



November 20, 2003

## ***"... I lived under a railroad bridge on Highway 100 and Silver Spring Drive."***

by Paul Legros

Hi, my name is Paul and I grew up on the Northwest side of Milwaukee just down the road from the Teen Challenge Center of Hope campus.

Earlier today, I stopped by Teen Challenge to see what I could do to be of help to the program there.

For the last 17 years I have been free from drugs and alcohol. However, for many years my life was destroyed by substance abuse.

Prior to entering Teen Challenge in 1983, I had been in 28 treatment programs and found myself homeless for many years of my life.

On one occasion, a counselor told me, *"There is no hope for you."* The picture shows where I used to live under the railroad track bridge on Highway 100 and Silver Spring Drive.



My brother started me on alcohol when I was 7 years old. At 9 I smoked pot for the first time with my older siblings. For many years I burglarized neighborhoods on the northwest side of town to support my drug habit.

One time I broke into the J.C. Penny Outlet store on Silver Spring and stole \$35,000 of merchandise, got arrested and put in jail. My sister worked for them and my actions hurt her at her job. On one occasion I almost went to prison for 20 years for grand theft auto.

During my years in trouble, my mother always prayed for me. She was a charismatic Catholic who attended St. Agnes Catholic Church in Butler. Her bible study group at the church prayed for me.

My mom wanted a better life for me and my brother. Today I thank God for a praying, loving mother.

In 1982, I attended a David Wilkerson Crusade here in Milwaukee. I heard about God's love for me and asked Jesus to come in my heart.

It was at that time that I also met people from the Teen Challenge referral office here in Milwaukee. At that time, Milwaukee did not have a residential program. These gentlemen sent me to Chicago Teen Challenge. Just prior to this time, I was asking God to help me.

At Teen Challenge, the Lord began to change my life. I learned many things at Teen Challenge that help me everyday.

The people at Teen Challenge didn't ask me for anything. Instead, they showed me lots of love. Grace is love freely given to the undeserved. That's what they showed me at Teen Challenge.

Please know that when you help a place like Teen Challenge, you are helping people put their lives back together.

I have been free from drugs for 17 years and I have been married to my wife Carol for 11 years. For the last 12 years we have had our own computer business and done well. We live just north of Watertown just outside of Milwaukee. Today, I have hope and a future. The influence of David Wilkerson and Teen Challenge has greatly changed my life.

One of my burdens is to help people. The Teen Challenge center here on the north side of Milwaukee is helping lots of people. Students come to this program with addictions to heroin, crack cocaine, meth-amphetamine and other very serious problems. Many are homeless, have been in prison, and are in desperate need of help.

This holiday season, please consider helping this place. My life is a miracle because over 17 years ago, somebody cared and provided a place for me to go. Thanks for reading this newsletter.