

Teen Challenge Update

New Ministry Reaches Out to Students' Wives

Teen Challenge of the Midlands recently started a new ministry to reach out to the wives of our students. It has always been the heart of staff to minister to not only our students, but their families as well. We know that during our 15-month program it is often very difficult for families while separated from their husband and father. With this new ministry, we hope to reach out to the wives in many ways: we want to be available to provide personal contact so they are informed and know what their spouse is involved in; to be available for counseling and to be there as a friend; to have more "Wives' Weekends," a retreat that includes teaching, testimonies, and fellowship with staff and other wives of students. Jennifer Ridgway is our new Wives Ministry Coordinator. As the wife of a former student, Jennifer has insight into the types of issues the

wives are dealing with and she has a strong desire to reach out to them in ministry. Along with other Teen Challenge staff, Jennifer has begun contacting wives and the reaction has been very positive. Wives are hungry to learn with their husbands and it is exciting to see how God is beginning to work in many of their lives. Watch for more details in future *Updates*.

"A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life...She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 'Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.' Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate."

Proverbs 31:10-12, 25-31, NIV

Thanks for coming out for our first night of "Undignified" worship. It was such a blessing to see many people from different denominations and backgrounds come together to praise our Lord! Our first night went so well that now we are going to meet twice a month. Please come and join us at our Colfax center on the 2nd and 4th Friday of every month at 7 p.m. See you there!



900 N. League Road, PO Box 185
Colfax, IA 50054
515.674.3713
515.674.4463

2916 N. 58th Street
Omaha, NE 68104
402.551.2322

You can reach our Executive Director by email at:
warrenhuns@aol.com

Visit our website at:
www.teenchallenge.com/midlands

1709 10th Street
Des Moines, IA 50314
515.282.5249

Set Free: A Testimony of God's Saving Grace

My name is Jason. I am from a big family; I have 16 brothers and sisters, and I was number 17. When I was 15 years old, getting high and drinking was a big part of my life. Every year just got worse, and by the time I was 19, I was sent to prison for robbery. When I got out, I went back to the same old life of doing drugs and drinking. Six months later, I was back in prison again, full of anger and hate. There, I joined up with a gang. I was in trouble all the time and this went on for the next two and a half years. Then, I found out that my mom had cancer. I got out of prison and seven months later, on April 9, 1995, she died in my arms. My mom really

loved the Lord, and in mom's house it was God's way, so I kept to the streets. About a week later I met Shannon, my wife. Talk about power in prayer. I know my mom prayed for God to send someone to her son, and He did. The Lord sent me Shannon. I soon found out that her father was an Associate Pastor. God was always with me, even in my resistance. Shannon and I had two children before we got married, and then another one after we were married. In the meantime, I was still drinking and doing drugs all the time. My children were getting a firsthand lesson on how to run with the devil. Time caught up with me again and before long, I was back on the street, separated from my family and living at the YMCA. It was only God that kept my wife with me through it all. Things got better for a short time and my wife and children and I were together again. I had my family back, but still thought I could do my drugs without them knowing. God had been calling me for years, but I ran and ran and ran. Again, I lost my job and turned harder to drugs. Soon, I had my van repossessed and then our car. Just a few weeks later, I robbed a convenience store and within 30 minutes, was back in jail looking at ten years. My wife was devastated and my children knew something bad had happened; my family was gone for sure. While sitting in jail, I had a

meeting with my Father in Heaven; I knew this time was real. Brian Schroeder, a former Teen Challenge staff member and a good friend, came and visited me many times and talked to me about Teen Challenge. I had made a commitment to



Jason & President Bush on March 1, 2002

Jesus that, even through I was in prison, I would never turn back; I was **SAVED!** I knew I needed Teen Challenge, so we went to the judge, but they wanted me to go to prison, so my request was denied. I was crushed, but told the Lord that I would even serve Him in prison. A month later, we tried again, but again the judge denied my request. The time to sentence me came a month later, and again I cried out

to God, "Please Lord, send me to Teen Challenge!" The Judge asked the District Attorney what he wanted to do, and he said to give me ten years. The judge bowed his head and said, "I don't know why I'm doing this, but I am sending him to Teen Challenge." I cried and thanked the Lord! Teen Challenge is awesome, but very hard. You have to be really sold out to Jesus to make it. Thank God I am! I am learning more and more about my Lord, about being humble, and learning how to love. I am determined to serve God. I was set back at Teen Challenge and lost privileges, which was another valley of growth for me. Praise God I am learning to trust Him. Just last week, Dave Olson called me into his office and said, "You are doing great and in March you get to go to Omaha." Then, Warren called me into the office and I thought, "Please Lord, don't stop it from happening." Warren said the President of the United States had invited him to a meeting in Des Moines, and he could bring a student. He asked me to go and I got to meet President Bush and even had my picture taken with him! There is so much the Lord has done for me. I thank God my wife and children have a new husband and dad. Now I say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).