries Sex Offenders Who Re-offended With A Sex Related Crime

Out of Hand Up Ministries Total population of over 1000 men.

- 41% were sex offenders, (407 men).
- Out of that 41%, (407 men). 9.25%, (44 men) Re-offended.
- Out of that 9.25%, (44 men). 4 men Re-Offended with a sex crime.



Over the history of Hand Up Ministries, 13 years, **four** sex offenders have re-offended with a sex crime. That **recidivism rate** compared to the total resident population of over 1000 men equates to **.0039 or .39%**.

To drive this home..... **Less than one half of one percent** (>.5%) of sex offenders re-offend with a sex related crime that has participated in the program of Hand Up Ministries.



Other Study Results



- 93% of new sex crimes are committed by people who are not on the registry, (statistic from the Department of Justice).DOJ.
- The New Mexico Sex Offender Management Board, published in December 2007, concluded that current research does not support imposing residency restrictions on sex offenders in New Mexico. While these restrictions are clearly well-intentioned, they do not appear to be supported by scientific research and may in fact result in a more dangerous society.
- Professor Jill Levenson, PhD, of Lynn University in Florida, joins other experts in pointing out that sex offenders need to have a place to live, they need to be able to get jobs. They need to be able to support themselves and their families..... Without those things, they're going to be more likely to resume a life of crime. That's not a debate, that's a fact.
- Iowa has state-wide restrictions and has encountered significant problems. This prompted the Iowa County Attorneys Association to request that the Iowa Legislature repeal that state's residential restrictions law. The Association noted that the restrictions were forcing Offenders into homelessness, to register falsely, or simply disappear.
- Today the national sex offender registry lists nearly 650,000 names, addresses and much more information about people who have only a **3.5%** chance of re-offending.
- The Center for Sex Offender Management reports there are approximately 20,000 sex offenders released to the community each year.
- Sex offenders re-offend at lower rates than those convicted of other felonies. After five years, 15% of sex offenders return to prison for new offenses compared to 43% of offenders convicted of property crimes.
- In Colorado, 130 sex offenders on probation were tracked for 15 months in order to assess recidivism (Colorado Department of Public Safety, 2004). Fifteen (12 percent) were rearrested for new sex crimes, and all were non-contact offenses (peeping, voyeurism, or indecent exposure). The researchers mapped the sex offenders' proximity to schools and daycare centers, and found that recidivists were randomly located throughout the area and did not live closer to such venues than non-recidivists. They concluded that residence restrictions are unlikely to deter sex offenders from recommitting sex crimes, and that such policies should not be considered a feasible strategy for protecting children. In sum, no evidence exists to support the hypothesis that sex offenders who live within closer proximity to schools, parks, and playgrounds have an increased likelihood of sexually recidivating. There is also no research as yet that establishes residence restrictions as a viable strategy for reducing sex crimes, preventing recidivism, or protecting children.



Other Study Results contd.



"In 1994 in Jerusalem, 19 countries held an international conference on the role of religion in crime prevention and rehabilitation..." The result was a unanimous agreement in the findings of every one of the 19 countries represented. Research shows that a spiritual experience, sufficient to bring about a change in personality, is the only thing that has any long lasting positive affect on reducing recidivism. - <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/compass/9912/page06.html>

"...several studies suggest that regular Bible Study participation over a twelve month period has a statistically significant effect in reducing re-arrest and re-incarceration for up to three years post-release. When the inmate steps off the bus in the same neighborhood that lured him into crime, he needs a decent-paying job, a roof over his head, health care (often including substance abuse treatment and/or maintenance medication), transportation, a mentor, and a social support system. Byron R. Johnson (2004) "Religious Programs and Recidivism Among Former Inmates: A Long-Term Follow-Up Study," *Justice Quarterly* 21: 329-354; Byron R. Johnson, David B. Larson, and Timothy G. Pitts (1997) "Religious Programming, Institutional Adjustment and Recidivism Among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs," *Justice Quarterly* 14: 145-166

