



September 2014

Dear friends of the Matthew 25 House:

This is my summer update covering the comings, goings and doings at the house and in the lives of the men who call 330 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street “home.”

The house currently has four residents, and we have a number of applications from men desiring to be placed in the Matthew 25 House upon parole. I anticipate that within the next couple of weeks we could have a full house once again. It is exciting to see men applying who have a sense that God is calling them to be part of the Matthew 25 House.

### **Head Resident**

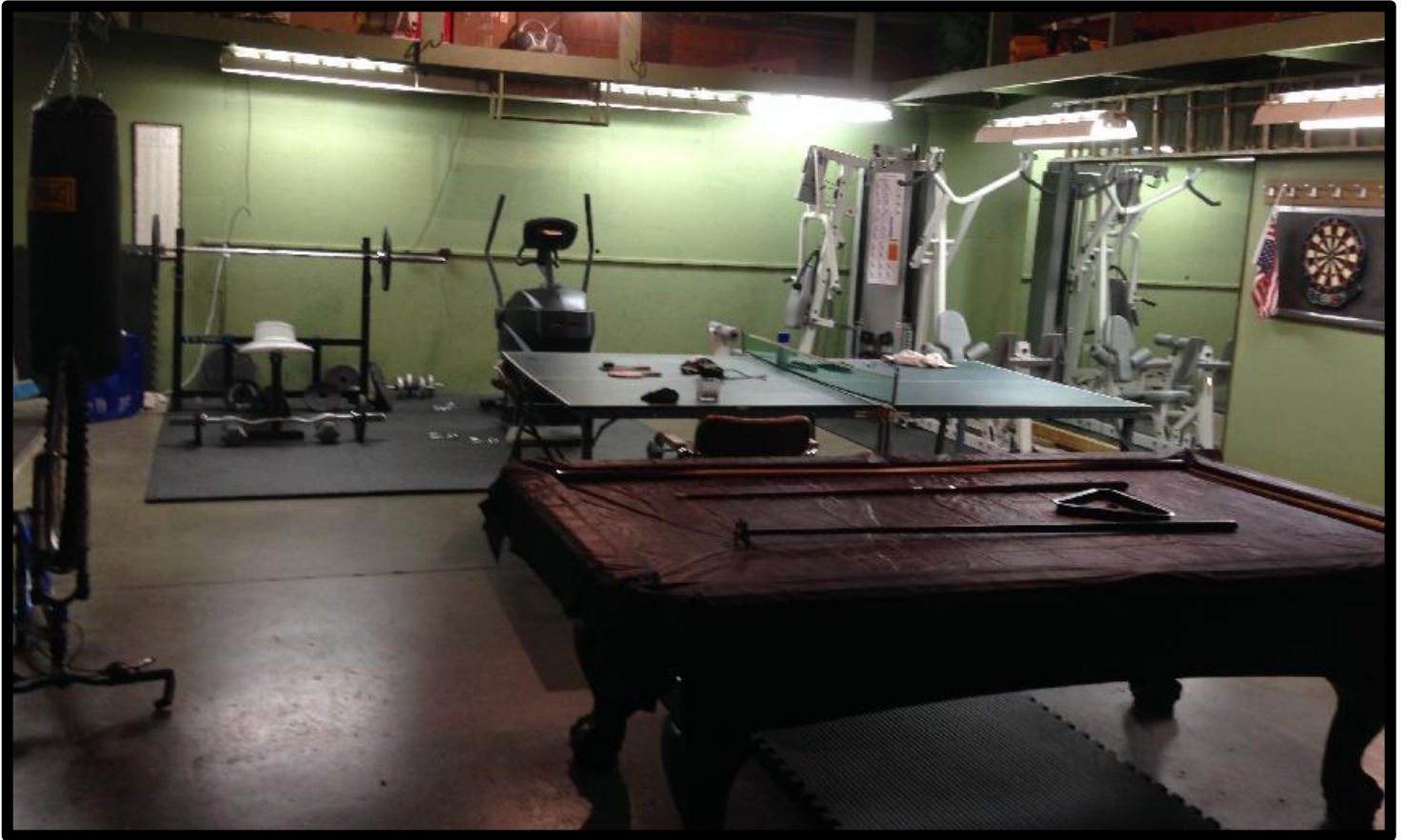
Eric replaced Jonathan as the head resident after Jonathan moved on to his next stage of life. Eric has done a very good job in his new role. Eric is currently working for Speck Plumbing & Heating in Ames, Iowa. He finds time to attend AA meetings and attends a couple local churches. Eric has also had the opportunity to continue to develop a deeper relationship with his son. They have enjoyed time this summer at the local swimming pool, Iowa State Fair, visiting both the Des Moines and Omaha zoos, and attending his son’s baseball and football activities. The two of them recently flew to Florida to spend a couple of days with Eric’s family.

