

Teen Challenge Update

June 2006

Where would we be without TC?

Saturday night was her first visit to Heartland, the church I pastor. She had set out for another church but somehow ended up in ours. She was desperate to find a service to attend because she was battling a meth addiction. When she arrived, for some reason one of our ushers shared with her that their pastor was a former Teen Challenge staff member. She then knew God had led her to our church.

Such is the reputation of Teen Challenge. Just knowing I was affiliated with TC gave this woman hope. As we talked, I had the privilege of pointing out numerous people in our congregation whose lives had been impacted by the ministry of TC. I told her God had led her to us. You see, there was a time I was losing a battle with my own addictions. Although I used any drug I could get my hands on, it was hard liquor that had a death-grip on me. I was powerless over it. It had robbed me of everything: my job, my family, and every ounce of self-respect.

Like the visitor to our church, one desperate night years ago, I cried out to God. As I did, His presence flooded the borrowed room I was in. At that moment, I knew I wanted to leave my sin behind, but I also knew I needed help if I was to break free for good. Like the female visitor, I wandered into a pastor's office a few days later. As I opened up to him, he shared with me that Teen Challenge was conducting a service at his church the following weekend. I knew I was being set up by God. I entered the program a week later.

Once there, I found the refuge I so desperately needed. God began to do a deep work of conviction and healing in my life. Slowly, I began to believe I could be free. That was 23 drug-free years ago.



Since that time, the Lord has blessed me with a beautiful wife, seven wonderful children and a fulfilling occupation as a pastor. I shudder to think of where I would be today had Teen Challenge not been available when I needed it...and I shudder to think of where I could refer a woman like the desperate visitor who came to us Saturday.

After attending Bible college, Dave Olson was a valuable staff member of Teen Challenge of the Midlands for 12 years. Dave became the pastor of Heartland Assembly of God in Ankeny in 2002.

It's Tee Time Again!

It's that time again. Yes you guessed it...our 9th Annual Golf Marathon is just a few months away. Mark your calendars and get ready to spend the day swinging those golf clubs. This year's event will take place Wednesday, September 20th at the Willow Creek Golf Course in West Des Moines where Van Harden of WHO Radio will be broadcasting live. Remember, this marathon helps us help hurting people through the ministry of Teen Challenge of the Midlands. For information on how you can help, call (515) 674-3713.

CONTACT INFORMATION

You can reach our Intake Coordinator by email at: info@tcmid.org

Visit our website at: www.tcmid.org

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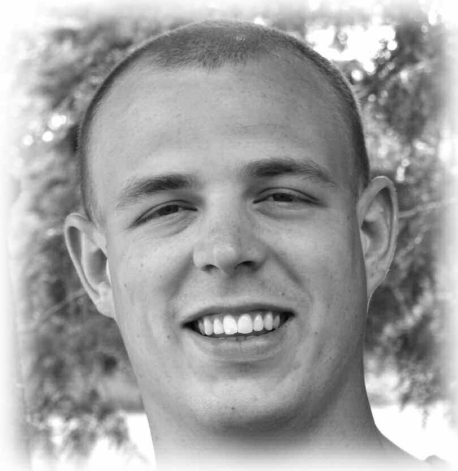
Set Free: A Testimony of God's Saving Grace

Growing up I felt like the black sheep, the outcast of my family and friends. When I was little my mom and dad separated. He was heavy into meth. My mom would always say I was like my dad, and since she didn't like him, I figured she didn't like me either. I first started to get into trouble for fighting and possession of weed when I was thirteen. I was sent to a juvenile group home for six months. That is when the real trouble started. Being sent to those types of places, at that age just put in my mind that I wasn't wanted by society or by my family. Lots of other kids there felt the same way, so that is where I got my identity from. It wasn't long after I got out that I was back in another similar facility, and each time was a step higher on security level.

When I was eighteen, I got into selling meth. I was addicted to the money and feeling that I got from it. In January of 2003, I was pulled over and arrested. I was sent to the state penitentiary, and while I was there, my son was born. When I got out, I went to a treatment place which did nothing for me except help me meet more drug addicts. I really wanted to be there for my son and my baby's mother, so I got a job and stopped using drugs. I was soon let go for failing the drug test. Around that time my son's mother took him and left to Missouri. That was the most painful thing I have ever gone through. I got heavy into Ice and didn't care if I lived or died. The only thing that ever meant anything to me in life was gone.

My mom kept calling me and asking me to go to Teen Challenge, and I decided to go during the summer of 2004. While I was here the Lord moved in my life. God allowed me to be able to have my son visit me here for Father's Day and for his first birthday. However, I believed the lie from Satan that I needed to go back and be with them, so I left the program. When I got back home, I saw my son for about two weeks and then his mom took him back to Missouri. Within one month I was selling

Ice again. I cared about nothing. Death sounded relieving, and prison looked more and more like home. This went on fourteen months until I felt the Holy Spirit warn me to stop. I decided to go back to TC, but I was so strung out that I left in a week. Four weeks after I left, I was arrested for selling Ice, and I was falsely accused of rape. While I was in jail, I was moved to a cell by myself and that is where I felt the Spirit of the Lord move on me once again. I accepted Jesus into my life. My whole attitude changed. I started telling other inmates what happened. I knew that I was called by God to go to TC, but I didn't expect the judge to let me go. Miraculously he let me come to TC while I am waiting for my trial in July.



For the first time in my life I feel different. I have a hope and a peace about the future. No matter where I go, I know that I have a personal relationship with Jesus. That is what matters. "Who the son sets free is free indeed." I've learned that no situation or circumstance can pull you out of God's will, as long as your heart is willing to obey Him. God is the power that changes hearts if you let Him. I am a witness of that as well as many others. This is just the beginning of what God has done. I have been here seven months now, and I have also been learning work ethics. I have completed construction training courses and have been doing hands-on training as well. A program called Christ-Life has helped me start to forgive myself, and has really changed the way I think. My relationship with family is way better, and I have true friends here that really care for me. It's hard to describe all that Jesus has done for me. All the people that knew me in the past can clearly see I'm not the same. But most importantly, I know now that if I were to die right now that I would not go to hell. Thank you, Jesus!