Criminal Re-entry, Housing Instability, & Recidivism

Convicted felons returning to communities are confronted with the (often quite daunting) challenges of locating and sustaining affordable housing (La Vigne, Visser, & Castro, 2004; Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005). Imprisoned offenders have been separated from their families and communities and consequently, after incarceration, they often find themselves without support systems, fiscal resources, housing, employment opportunities, and transportation. Obstacles to employment can create financial instability, and affordable lodging is often scarce, especially since laws prohibit felons from obtaining subsidized housing (Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005). The basic needs of offenders attempting to re-enter society have frequently been ignored, causing some scholars to warn of dire consequences of such neglect: “Housing is the linchpin that holds the reintegration process together. Without a stable residence, continuity in substance abuse and mental health treatment is compromised... in the end, a polity that does not concern itself with the housing needs of returning prisoners finds that it has done so at the expense of its own public safety” (Bradley, Oliver, Richardson, & Slayter, 2001, p. 7).

Housing instability and criminal recidivism are clearly linked, and numerous studies have documented the relationship. Residential instability was found to be a robust predictor of reoffending among Georgia criminals; the likelihood of re-arrest increased by 25 percent each time a parolee moved (Meredith, Speir, Johnson, & Hull, 2003). Released offenders temporarily residing in New York shelters were at increased risk for drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, and absconding from probation or parole (Nelson, Deess, & Allen, 1999). Unstable living arrangements were identified as the strongest predictor of absconding in a sample of over 4,000 parolees in California (Williams, McShane, & Dolny, 2000), and in a national sample (n = 2,030), probationers who moved multiple times during their period of supervision were almost twice as likely to have had a disciplinary hearing (Schulenberg, 2007). Offenders themselves have identified housing as the most essential factor in their community adjustment and reintegration (La Vigne et al., 2004).

Housing and property ownership lead to the development of social bonds, which facilitate crime desistance through engagement in pro-social activities and self-perception of a non-deviant identity (Laub & Sampson, 2001). Community connections and healthy interpersonal relationships create social and psychological reinforcements to the offender’s investment in conformity and crime deterrence. Employment and relationships, especially marriage, are reliable predictors of desistance from crime (Laub & Sampson, 2001). Lifestyle instability has been associated with both general and sexual recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Hanson & Harris, 1998) and sex offenders with constructive support systems have fewer violations and new offenses than those who have negative or no support (Colorado Department of Public Safety, 2004). Thus, unstable housing and the ensuing disengagement from family and community appear to increase the likelihood of recidivism for criminal offenders.



Due Process of Law

A fundamental, constitutional guarantee that all legal proceedings will be fair and that one will be given notice of the proceedings and an opportunity to be heard before the government acts to take away one's life, liberty, or property. Also, a constitutional guarantee that a law shall not be unreasonable, ARBITRARY or capricious.

The **DUE PROCESS CLAUSE** of the **FIFTH AMENDMENT**, ratified in 1791, asserts that no person shall "be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." This amendment restricts the powers of the federal government and applies only to actions by it.

The Due Process Clause of the **FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT**, ratified in 1868, declares, "[N]or shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" (§ 1). This clause limits the powers of the states, rather than those of the Federal Government.



