

# Teen Challenge Update

## *GED Class Equips Students For the Future*

The Teen Challenge Work Study Program continues to grow in many different ways. One portion of the program that is blossoming is our GED class. GED class is required for all students in Teen Challenge who do not already have their GED or high school diploma. The program is a partnership between DMACC (Des Moines Area Community College), Teen Challenge, and the Colfax-Mingo Public Schools.

Jennifer Ridgway, a Teen Challenge staff member, teaches the class. "We offer the GED program because one of our goals is to give our guys ALL the tools we can to help our students succeed after Teen Challenge. Completing their GED will better equip them to find employment and/or continue with their education."

Since the beginning of our GED training just a year and a half ago, several students have already completed their GED's. Three are currently in the process of testing now. Each student must complete a pretest in each subject area (Reading: Interpreting Literature, Writing Skills, Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics) and receive a high enough score to be eligible to test in that subject for the GED. It is a self-paced program because students enter Teen Challenge at all different levels. The following are testimonies of two students that have completed the class.

"The opportunity for me to get my GED while I was in Teen Challenge was a blessing from God. I never thought I needed it when I was dealing and using drugs. In my old life, I dropped out of high school, lost my job, got

kicked out of my house, and got arrested. After all that happened, I went into a state of depression and never thought I would go anywhere in life. When this opportunity was given to me, I realized that I needed schooling to be able to pursue my dreams. While taking the GED class, I was provided with an atmosphere that I could work in and not get sidetracked by things of the world.

Now that I have my GED, I can change "just dreams" into goals that I can pursue and accomplish — like going to college, graduating, and getting a good job. Also, I've gained back respect from my family. God will use this in my life in a way that I can't even fathom."

"I completed the GED program at Teen Challenge. The whole process went smoothly and I received my GED within two testing periods. We went to school in Colfax on

Thursday nights, and went to DMACC on the assigned testing dates. The effort to complete my high school equivalency diploma is well worth the time and energy because since coming to Teen Challenge, my plans for my life have changed, and I now intend on going to college!"

The GED program is just one of many aspects of the Teen Challenge Work Study Program. Not only are students able to further their skills with the courses, but also, they are able to get their accomplishments certified for future reference. The students are given the tools they need for success, and they in turn use it for the glory of God!



*Teen Challenge students study during their GED class*



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### NEW INFORMATION

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## Set Free: A Testimony of God's Saving Grace

My name is Brian. I am 42 years old and am currently 8 months into the Teen Challenge Program. My testimony is somewhat different as I had everything provided to me to be successful in life...except the one thing I needed to do for myself- accept Christ. I grew up in a church environment and a stable family setting. I basically had a normal childhood with minimal issues. At 16, I started to believe that I could do anything on my own. I knew of the Christ way but I chose my way. I started drinking at age 14 and continued on and off for the next 25 years. I started doing drugs at 19 and continued for the next 20 years trying to manage an unmanageable situation. My life was a mess and I caused much pain to myself and to others that loved me. My damage list is quite extensive. Doing things my way has given me two failed engagements, two bankruptcies, the loss of a home, the loss of an inheritance, four DWI's, nine treatment center trips, the loss of three well-paying jobs, jail time, damaged family relationships, a criminal record, being part of two abortions, damage to my health, the loss of all material things and finally, all hope! I reached the decision in March 1998 to quit—quit living. I had just recently been found out – I'd been caught stealing thousands of dollars from my company. I was looking at a rather lengthy prison term and I didn't want to face my family. On Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> I started taking different drugs and consuming a large quantity of alcohol. I didn't want to wake up ever again. On Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, in a stupor, the Lord spoke to me and in a moment of clarity I heard Him say, "Have you had enough?" With tears in my eyes, I said, "Yes!" I accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of my life; I became a Christ follower. The many things I had to face after that day were neither fun nor comfortable, but when I finally got humble, He started doing things in my life. The biggest difference was He was with me every step of the way and



I finally had a hope— an eternal hope! In the next five years the Lord did some awesome miracles in my life. He restored family relationships, employment, freedom, health, and understanding. God showed me how much He loved me and that I was forgiven. Eternal things mattered and temporal things were out. Unfortunately, I lost my direction by trying to take over again and ended up falling. To get back on track, I made the decision to enter Teen Challenge in July, 2002. Since being at Teen Challenge, God has shown me that I am to stay in the ministry field after I complete and that He has an awesome plan for me if I let him do His work in me. The Lord has given me my three R's: Reliance, Relationship and Rest. Reliance — total reliance in Him, all that I have and all that I am is His, no questions. Relationship — the relationship gives me hope; He never fails, He never stops loving me. He is always there — how can you not have hope? And finally, the Rest — so many times I have tried to "do something" to make it right with God. It doesn't work, and you become very exhausted. Rest is where I can get intimate with God and accept the work that has already been done at the Cross. Lastly, there is a song by Darrell Evans that sums up my life very closely:

*All the wasted years  
All the many tears I've cried  
Trying to fill my life  
Trying to bring some peace to my mind  
Never really knowing Lord  
It was you I was longing for  
Till you opened my heart  
And I tasted of you  
Now all I want is you*