

# Teen Challenge Update

Teen Challenge of Nebraska

May 2008

## Church Ministries: Students get Involved

Our re-entry program exists in order to help our students get back into the "real world" after their seven-month stay at our Colfax, IA facility. This part of the program helps students to face the challenges of living out their new life under some supervision and with some degree of help before having to face these things on their own. They live at the re-entry house, paying some rent, find jobs, and get involved in a local church.

Each student picks their own church of their own denominational choice. Not only do our students attend these local churches, but they are also required to serve in an area of ministry within that church. Some of our students volunteer as ushers. Some get involved in prayer ministry, music ministry, or the choir. Some are greeters, some work in children's ministry, and some work as church security.

Here is what some students have to say about serving and being a part of their churches: Thaddeus said that he sees that there are real people walking out the Christian life outside of Teen Challenge. He is a greeter at his church.

When asked how his church involvement has affected his life, Nick says, "I have developed healthy relationships...and that is something I always longed for. I am grateful to be part of something, to be looked upon as needed, to be appreciated and part of a family." Chris, who works with the children at his church, replied similarly. He said, "When I'm at church I feel like I'm a member, like I'm not just a student at Teen Challenge."

Tony, a part of his church's choir, says, "It has shown me how friendly and welcoming other

Christians are. I now know how fun being involved with a church can be. I used to think that people in church didn't have anything else better to do and that they were losers. I'm definitely convinced that they are the ones that show true friendship and love."

Most of the students said that serving at their churches has made them step out of their comfort zone. Robert says that being involved in his church's children's ministry has challenged him to be more serious about his Christian walk. He says being involved brings accountability in his life.



*Students in choir at Glad Tidings Church*



*Student poses in front of TC ministry board*

### CONTACT INFORMATION

You can reach our Admissions Director by email at: [i.hunsberger@tcmid.org](mailto:i.hunsberger@tcmid.org)  
Visit our website at: [www.tcmid.org](http://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

# Set Free: A Testimony of God's Saving Grace

My parents have always been together, and my three sisters and I have always been close. I attended a Christian school, my grandpa was a pastor, my parents worked with the youth group, and I think that even then I knew that there was a God; I just didn't know Him. Throughout my life I think I always knew that God was real, I just wasn't willing to give up the things that I was doing to get to know Him. It wasn't until I did things my way for a long time that I finally figured it out.

My whole world was turned upside down when I went to public school. I realized that I was very sheltered up to this point, and I suddenly found myself in a school that had 360 kids in my class alone. I didn't know anyone, and I found that I had a very hard time making friends.

At fourteen, I started working at a local restaurant as a bus-boy and dishwasher, and that is where I started making some of the bad choices which led me to where I was before I entered Teen Challenge. The place had a bar, and most of the employees were high school to college age. Almost immediately, I began smoking and drinking to fit in, and for the first time I had found a way to make friends. Soon, I had a drinking habit which opened the door to other drugs. I was smoking pot regularly, and had tried other drugs like LSD, methamphetamines, cocaine, and anything else I could get my hands on. The people I hung out with and thought were my friends were really symbolic of my lifestyle: they were fading away like sand in an hour glass. Eventually I realized I was all alone and maybe it was better that way. There was only one friend that always stuck by me, and was always there when I was down: alcohol.

Multiple drug and alcohol convictions followed me. I had been arrested for possession of meth, marijuana, and a string of alcohol related charges. I continued drinking over the next four years on a daily basis. I didn't feel right mentally

if I was sober, so I just kept on drinking. Alcohol finally brought me to my knees. I was spending all of my money on booze, and at the end it nearly took my life. I was hospitalized twice for alcohol poisoning, was in trouble with the courts for alcohol related offenses, and was living out of my truck. I had come to the end of myself. I didn't want to live but was terrified of dying. I knew that if I kept doing what I was doing it would kill me. I felt death's tug and knew it might be in the next breath. My family and I were scared because I had been drinking for so long. I didn't know any other way to live, and I felt like I couldn't stop. I needed help from someone or someplace that understood what I was going through.



My family had heard about a program called Teen Challenge. At first I refused because of its length, but I finally gave in and came in October of 2006. I stayed for a week, and then left. My problems just followed me. I was drunk before I made it home, and my terror worsened because I couldn't escape. My only refuge was in Teen Challenge. I came back on January 2nd, 2007. About a month later I found what I had been missing my entire life: Jesus Christ. In a chapel service in Colfax, Iowa, I gave my life to the Lord, and nothing has been the same since then. He has freed me from not only the drugs and alcohol, but from my life of sin. Everything from the way I talk, to the way I think has been changing. I am blessed to say that I know what true friends are, and know how to be one who encourages others in a positive, life changing way. When I see myself in the mirror today, I see a new man. I know that God has a plan for my life. I'm not sure what it is yet, but I have faith that He will guide me through whatever is to come. I know that when I leave Teen Challenge, the battle is not over. I think it will just be the beginning, but I am confident that I have a great future in front of me because the Word tells me that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.