Laws Surrounding The Issues



- Criminal justice policy should be grounded in empirical evidence, but sex offender policies in particular have not incorporated available research into their formation and implementation (Levenson & D'Amora, 2007; Zgoba, 2004). Social scientists and criminal justice professionals have a responsibility to assist lawmakers to respond effectively to the problem of sexual violence. **It is crucial that sex offender legislation be informed by scientific data and designed to maximize the potential for community safety, while minimizing collateral consequences for offenders and communities.**
- A **Georgia** law banning sex offenders from living or working within 1,000 feet of school bus stops (with no grandfather clause) has been granted class action status and a temporary injunction preventing enforcement of the law is in effect (Tewksbury, in press).
- Two judges in **New Jersey** have declared township ordinances unconstitutional because they violated the state's "Megan's Law," which prevents sex offender registration status from being used to deny housing or accommodations (Elwell v. Lower Township, 2006; G.H. v. Galloway Township, 2007).
- The **Missouri Supreme Court** released a short opinion June 16 supporting the federal guidelines of Sex Offender Registration. But experts say federal law contradicts Missouri's sex offender registry laws, and the high court still has not addressed the conflict. The lawyers are confused. The judges are confused. The cops are confused, the **Missouri Constitution** is going to have to be amended if we comply with federal guidelines.
- The **federal government** can't mandate states to make the changes, experts said. So instead, Congress threatened to take away 10 percent of a federal law enforcement grant if states don't comply. **Missouri** would stand to lose an estimated \$400,000; Illinois' total loss would be about \$850,000, according to the **Justice Policy Institute**. Lawmakers in **Virginia** asked experts to guess how much taxpayers would spend on the changes. The Virginia Department of Planning and Budget decided the first year would cost more than \$12 million. Virginia only stood to lose about \$400,000 in U.S. grant money each year, according to the department's documents.
- The Law Society, the ruling body for solicitors, has called for a "legal forgiveness" scheme for convicted sex offenders who undergo rehabilitation programs and remain conviction-free. The second-chance law would not apply to persistent sex offenders or those who continue to pose a risk to public safety, and "sensitive" occupations would be excluded. The report, launched by **Mountjoy, Ireland** Governor John Lonergan last night, says there is an "innate prejudice" against sex offenders which leads to an assumption that they are predisposed to carry out sex attacks and incapable of rehabilitation. "Research both in this jurisdiction and abroad refutes the commonly held belief that recidivism (reoffending) rates amongst sex offenders are higher than in ... other types of offender," said the Law Society.



Laws Surrounding The Issues



- Every American state keeps a register of sex offenders. **California** has had one since 1947, but most states started theirs in the 1990s. Many people assume that anyone listed on a sex-offender registry must be a rapist or a child molester. But most states spread the net much more widely. A report by Sarah Tofte of Human Rights Watch, a pressure group, found that at least **5 states** required men to register if they were caught visiting prostitutes. At least **13 states** required it for urinating in public (in two of which, only if a child was present). No fewer than **29 states** required registration for teenagers who had consensual sex with another teenager. And **32 states** registered flashers and streakers.
- Publicizing sex offenders' addresses makes them vulnerable to vigilantism. In April 2006, for example, a vigilante shot and killed two sex offenders in **Maine** after finding their addresses on the registry. One of the victims had been convicted of having consensual sex with his 15-year-old girlfriend when he was 19. In Washington state in 2005 a man posed as an FBI agent to enter the home of two sex offenders, warning them that they were on a "hit list" on the internet. Then he killed them.
- Some states have decided that harsher sex laws are not always better. **Iowa** has sharply reduced the number of sex offences for which residency restrictions apply. Previously, all Iowan sex offenders who had abused children were barred from living within 2,000 feet of a school or child-care centre. Since where offenders lived was defined as where they slept, many would spend the day at home with their families and sleep at night in their cars at a highway rest stop. "That made no sense," says Corwin Ritchie of the **Iowa County Attorneys Association**. "We don't try to monitor where possible bank robbers sleep."
- Because so many offences require registration, the number of registered sex offenders in America has exploded. As of December last year (2008), there were **674,000** of them, according to the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children. If they were all crammed into a single state, it would be more populous than **Wyoming, Vermont or North Dakota**. As a share of its population, America registers more than four times as many people as Britain, which is unusually harsh on sex offenders. America's registers keep swelling, not least because in **17 states**, registration is for life.
- **It would not be hard to redesign America's sex laws. Instead of lumping all sex offenders together on the same list for life, states should assess each person individually and include only real threats. Instead of posting everything on the internet, names could be held by the police, who would share them only with those, such as a school, who need to know. Laws that bar sex offenders from living in so many places should be repealed, because there is no evidence that they protect anyone: a predator can always travel. The money that a repeal saves could help pay for monitoring compulsive molesters more intrusively—through ankle bracelets and the like.**



Our Partnerships

**Jerry Randolph**

Re-entry Case Manager
North Care Center / Directions for Life
1140 North Hudson
Oklahoma City, OK 73103
405.272.0660 ext.110

