



# The Challenger

April, 2006

## Teen Challenge Team Is Growing!

Two new staff members have just joined the Teen Challenge team! John Shelley and his family arrived on the scene in mid-February. John, his wife, Charlotte, and two sons, John Jr. (14) and James (12), moved here from the Delaware Township area just outside of Des Moines. John was first introduced to the Teen Challenge ministry four years ago when he came to a worship service here at the Colfax center. After some time, John was reminded of this ministry when he recommended Teen Challenge to a woman and her son who was addicted to drugs. John brought them here for a tour. The son never came to Teen Challenge, but the Lord used that visit to bring John on staff. John was addicted to drugs and alcohol for 27 years and feels like the Lord orchestrated his move here because he can relate to the men and their struggles. John said, "I just want to be able to...help this ministry reach more men for the sake of the gospel." John is working in development as a Community Relations Assistant. Charlotte works in the accounting department of Brown National Lease of Des Moines. Before coming on at Teen Challenge, John was a Commercial Sales Representative for a national office supply firm.

Steve Hankins came on board March 20th as our new Director in charge of Administration and Finance. Steve's wife, Erin, is currently a musician and worship leader at their church in Bellevue, Nebraska. Erin and their two boys, Jonah (11) and Luke (8) will join Steve here in Colfax as soon as school dismisses in Bellevue for the summer. Steve heard about Teen Challenge of the Midlands through his friend who recently completed the program and is now on staff here as an intern.



*Shelley Family: (from left) John Jr. (14), John Sr., Charlotte, and James (12)*



*Hankins Family: (clockwise) Steve, Erin, Luke (8), Jonah (11)*

One of the things that drew Steve and his family to Teen Challenge of the Midlands was the dramatic Holy Spirit-led changes that the students undergo. Steve and Erin have been praying about and considering working in full-time ministry for several years and thankfully God brought them here! When asked what he's enjoyed most about working here so far, Steve said, "The family atmosphere and the daily craziness that, for some odd reason, seems so natural." After graduating from the Air Force Academy, Steve was a pilot in the U.S. Air Force then was in management at a large bank in Omaha before joining the Teen Challenge team.

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# SET FREE! – A Testimony of Hope

I come from a very loving family: one of those families who give a lot of hugs. We are a very close family. Both of my parents are still alive, and I have two older brothers. I started smoking pot when I was about 15 years old. I seemed to keep up with my grades and was very involved in sports still. Right after graduating from high school I was blessed with a job at a local manufacturing plant. In my twenties I was using cocaine and still smoking pot. I was 22 when I married my first wife. It only lasted a year and a half. By this time my usage had doubled, and I had been in treatment once already.

I then met my children's mom, who I was married to for about five and a half years. I was spending a lot of money on cocaine. In one three week period I went through \$27,000! My job was very rocky. At this time I was going through a divorce from the kids' mom. I got out of treatment and went back to work. Things were going good, but then I stopped going to the AA meetings. I was clean for about a year and a half when I started up again with the cocaine. I thought I was doing ok because I was only using every other weekend (since I had my kids the other weekend). Well that lasted about three months, and then I stopped picking up my kids. My youngest would sleep on the front steps of his mom's house waiting for me to come and pick him up for the weekend. Sometimes he would sleep there all weekend waiting for his dad to pick him up. I was looking for something but didn't know what it was. I knew I was very dead inside. I felt like I was hollow inside, so I kept using cocaine to hide what I was feeling. I was fired two days before Christmas from my job of nineteen years. That year there were no presents under the tree for my kids.

I started going to church. The first time I walked in, tears started flowing down my face. I thought I was having a nervous breakdown. The feeling that came over me was something I never had before in my life. The next week I took my kids with me, and again the tears started running down my face. The next week I took my mom, and she loved the church. From that day on my whole family started going to that church.



After attending church for about six months, I was still using. It was not as much until one day I came home, and there was a check in the mail from my old job. So again I was off on a thirteen-day binge. I went through a couple thousand dollars, and when that ran out I robbed a gas station. I was sentenced to 10 years in prison. As I was talking to another inmate, he told me that I needed to "read this," and he threw me a Bible. I read it every day that I was locked up. I had the opportunity to take Bible classes, and in every cell I was in (about 14), there was a Christian brother in there with me. Out of the 10 years, I only did 28 months. I got out of prison two days before Christmas and was able to spend it with my family. What a blessing!