Eric was passionate about creating a place where the men of the Matthew 25 House and their friends could gather and spend time with each other. His vision was to turn our cluttered garage into a fitness center and rec room. As Eric and the men started the process of stripping the old cabinetry and workbenches from the garage we had a very generous offer from Theodore and Rachel. This couple was moving and wanted to donate some items to the Matthew 25 House. Their donation of a pool table, weight machine, elliptical machine, heavy bag, popcorn machine and rubberized mats to cover the floor was timely and greatly appreciated! This gift from Theodore and Rachel fit in with Eric’s vision for the newly designed space. We thank Theodore and Rachel for the items that helped complete our rec area. Yet the greatest gift they gave us (at the end of a long Saturday morning of tearing down the equipment and loading it onto a couple of trailers) was Theodore sharing his testimony about how Jesus Christ changed his life. I can still see Eric and Brady leaning against that trailer with beads of sweat running down their faces absorbing each and every word that Theodore shared. The conversation back to Ames centered on the last few minutes spent with Theodore and the truth he spoke to us about his relationship with Jesus Christ. All of the donated items seemed to be secondary to us at that time.

Not long ago I received this text from Eric:

**“I want to send a shout out to the big J (Jesus) for allowing us to be forgiven for our sin and to accept him as our savior so that we can have eternal life in heaven. Also another shout out to the big L (Lord) for providing this gym for the Matthew house so that not only we can get spiritually strong but also physically and for that I have a lot to be grateful.”**

This space has provided great opportunities for the residents and their friends to meet and share in a safe area. I found out once again that I am *not* a very good pool player and, at best, an average ping pong player. I have started to lift weights four or five times a week at 5:30 A.M. with a couple of the men in the Matthew 25 House and another friend. This has been a rich time of fellowship and conversation. It has provided many opportunities to visit about things that are on our hearts. I am amazed at how God can use an old garage to influence the live of people!



### **Eric's vision – Now a reality**

#### **Current Residents**

Jimmy – Jimmy is currently working at Old Main Brewery, an eatery in downtown Ames, IA. He is enjoying his job and finding it to be a challenge at times. He has done well since coming to the Matthew 25 House and I have seen positive growth in his approach to life. He is fitting into a church where he and his girl friend attend together. I look forward to watching Jimmy grow in his faith and in his new lifestyle.

William – William is currently working for a contractor out of Nevada, Iowa. He rides this bike to and from work each day (17+ miles, round trip). Just the other day he crashed on his way to work when his back tire blew out. As he told me the story I laughed to myself as I imagined what William must've looked liked as he and his bike tumbled off the road! William is currently addressing some significant life changes, adding an additional layer of complexity to his life. I am certain he will find his way through this if he continues to put his faith in Jesus Christ.

David – David is our newest member of the house. He is currently working at Okoboji Bar and Grill as a waiter. David's passion is music and he is looking for opportunities to get connected with other individuals with similar interests. He is currently visiting a number of churches to find one that will match his worship style.

### **Former Residents**

Brady – Brady has taken a new job back in his hometown of Mason City, Iowa. His decision to leave the Matthew 25 House was driven by a desire to be closer to his family and have a greater opportunity to assist in raising his son. Our prayers go out on his behalf as he faces this new adventure.

As happens on occasion we have had a resident make decisions that placed him back into prison with a long-term sentence. It's easy for *me* to see when residents are making decisions that can result in negative results. Yet I am still surprised at how difficult it is *for them* to see the outcome of their poor decisions until it is too late.

### **Events**

Steve Larson, a board member of the Matthew 25 House, is currently leading a Bible study on Monday evenings at the House. We are studying the book of Ephesians. It has been a great study and the men have shared significant insights as they ponder the words of God together.

I hope this short update provides you with a glimpse of life at the Matthew 25 House and the men currently living there. If you have any questions about the house or the application process, please contact me. If you desire to communicate with any of the residents you may send them a letter at the address below, or I would be glad to provide their email address.

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