

Teen Challenge Update

Teen Challenge of Nebraska

August 2008

From Completion to Graduation

You may have noticed us use the two terms "completion" and "graduation" in past publications. Although these words may seem nearly identical, there is a vast difference between the two in Teen Challenge's jargon dictionary.

"Completion" is the term we use for students who have completed the twelve month program. Most begin the program at Teen Challenge of the Midlands' Training Center in Colfax, IA. After spending around seven months there, the students then transfer to our Re-Entry

date: around a year's time. Students also must make themselves accountable to their local pastor (or someone he delegates), and are also required to call an appointed Teen Challenge

CONTACT INFORMATION

You can reach our Admissions Director by email at:
i.hunsberger@tcmid.org

Visit our website at:
www.tcmid.org

You can reach our other Midlands centers at:

Teen Challenge Admission and Crisis Center
1709 10th St.
Des Moines, IA 50314
515.282.5249

Colfax Training Center
900 N. League Rd.
PO Box 185
Colfax, IA 50054
ph. 515.674.3713
fax. 515.674.4463

Pella Women's Home
714 Independence St.
Pella, IA
50219-1828
641.628.2808



A student and his mother celebrate at his completion service last month.

Center in Omaha, NE. When these two phases are completed, we hold what we call a "completion service." Completion services are usually held monthly. The students are honored, given a certificate of completion, and a reception following the service. Along with their completion, these students are given information on how they may "graduate" from the program.

In order to "graduate" from Teen Challenge, completed students must maintain a walk of righteousness and integrity from the time of their completion to their projected graduation



Two of our graduates get ready to enter the graduation ceremony to Pomp & Circumstance staff member monthly to report how they are doing and to share any needs or prayer requests. Graduation is a very exciting time. The Teen Challenge of the Midlands' graduation ceremony occurs once a year. Graduating students wear cap and gown and enter the ceremony to Pomp and Circumstance. Family members, friends, alumni, donors, and other supporters of Teen Challenge attend, and the entire weekend is dedicated to celebrating what these men have accomplished.

As our students make their way from completion to graduation, their time of transition is very important. Please remember not only our students, but our completed students and our alumni as you pray for Teen Challenge of the Midlands in Nebraska!

Set Free: A Testimony of God's Saving Grace

I grew up in a Christian home in a small town in California. We were a middle class family who looked well-to-do on the outside but on the inside we were broken. My father, active in the Army Reserves, would get home at six or seven each night and was gone every other weekend. He wasn't very affectionate nor did he teach us much about life. His love consisted of keeping us safe, food on the table and clothes on our backs, not teaching basic life skills or playing ball.

My mother was born without thyroid glands but the effects of this somehow didn't show until I was around two years old. She would lose control of herself and fall into fits of rage and hysteria, attacking my father. These fits would be so violent she was almost committed to a psychiatric hospital. Fortunately, a doctor in San Francisco was able to help her, but unfortunately, the damage from that hysteria and rage left fear in my own heart, even at an early age.

This family situation was compounded by bullying from the neighbor kids. I was physically beaten 2 or 3 times each week until 7th grade. I learned how to fight and most of the taunting subsided, but I still had a poor self image going into high school. In high school, I discovered a group of "friends" who would have my back and allow me to fit in. The only catch was that I had to do drugs to fit in. By the time I was 18, I was addicted to methamphetamines, cocaine, and marijuana.

About this time, my father was promoted and we moved to Iowa. Things were a lot slower here in the Midwest. I had a lot of good intentions to straighten up my life but it wasn't long before I was caught up in the drug culture again, in addition to an alcohol problem. My mom and dad asked me to go to Teen Challenge when I was 18. I did, but only to make them happy. When I got out, I was still so full of fear and loneliness that I went to see my old friends. Quickly, I fell right back into the old drug addiction.



I wanted to serve God but also wanted the things of this world... family, good job, a beautiful wife, and nice cars. I eventually married a non-believer and soon began to smoke marijuana again. My wife and I had two children, boys Brandon and Jordan whom I love dearly. As time went on, my wife and I began to drift apart and both of us were unfaithful. Our relationship was getting violent, and we verbally, mentally, and physically abused each other.

In 2004, I finally left my family. Within that month I sat on a couch in my apartment, took two months worth of blood pressure medication and slit my wrists. I woke up the next morning by a voice in my head telling me, "Wake up, Robert. I love you, and your children desperately need you." Instead of turning my life around, I ran from God for the next 2 years.

My methamphetamine use increased and as a result I eventually became delusional, hearing voices in my head and losing all sense of reality. When I came back to my senses, I was homeless and in a psychiatric hospital. In that hospital I cried out to Jesus and at the very same moment a male nurse asked me what I was going to do with my life. He told me about Teen Challenge. He didn't know me or that I had been there before. I knew God was speaking through this nurse and directing my miracle.

Since coming to Teen Challenge, the Lord has blessed my obedience. I have been able to dump my past garbage through a group program called Christ-Life Solutions. I now know that God is life and must be the center and the reason behind everything I do. I'm so thankful the Re-entry program is here to help me live out this walk with God. My time here pushes me toward God and makes me totally reliant on Him. This entire time has been a refining process God is using to purify me. Life is still difficult at times but God is teaching me to walk through those times and allow Him to show Himself faithful. By living in obedience, this year I was able to lead my 10 year old boy to Jesus!