

Teen Challenge Update

September 2007

Omaha: New Driveway & Living Room

The Omaha Re-Entry Center has a new look both on the inside and the outside! Last fall, a new driveway was poured, and this spring, the main living room was redecorated. Both areas look simply amazing!

Glad Tidings Church in Omaha gave a generous donation along with many other faithful supporters of Teen Challenge to pour new concrete for the dilapidated, old driveway. The driveway was cracking and crumbling and getting worse every year. American Excavating removed and hauled off the old concrete, and Teen Challenge staff and students poured the new concrete and finished off the project. Thanks to all who helped!



New living room with cozy fireplace

In April, Random Acts of Kindness, a women's group in Omaha redecorated our Re-Entry Center's well-used living room. The room was redone in years past, but as you can imagine, the constant traffic of re-entry students in one space can take its toll and leave quite a bit of wear and tear.

With donations from individuals in the group, Glad Tidings Church, and King of King's Lutheran Church, the group was able to purchase new furniture and decorations, paint the walls, and have beautiful Roman shades made. The room is comfortable and masculine. Thank you to this group for giving our re-entry students a cozy place to relax after a long day's work.

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10th Annual Golf Marathon this Month

Wow - time does fly! On the 19th of this month hundreds of golf balls will be flying through the air at Willow Creek Golf Course in West Des Moines. It's our 10th Annual Triton Homes/Teen Challenge Golf Marathon.

Golfers will enjoy a hot breakfast at 6:30am, followed by a shotgun start at 7:00am. They'll play at least 100 holes and will compete for prizes in closest-to-the-pin and longest-drive contests. Along the way, they'll enjoy lots of good food, beverages, and fellowship with Teen Challenge students, staff, and friends.

WHO Radio's Van & Bonnie will be broadcast-

ing, and Mark Allen of WHO Radio Sports will be on hand for his own closest-to-the-pin contest. Call (800) 596-1706 between 5:00am and 9:00am, donate at least \$50 to Teen Challenge, and Mark will hit three balls for you on one of the par three holes. The ball closest to the pin at the end of the Van & Bonnie Show wins a 32" HDTV from Archer Home Center in Adel. A BIG thank you to Van & Bonnie, Mark Allen, and WHO Radio for all you do!

It's not too late to get involved. To golf or make a donation, call Brian Near at (515) 674-3713, ext. 254 or e-mail him at b.near@tcmid.org.

Set Free: A Testimony of God's Saving Grace

I'm 40 years old and so thankful for God's saving grace and mercy. I grew up in a home where both of my parents were Christians. They did their best to raise me the right way and to follow God. My mother had health issues, though, and my father, being in the military, was often gone. I was mostly raised by my grandmother when I was young, and because of that I felt abandoned and alone. To compound things, I was constantly physically abused by the kids in the neighborhood. All I wanted was to matter and to be accepted, but I didn't think I was wanted by anyone.

I thought I had found a crowd that would accept me among a group of people who used drugs, alcohol, and who were sexually immoral. I knew these things were wrong, but my need for acceptance was so great that I involved myself with them just to feel wanted and accepted. Although I went to church, I felt God didn't love me, and I eventually stopped attending. I dropped out of school and walked away from my family and from God. My life became empty and hopeless.

I entered Teen Challenge when I was 18, only doing it to please my mom and dad. I reentered the program again in 1992, but I held things inside and didn't give God everything. I thought I could somehow fit God into my life, but what I really needed was to receive His life. I completed the program, but fell back into a life of sin because I had not totally surrendered my life to Him. I didn't stay in church fellowship, and I didn't keep myself accountable to a pastor or an older brother in the Lord. Jesus Christ was not the center of my life.

I thought success would be having a good job, a family, a wife and kids, a house, nice cars, etc.... Because I sought these things outside the will of God and didn't wait for Him to bring them into my life for His purpose and glory, they became empty, and I became bitter. I sank into depression and deeper into alcohol, drugs, and immorality. I lost

everything - my home, my family, even my identity.

While sitting in a hospital on suicide watch in the psych unit, I cried out to God, and He heard my prayer. A male nurse that I did not know came over to me and asked me what I was going to do with my life. I said I didn't know. I had wrecked my life and had walked away from God and wanted to start living for Him again. This nurse asked me if I knew about a place called Teen Challenge, not knowing that I had been there before. Right then I knew it was God speaking to me through him. The nurse told me that God loved me and that I just needed to trust Him. He helped me get information on Teen Challenge and after a few months I finally got here.



Today I have that relationship with God, and we are becoming more intimate every day. He has answered my prayers, He has restored my relationship with my children, and I have learned that I was created in Him, through Him, and by Him. Jesus has to be at the center of everything I do. He is the missing link that I had been searching for. Today my life isn't perfect. I still struggle, and in those struggles I grow. I have a peace today that I have never had before, a knowledge that God has my life in His hands, and that He will restore what the locusts have eaten.

One of my favorite verses is Jeremiah 29:11 - "'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.'" I am so thankful that God is faithful, even when I am not. I am thankful that He never leaves us nor forsakes us, and that His mercies are new every morning. Thank you for letting me share with you. May He bless you today out of the abundance of His riches.