



“When he committed suicide one month later, I thought it was my fault.”

- Testimony of Ismael Torres, Jr.

My name is Ismael Torres, Jr. My family is from Puerto Rico, but I grew up on the south side of Milwaukee. I grew up living with both parents. My mother was Catholic.

My father was an alcoholic and drug addict. My father verbally and physically abused my mother, my younger brother, and me. When I was 7 years old, my father and mother separated.

Mom had to work to support us and pay the bills. Without a father figure in my life, it was hard to stay out of trouble. My father taught us how to fight. After he left, we were always fighting in school.

Mom always taught us right from wrong. She took us to church. However, at age 12, I started using marijuana which led to alcohol, speed, and other narcotics. At 14, I was selling drugs at school.



I started to commit crimes: strong armed robbery, burglary, and masked armed robbery.

“I was sentenced to Ethan Allen School for Boys for 9 months.”

When I was released, I got involved with drugs again. This time it was tick, PCP, acid. I began to sell all those drugs in school and by my senior year, I was selling cocaine in large amounts.

In time, I began to use a lot of my own stash. My drinking got worse and so did my addictions. I had been selling and using drugs for 24 years and had nothing to show for it. I spent a lot of money and I put my family through a lot of pain and sorrow.

In 1998, I started using a new drug which my father introduced me to, crack cocaine. He and I began a new relationship based on this drug. After two months of using with my father, I started to lose all control of my life. I couldn't handle it anymore.

I went to a secular drug rehab program for three months. When I got out, I told my father that I was not going to visit him at his home anymore because that would trigger a relapse. But, I told him he could visit me at home anytime. When he committed suicide one month later, I thought it was my fault.

July 10, 2003

I went back to doing crack again. This time it was worse. I met a friend at a funeral that I hadn't seen in ten years. I told him what was going on in my life. I told him something was missing and I felt emptiness inside. He spoke to me about God and how Jesus saved him from his destructive life.

He began to visit me and tell me about Jesus and I began to want to know more. I started to attend his church. By October of 1999, I gave my life to Jesus Christ and accepted him as my Savior.

I started to attend fellowship groups and go to church regularly. The only thing that I was not doing was staying in the Word. By 2001 I was back using drugs again. It was as if I had never left. I was using very heavily and drinking a lot. I got started back with crack cocaine.

“While in the process of using, I would cry out to the Lord and ask him to forgive me, to help me with this addiction and to have mercy on my soul.”

I never gave up on the hope that one day God would hear my cries and save me. In February of 2003, Jesus heard my cries and sent me one of his people.

It was my friend who first introduced me to Christ. He told me about Teen Challenge and I decided to give it a chance. Today, through Teen Challenge, God has given me hope and through faith in Jesus I have recommitted my life to him.

I have repented from my old sinful nature. Through Jesus, the spirit of Christ has set me free from Satan's bondage.

Ismael is now in second phase in Riverside, California. Ismael did well during his stay here at Milwaukee Teen Challenge and we are grateful for the progress he is making. Thank you for your partnership with Teen Challenge and young men like Ismael.

Mark your Calendar!

August, 2003 marks the 20 year Anniversary for Teen Challenge in Wisconsin. We hope you will come celebrate with us at our annual Banquet & Auction on October 16th at the Midwest Center in Downtown Milwaukee.

If you cannot attend but would like to be involved, would you consider becoming a sponsor? We have several levels of sponsorship available:

Gold Sponsor ~ \$2500

Silver Sponsor ~ \$1000

Bronze Sponsor ~ \$500

Table Sponsor ~ \$235

Program Sponsor ~ \$35

If you would like to donate an item for the auction, please call Crystal at 414/466-4415 ext. 114. Thanks!