



The Challenger

April, 2005

Hotel Colfax: Getting another Facelift

Opening in the spring of 1884, Hotel Colfax served many travelers coming from far and wide to drink and bathe in the famous mineral water of Colfax, Iowa. Once containing over 100 rooms, it was considered the best hotel between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains. The hotel reached its peak in 1900 with a record 13,000 guests! Over the years, this magnificent building has morphed from a hotel, to a hospital for World War I veterans, to an auction house for livestock, to a monastery, and finally to Teen Challenge of the Midlands. A little over 100 years after its inception, Hotel Colfax was purchased by Teen Challenge of the Midlands. Since 1986, not only has change taken place in the building but also in the lives of the people who have occupied it.

As you can imagine, a building more than a century old has required much maintenance and repair. Presently we have two renovation projects on the table. We are in the midst of replacing the front entry way, and we need to replace all of the windows with more energy efficient windows and frames.



Postcard of Hotel Colfax dated 1916



Demolition of the old porch portico

The grand Spanish style porch portico on the front of the hotel has been known as a landmark in the Colfax community. Even with numerous structural changes to the building, the front entrance has amazingly remained unchanged for more than 100 years! However, as age and weather have taken their toll, the elegant lobby entrance had begun to lean. Despite our efforts to brace and shore it up, potential collapse and eminent danger to our staff, students, and guests became evident.

With the help of the Iowa State University Design/Build Student Chapter, our Teen Challenge staff and students completed demolition and removal of the entry way structure in April of 2004. Brent Whitney of The Weitz Company graciously volunteered his time to help formulate working drawings for the reconstruction of the porch portico. We will replace the front entrance with modern materials (steel instead of wood), while the

appearance of the old Spanish style portico will be maintained. Currently, construction is ready to begin once full financial support has been attained. Throughout the project varying materials will be needed as well as many talents and expertise. Please pray about supporting this project with your finances or with your volunteered time.

“...two renovation projects on the table.”

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SET FREE! -- A Testimony of Hope

I was born twenty-one years ago in Omaha, Nebraska, where I lived for most of my life. My life as a child appeared very normal. I attended church regularly; we lived in a nice house, had nice material things, my parents had respectable careers, and nice cars. But under the surface there was a world of emotional and physical abuse, inconsistency and a worldly view of Christianity. All of this was going on while we kept up a "Brady Bunch" façade.

This façade soon was built around every area of my life. If I thought something about me was undesirable, I hid it. This really came in handy as I started to feel the effects of the shame my father had been putting on me since I was really young. This shame, mixed with the craziness of my home life led to some really messed up paradigms.

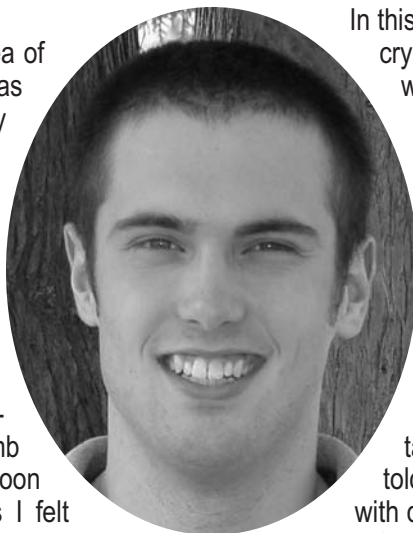
In high school these paradigms led me into drugs. For one, drugs helped me cope with the fears and anxieties I felt, but more importantly, it allowed me to escape reality and numb out to the world. This new found freedom soon withered away and the fears and anxieties I felt were magnified by the drugs. I then sought even harder to hide myself from the world and stay away from anyone really knowing me. This whole time I was lonely and wanted to be close to people, but I was unwilling to deal with the fear that I had toward people.

I carried these huge fears into college along with a bad drug habit. This drug habit soon combined with a drinking problem as I got acquainted with the party scene. Then I put up a new façade and took on a different way to numb the pain. This calmed my fears for a little while. The stress of classes, of getting good grades, of partying too much, and of trying to keep up the lie that said, "Everything was going well for me," finally got to me, and I couldn't handle it anymore.

After spending the last two months of college in my room almost all of the time, I dropped out in November of my sophomore year. Every night I would get drunk and just sit and stare at a bottle of pain killers. I was ready to end all of the madness. I was also constantly lying, trying desperately to keep my roommates from seeing all my sadness. If I let them see my sadness, then my façade would be gone.

