

A big life change, for the love of a son

Tito Trujillo left a destructive lifestyle behind to obtain custody of his son Bryan. Finding faith led him to a more positive path.

By LOIS EVEZICH
ORANGE CITY NEWS

It took the birth of his 2-year-old son Bryan to convince Tito Trujillo that he had to clean up his life.

He was a member of a gang in a south Orange County beach city, heavy into drugs and alcohol, was familiar with juvenile hall and county jail, and in debt.

Like some other gang members, Trujillo expected to return to his old lifestyle and his old friends, until he found out his baby son was in foster care.

Bryan was born to a drug addict mother when Trujillo



Tito Trujillo's love of his son Bryan led him to new faith and the strength to escape a life of gangs and substance abuse.

was in jail. Eventually the baby's mother was arrested and is now serving time. When Trujillo got out, he knew he wanted custody.

Before Bryan, Trujillo says, there wasn't any reason to lead any other kind of life.

But he rented a room in Orange instead of returning to his old neighborhood and

found the job he wanted as an automobile mechanic. His months in rehab gave him some tools, he said, to know where to start.

Trujillo had been clean for six or eight months when he turned to the Orange County Rescue Mission. Through them he met Chaplain Ray Green and found out about the Operation Hope/Strong Beginnings program.

Operation Hope, one of many operating under the umbrella of the Rescue Mission, reaches out to stabilize lives and bring families together. The program involves churches in a client's own neighborhood to bring spiritual guidance as well as meeting practical needs.

Strong Beginnings is a mental wellness program, with assessments of a client's mental health, and help with spiritual needs, medicine, therapy, and counseling.

From that first meeting, Trujillo and Green were friends. Most importantly, Trujillo listened to the chap-

lain and learned about the faith-based Rescue Mission.

The Orange County Register chose the Orange County Rescue Mission as one of the 24 nonprofits it would sponsor during the holiday season for its Season of Caring.

The Register chose to profile the organization because of its success in turning lives around. Trujillo credits the mission with bringing him back to God, who strengthens him, he said.

The Rescue Mission found an apartment in Anaheim for him, arranged consumer credit counseling to pay off his debts, and gave him vouchers for food, clothes, furniture, and tires for his car. But he was afraid to go to church.

"I was sneaking around Praise Chapel but not going in on Sunday," Trujillo said. "I thought God would do something to me if I went to a regular service. But one Sunday I went in and was saved, and found God."

Since that day, he said, he has never been the same. Ev-

erything fell into place.

Green said that Trujillo is an example of the good that is done with funds raised for the Orange County Rescue Mission.

"We've taken a man without hope and helped him to become a productive citizen, and a child caught up in the social services system and reunited him with his father," Green said. "You want a modern-day miracle? Well, this is it."

Trujillo's goal is to go back to school and learn more about electrical diagnostics. Meanwhile he goes back to the rehab center and gives testimony about changing his life.

Compounded caring

Contributions to Season of Caring may be made by calling (714) 796-2280 or donating online at www.ocregister.com/seasonofcaring. All contributions will be distributed amount 24 charities that assist the hungry, homeless and disadvantaged in Orange County.