I started as the custodian of our church and moved to Building Engineer and then to the Director of Facilities. I married a Christian woman, one of the strongest ladies I know. She is my best friend. After about three years of marriage, I went on the run again with crack cocaine. I was gone for 4 days. My wife didn't know if I was alive or dead, so she got some awesome people from church and found me in the bad part of town. They brought me home, and for two days straight, we talked and prayed together.

And this is where I'm at today: Teen Challenge of the Midlands in Colfax, Iowa, a place where I could come and be at total rest in the Lord. I truly believe that I'm here at Teen Challenge to be delivered from all of this once and for all. I ask Him each day to show me His way, not mine. It's hard to tell you how I feel here at Teen Challenge of the Midlands. The only way I can express it is from a dad's or husband's point of view. When your baby or your wife falls asleep on your chest, they feel love, assurance, security, and rest knowing that you will take care of them. That is the feeling that I get from Teen Challenge of the Midlands. I've only been here a little over a month, and it is very hard. His grace is on me, and my faith gets stronger by the day. I have learned more in the month at Teen Challenge of the Midlands than I have since I've been a Christian.

# Family Fellowship is Key to TC's Ministry

One significant thing that sets Teen Challenge apart is its family atmosphere. Staff members often invite students into their homes or out for ice cream or coffee. This gives students a chance to get to know staff members and to see what Christian family living can be like. In addition, once a month we hold a "Family Fellowship" night. Students gather with the staff and their families at their homes for goodies, games or movies, and, most importantly, fellowship. Here's what some students and former students had to say about this important aspect of the ministry:

"Spending time with the staff families really impacted me. About two weeks into the program, it hit me that not long ago I was in a world of evil, and now I was in this godly man's home playing board games with his kids...I felt love and unconditional acceptance."

*-Matt, 1999 graduate*



"I think it's great! It gives us a chance to interact with families when you're not used to that."

*-Randee, current student*

"When I first came to T.C., I felt shame & embarrassment,...they made me feel welcomed & loved; it was just what I needed."

*-Dave, current Re-Entry student*

## Leaving a Legacy...

One gift option that donors have when it comes to real estate is the gift of real estate with retained life estate. This can apply to your primary residence, farm, vacation home, or even rental property. The way it works is you give the property over to Teen Challenge but retain the right to use it personally or even rent it out for the duration of your lifetime. This can enable you to bless Teen Challenge, keep the use of your home or keep receiving rental income, and give you, in many cases, a tremendous income tax deduction while you are living.

For instance, Harry & June, 79 and 77, are leaving their children their IRA accounts, savings accounts, and life insurance policy money. They would like to



"It's awesome! You get a chance to spend time with the staff families."

*-Aaron, current student*

"I learned how to be in relationship with good people and knew because of Christ I was 'good people' too."

*-Christian, completed student/current intern*

"Family Fellowship was a day in the month every student looked forward to."

*-Mike, current Re-Entry student*

"It was a chance to not have your guard up, to be real...You could just talk and not worry about the 'staff member/student' relationship...It was one of the key things that kept me there."

*Chad, 2000 graduate*

"It makes us all feel like part of a family."

*-Rich, current student*

"It made me feel special because even though I thought of myself as a royal jerk, people still cared enough to give me another chance and share the love of Christ."

*-Nathan, completed student/current intern*

support the work of the Kingdom with the value of their house while at the same time retaining the use of the house for as long as they need it. The house is worth \$300,000, which gives them an income tax charitable deduction of \$127,800. With a combined federal and state tax rate of 28%, they would save almost \$35,784 on their taxes this year. If capital gain taxes were an issue such as with investment property, the tax savings would be even greater. In addition, depending on the value of the home and their age, we may be able to generate an income stream to them if they need it. It all goes to the heart of what you would like to do with the assets the Lord has entrusted to you.

Mailing label goes here

*Helping People Who Hurt*

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*John Shelley (far right) already at work  
in the Development Department*