When I got home from school I checked into a psych ward knowing I needed help, but not really knowing where to get it. I thought I had found the answer: counseling and psych drugs. This helped for a short time, but soon the old feelings were back. Two months later I ended up in the same hospital again. This time it wasn't my choice. After running away and leaving a

note saying I wouldn't be back, my parents had filed a missing persons report. I either had to go with them or go with a sheriff. From there I spent the next six months on a hopeless downward spiral. It entailed numerous suicide attempts, one in which I slept for two days and nights waking only once to find I couldn't move and then passing out again. I abused the drugs the doctors had given to help me.



In this place of despair I spent many sleepless nights crying out to God for help. Deep down I knew there was more to life than what I had. I also knew that I needed to go somewhere and get some help, but it would have to be a long term place. A few weeks wouldn't be enough. From my bed of sin and hopelessness, God heard my pleas.

One day I went home to tell my Mom all the things that were going on in me. I had never really told anyone what was going on. She told me how earlier that week she had been talking to the man hired to paint her house. He told her about how his son had similar problems with drugs and how he had gone to this place called Teen Challenge. He said it had really helped his son and that his life was completely different.

Three weeks later my bags were packed, and I was on my way to Colfax, Iowa. My mind was a little foggy, and I had no idea what I was getting myself into. That was eleven months ago. Since then I have found out what I got myself into: a relationship with Jesus, a process of maturing and securing, and a place where day in and day out I learn to have relationships. I've received a love from Jesus that I didn't even know existed. The lies and shame in my mind are starting to fall away as the Lord sheds light on how He sees me.

My parents have now become two of my biggest allies and an awesome source of encouragement. I now know that I have a future and a hope for that future.

"...I had no idea what I was getting myself into."

I have a calling on my life, and I plan on going to Bible college at some point. I'd like to eventually become involved in missions work. More than anything I am learning how to have close relationships, and I have a strong desire to enter into relationships-something I've never known before.

I thank God for His grace and the abundant life I now have in Christ.

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Our second on-going renovation project is to complete the installation of new energy efficient windows throughout the building. With the help of our Capital Campaign, "Blueprint for Hope," a number of windows in the building have been replaced in recent years. In 2000, new windows were installed in the entire fourth floor with the renovation of our student dorms and intern apartments. In 2002, the old windows were replaced in our chapel during its renovation. Three of our staff apartments have been furnished with new windows, but the remainder of the windows in the building date back to the original construction of Hotel Colfax.

As you can imagine, these windows, installed in the late 1800's are not energy efficient by any means! With the installation of new windows, energy savings would be immense both during chilly winter months and during those scorching summer days. With insulated glass,



Teen Challenge of the Midlands today



Michael Hunsberger, Construction Coordinator and student begin demo work

the cold will stay out of the building and the heat will stay inside, and with operable screens, windows can be opened for ventilation, saving on high air conditioning bills. In addition, the window's exterior will be clad in aluminum, making them virtually maintenance free. Costs to purchase and install one window range between \$600 to \$1,800, depending on the size and design. With over 90 windows to replace, this much needed renovation will be a major undertaking!

What is needed? We're glad you asked! Financial contributions, donation of materials, and volunteer work would all be a major blessing to Teen Challenge of the Midlands at this time. Both of these renovations are enormous projects to embark upon, but we know that, "...with God, all things are possible!" (Mat 19:26) We have a need and we know that God will supply. Thank you, Jesus.

MAPS RVers Say Good-Bye

They pulled in with their diesel truck and RV trailer on June 8th of 2004. They had heard of Teen Challenge from other MAPS RVers, but didn't quite know what they were getting themselves into when they decided to volunteer at Teen Challenge of the Midlands.

Myron and Nina Towers are MAPS (Mission America Placement Service) RV Volunteers. The RV Volunteer Ministry's goal is "to help meet the need for construction and renovation of churches...and other facilities, and to offer a ministry of helps to volunteers-especially retirees."

The Towers' plan was to stay for a few

weeks last summer to help with the construction of our new staff duplexes. A few weeks turned into a few months, and after a few months, they decided to winter here! When asked why they decided to volunteer months of their time, Myron replied, "...I could go home at night and feel good about what I had helped do that day, and I wanted to do more."

Myron and Nina ate their last meal with our staff and students on Easter Sunday, March 27th. After saying their good-byes, the Towers headed out for their next RV adventure! Myron and Nina will take with them many memories and many new friends. The Towers have been a blessing to Teen Challenge of the Midlands, not



MAPS RVers, Myron & Nina Towers

only in helping with the construction of the staff duplexes, but in developing close friendships with the students and staff.



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Helping People Who Hurt

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Staff members watch demo of entry way