

TOPEKA RESCUE MISSION MONTHLY REPORT MAY 2019

Topeka Rescue Mission • 600 N. Kansas Avenue • Topeka, KS 66608-1240

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FACILITIES: 785-354-1744

Hope Center for Women & Families #8

Men's Shelter #0

Distribution Center x366

Thrift Store 785-235-9094

TRM Boutique on the Blvd 785-478-5744

Children's Palace 785-730-8810

PROGRAMS: 785-354-1744

Dining Services x322

Food Distribution x366

Education & Mentoring x338

Volunteer Services x393

COMMUNITY:

Operation Street Reach 785-230-8237

DONATIONS:

Monetary: 785-354-1744 x316

Material: 785-357-4285

Food: 785-357-4285



NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
AMERICAN
PRE-SORT INC

website: TRMonline.org

email: trm@trmonline.org



TONY & STACY BROWN:

STORY OF HOPE

PART TWO



TONY & STACY BROWN: **STORY OF HOPE** PART TWO

Stacy and Tony Brown have experienced a 20-year journey full of challenges, perseverance and persistent hope. Stacy is the operations manager at the distribution center and Tony is a chef at the Burger Stand. They have four amazing children. Part 1 of their story described their challenges with addiction and losing their children to state custody. Part 2 focuses on their journey toward family reunification and a stable life.

The good news came when Stacy was at her parent's house and Tony was at work. The trial to release their children for adoption was set for the middle of May. Two

weeks before the trial their lawyer called. "The attorney had called me earlier that day and I ignored the call because I was scared of what she was going to tell me. She was a

very blunt person and would tell me if things looked hopeful or not. My parents were sitting there saying, "Stacy, God's not gonna do this to you." In my head I was talking to Him and

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saying, “Please don’t do this, I will do anything, I just need this last chance.” Right then I was told to get on the phone and listen to that message. I listened and I went to the ground crying. My parents thought it was bad news because I was an emotional wreck. I said “We won, we are getting them back!”

Tony and Stacy had done what they were told couldn’t be done...they got all four kids back from State custody. Stacy’s dad said, “Load up the car. We are going to tell Tony.” Stacy walked into Tony’s work with tears coming down her face and went straight over to where they hand out food. “I didn’t care who was around. It was the best day of my life. I mean having the kids come into this world was great, but having that second chance, the one I was told that we wouldn’t get ... that was incredible.”

When asked how he felt, Tony said, “We didn’t expect it. It was something that just tugged at your heart. I mean, it was unbelievable!”

Getting their kids back was a huge accomplishment, but so was staying married. “Most people don’t make it

through addiction itself, let alone go into recovery,” Stacy said. “We not only had to learn how to live clean and not using drugs, we had to learn who each other was and how to love each other and work together, live together.” Tony added, “All we ever knew of each other was through addiction. We never knew each other clean.”

Stacy added, “The only time we would ever get clean was when I was pregnant and that only lasts nine months. That’s not long enough to get to know anybody. We had to learn how to be parents sober. It wasn’t just getting clean, there is so much more that goes along with it. When you look at the statistics of a couple going through addiction and then look at them making it through recovery together, it just doesn’t happen.”

Tony advises, “Don’t do it. Sometimes it’s not that easy. You just have to find good support. We had support. We had somebody that took us in. They opened their house. It is very rare to find people like that. If you can’t always find somebody like that. Just get somebody to help you through it.” Stacy added

that they had a lot of people around them say this person is a lost cause, that person is a lost cause. “Nobody is a lost cause! If that was so, we would have never made it out. You have to know your worth and keep going. Like Tony said, get that support system going. Get somebody around you that thinks you can’t fail – you can’t let them down. We couldn’t let our kids down. So there is no option but to keep going and do the thing.”

While the kids were impacted by their parents’ addiction and the stay in foster care, they are resilient and doing well now. Stacy shared, “While they had a great foster home, while they were in foster care they kind of shut down. They weren’t very outspoken and really quiet. Now they are outspoken and drive me crazy! You know how they say if your kids are a handful at home, it’s because home is their safe zone and they are comfortable? Well, I do get tired and sometimes I wanna put myself in time out, but they are who they are supposed to be. Academically all the kids did fairly well in school except for our oldest because he was shipped

from foster home to foster home. He was about a year behind in credits to graduate. Right now, he is graduating on time and with half days of school. So, he has made a huge improvement.

Nothing compares to the “tired” I felt not having them - that really took a toll on me. I was in my own hell without the kids. I don’t know what would have happened if they adopted the kids out. I thank God every day for giving them back to us. Nothing can be so overwhelming that it is going to break me as long as I have them to go home and look at, even if they are driving me crazy, I’ll take it. Our kids are our world.”