John Easley

Director
Genesis One Life Skills
5103 South Sheridan #344
Tulsa OK 74145
918.491.0961

Mike McKendrick

Oklahoma State Representative
Celebrate Recovery Inside
Southern Hills Baptist
5590 South Lewis
Tulsa , OK 74105 918.671.7882

Tom Tinneman

Registered Nurse
Red Rock Behavioral Health Services
4400 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405.425.0341

Rev. Sean E. Reed

Minister
Lighthouse Mission Church
208 SE 62nd St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405.204.1374

Kathy McRee

Transition Coordinator
Oklahoma Department of Corrections
2901 North Classen #200
Oklahoma City, OK 73106
405.962.6187

James “Slim” Crabtree

Chaplain
John Lilly Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 1908
Boley, OK 74829
918.667.3381

Dr. Khem Khepra

ODMHSAS
Oklahoma Access to Recovery
1200 NE 13th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73152
405.522.3866

Kathy Foster

Director
Emerge Independent Living Center
8712 E. Main St.
Midwest City, OK 73110
405.732.1500

Chester & Henreese Moore

Pastors
Love Street World Outreach
220 SW 25th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73109
405.537.6715

Cont.



Our Partnerships



Mark Englander

Psychologist
Joseph Harp Correctional Center
P.O. Box 548
Lexington, OK 73051
405.527.5593

Dr. Don Kiflin

Oklahoma Department of Corrections
2901 North Classen
Suite 200
Oklahoma City, OK 73106
405.962.6176

Sherry Scolds

Mental Health Case Worker
Deaconess Hospital
7600 NW 23rd St.
Bethany, OK 73008
405.604.6278

Debra Thomas

Mental Health Case Worker
Deaconess Hospital
7600 NW 23rd St.
Bethany, OK 73008
405.604.6278

Vicky Escahada

Mental Health Case Worker
Deaconess Hospital
7600 NW 23rd St.
Bethany, OK 73008
405.604.6278



Conclusion



Faith Based reintegration ministries such as Hand Up Ministries, are not only needed but necessary. We know through personal experience that a great deal of former offenders are good people who made a big mistake in their lives. They have accepted responsibility and paid their debt to society. We advocate for the public policies that offer smart-on-crime solutions based on reason and facts and oppose the “one size fits all” approach that is based on emotion and irrational fear—and that frequently produces laws that damage the lives of law abiding former offenders without providing any real protection to the community.

Make the punishment fit the crime. There are three main arguments for reform. First, it is unfair to impose harsh penalties for small offences. Second, America’s sex laws often punish not only the offender, but also his family. If a man is barred for ever from taking his own children to a playground, those children suffer. Third, harsh laws often do little to protect the innocent. The police complain that having so many petty sex offenders on registries makes it hard to keep track of the truly dangerous ones. Cash that might be spent on treating sex offenders—which sometimes works—is spent on huge indiscriminate registries. Public registers drive serious offenders underground, which makes them harder to track and more likely to reoffend. And registers give parents a false sense of security: most sex offenders are never even reported, let alone convicted.

Hand Up Ministries believes the facts. The facts are: That present day alienation does not protect the public. Programs like Hand Up Ministries provide an ex-offender with the basics of life, the direction of Christianity, and access to professional counseling are models for real reform. Our recidivism rates speak for themselves.

We need your help. We need assistance in changing one word in the law that was meant to help existing non-profits but turned out to be impossible to obtain because there is no such thing. The word is “commercial”. This is in Section 29 and 30 of House Bill 1760 passed May 24, 2007. There is no commercial zoning for housing in Oklahoma City. Even though the county and state show a property with housing commercial, city zoning does not. We need lawmakers to understand the consequences of laws they make and the cost to the citizens of this state, and to work with us and other faith-based programs to eliminate the unnecessary tragedy and hidden costs resulting from a law.

Hand Up Ministries is committed to safe communities and knows that the keys to success for former offenders are the love and grace of God, the love of family, the support of friends and the strengthening of community ties.