Faith in God has played a large role for both Stacy and Tony as they dealt with addiction, put their family back together and dealt with tremendous loss in the past year. Stacy shared, “I have always believed in God. I won’t lie, I questioned Him in my addiction. I didn’t understand if there was a God, why wasn’t I a normal person that could take care of our kids and just do life? We were in a parenting class and the pastor asked us if we believed God

had a plan for everything. I sat quietly because I didn’t think they wanted to hear my answer. Tony spoke my answer out loud. He said if that is true, is it God’s plan to take our kids away from us? The pastor explained that sometimes it is out of His hands, but the end plan is what you need to worry about. So, it just flipped a switch for me and I started talking to God every day. Whether at work in the back room talking out loud or just in my head. I know without Him we definitely wouldn’t be where we are at today. We definitely wouldn’t have our family back. We would probably still be out there in addiction. I don’t think there is any possible way that I could ever go back to questioning him.”

Tony grew up in the church. “I knew there was a God, but when I was in my addiction, I didn’t believe that He was there to help. I gave up and to be honest I didn’t believe for a while. I know now I still believed, if it wasn’t for Him I could be sitting in prison, or maybe even dead . . . especially with some of the stuff that I’ve been through. I thank Him every day. I may not do

it out loud but if it wasn’t for him, we wouldn’t be where we are at right now. He has done so much for us – how could you not believe? It’s one of those roads that you sometimes never come back from. It was a very difficult road. Twenty some years of my life was addicted to drugs and He just pulled me away from it.”

Tony and Stacy have experienced much sadness over the past year. When asked how they withstand these trials Stacy replied, “I know God has a plan for everything and this last year and a half has been incredibly hard and heartbreaking, especially when I lost my sister to addiction. It tore me apart. Losing Tony’s mom and his aunt all within three months and then facing losing my dad, it just felt like we were fighting to breathe. But in my head, I know that God has a plan for everything and my sister is not hurting anymore, she is not living that life and doesn’t have to fight that devil anymore. Tony’s mom doesn’t have to hurt anymore. She doesn’t have to live in agony about anything. I know God has me through everything. And I have my family, no matter what, to

▼ *Stacy & kids on a recent trip to Gary's Berries.*

keep me going. Our kids, even when they are driving me crazy, I love them and I wouldn't have it any other way. They are a big motivator for us to not let things break us. We have to show them how to be strong and to believe and to keep going."

Sometimes it takes people a lifetime to do what Stacy and Tony have done in just a couple of years. It's just from dedication – they just keep going. "We put a deposit down on a house, we are both working full-time jobs and I wouldn't pick anything over that. Just know that when you are helping out the Mission in whatever area, if you are donating money or items or volunteering, you are helping families just like ours. They need to know that they are worth something - that even if someone has been at the mission 15 times, they are worth it and not a lost cause." †



Coming
SOON

EXCITING CHANGES COMING!

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER FOR AN UPDATE ON HOW WE WILL BE COMMUNICATING WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE LIFE OF TRM MINISTRIES!

SHOP TO SUPPORT TRM MINISTRIES

EVERY \$25 YOU SPEND HELPS SHELTER 3 PEOPLE FOR A NIGHT!



3400 SW TOPEKA BLVD. • MONDAY – SATURDAY 10AM-5PM



FIND US ON FACEBOOK!

CURRENT NEEDS LIST

* DENOTES CRITICAL NEED ITEMS

FOOD ITEMS:

Peanut Butter / Jelly / Ravioli / Canned Tuna / Chicken / Cereal / Spaghetti Sauce / Soup / Baby Formula (Similac Advanced & Similac Sensitive) / Gallon Cans of Vegetables & Fruits / Coffee* / Sack lunch items (i.e. granola bars, fruit cups, pudding cups, snack crackers)

SUPPLY ITEMS:

Arm & Hammer Super Washing Soda / 20 Mule Team Borax / Fels Naptha Laundry Soap / Kleenex (Large Boxes) / Dish soap

HYGIENE/HEALTH ITEMS:

Diapers size 5 & 6 / Men's and Women's Deodorant (No Aerosol)* / Foot Powder / Toothpaste (small & large)* / Shampoo* & Conditioner* / Shower Gel (Hotel size & larger)* / Razors (Men's and Women's) / Cough Drops / Hair Brushes / Hand Soap / Tylenol / Ibuprofen / Baby Tylenol / Baby Powder / Pads/Tampons

CLOTHING:

Spring Clothing for Men, Women & Children (clothing and shoes can all be used) / Shoes – All Sizes / Women's Underwear (Small – 5,6,7)

FURNITURE *(in good condition):*

Mattresses and box springs with the safety tag of July 2007 or newer, no tears or stains.*

Furniture – i.e. Couches, Recliners, Loveseats, Dressers, Tables, Mattresses, etc.

Large & Small Appliances – i.e. Washers, Dryers, Ranges, Freezers, Refrigerators & Microwaves