

ATLAS of Osceola

Attaining Truth, Love And Self-control

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From the Director's Desk...



Meet my friend, Jacob. At 19 he's one of those guys with brains, looks and an easy way with people. He's also kind, humble—and he

has a green-thumb. Talk about great combinations! Almost makes me jealous. Plenty men lack half those attributes. But Jacob doesn't. And the list could go on. There's no doubt: the guy has what it takes to succeed. He also has a criminal record. Jacob took me back a few years to see how it started and how fast things went out of control.

He'd always been a sad kid but never thought much about it. So when he got online and read about marijuana and how it makes you feel, he sought it out, tried it and loved it. He didn't feel sad when he smoked weed and for 14 year old Jacob, that was amazing. By 15 he'd formed friendships with like-minded classmates. After school they'd gather in a friend's basement and get high. He met more and more people "in the game" and peers began asking him where they could get weed. This got Jacob thinking. He had the connections and he had the customers. He also had a part-time job. So he spent an entire paycheck on as much weed as he could get and began to deal. Suddenly he had a business—he was the star-employee and reaped the profits with a smile. His customer base grew and so did his wallet. To increase profits he grew his own marijuana in secluded plots around town. The harvest was huge, his budding business took-off. . . and so did his addiction.

At 16 he was getting high multiple times a day and was also in

trouble at home. So he moved-out before getting kicked-out. He lived in his truck until he moved-in with a sibling. These bumps in the road didn't slow him down. He was a successful dealer with lots of money and a pretty girlfriend. But his success came at a price. He was badly beaten-up and robbed numerous times—sometimes at gun-point and sometimes losing thousands in cash and large amounts of weed. He lost trust in everyone.



He was a full-blown addict at 17—armed, paranoid and completely focused on the business; growing and dealing came before anything else. He felt prepared for anything, but instead. . . he was blindsided. His girlfriend took-off and *that* nearly wrecked him. As a result, he decided to slow-down the dealing and re-focus. He graduated from high school a year early, moved into an apartment with friends and decided to be a kid—something he'd missed out on. He simply wanted to get high, relax and enjoy his friends. But things quickly spiraled out of control. Jacob began using psychedelic drugs like acid (LSD), schrooms and DMT. He'd stay up for days completely messed up—unable to recall stretches of time. He and a buddy would break and enter, steal and vandalize. He'd just turned 18 and his train-wreck was coming. His room-mates moved-out. The cops moved-in.



He remembers little of his arrest but clearly recalls waking up in jail and six horrible days of withdrawal there. Facing multiple charges he posted bail and went to treatment. Jacob loved treatment and embraced the 30 day program.

His journey in recovery continued at Morning Star (a sober living home in the countryside near Worthington, MN) where he lived for 9 months. Soon after, he relapsed briefly but got sober again with AA/NA meetings. His court-date came next. He accepted a plea deal which included 60 days in jail. One hour before he walked into jail, he walked into ATLAS.

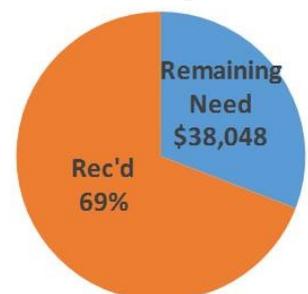
Jacob, it's been my privilege to spend time with you the past several months, both in and out of jail. Your resolve to pursue recovery and sobriety is excellent. There's no doubt: you have everything it takes to succeed. The ATLAS staff and prayer-teams have prayed you through and prayed you forward since the day you walked into the office. That won't change. Remember that we're right here for you—always. But above all else, remember that you matter. You matter to Jesus. . . and you matter to me.

Clark

ATLAS Wish List

Hershey's Kisses
Coffee, Pop—all kinds
Postage stamps
Grocery gift cards

ATLAS Budget - 2019



A Note From the Board

One of the things I have appreciated about ATLAS of Osceola, the staff and this board is our commitment to prayer and seeking the will of God concerning every aspect of what goes on in this ministry.

Billy Graham wrote, "The prophet Samuel once said, 'Obedience is better than sacrifice.' So when you find yourself up a blind alley, not knowing which way to turn, if you are willing to do His will, He will reveal himself. Be an obedient Christian. Remember this: Where God guides, He provides. Where He leads, He supplies all needs."

Have you ever wondered what this community would look like if we had not followed the Lord's leading to open ATLAS? The Spirit moved in the

hearts of obedient Christians who said "yes" to opening the doors to a faith based, mentoring ministry. The Spirit moved in the hearts of obedient Christians (our Prayer Warriors) who cover this ministry, our "Peeps" and this community in prayer.

Each year at our celebration banquet we hear how those who were hurting, scared and lonely found a reason to go forward because of the love, patience and kindness shown to them through this ministry. ATLAS has been a cheerleader, a friend and a counselor to many people searching for answers in their very complicated lives.

God knows there is someone who needs encouragement and letters in prison. God knows who is tempted to make poor choices, who is lonely, and who would consider harming them-

elves. God knows whose relationships need to be strengthened. God knows which families are struggling. God knows who needs support, forgiveness and love. I truly believe God led us to open the ATLAS ministry to fulfill those needs and make His power and glory known. It has never been about us, but rather, what God is able to do through us when we are obedient and seek to do His will. Though we are one small part in God's plan, He is able to use us in powerful ways to supply needs when we're obedient and open to His leading.

"Where God guides, He provides. Where He leads, He supplies all needs."

To God be the Glory.

Deb Kusters

From the



Honestly, I don't know where I'd be without someone to talk to. I truly believe I would have taken my life if I hadn't walked into ATLAS. I changed my mind about taking my life because of the hard but honest

conversations there. My thoughts were all selfish and you gently talked me through all that until it "clicked" and I understood. All my justifications were wrong and you talked me through that too. You prayed with me and taught me to praise God first and then pour myself out to him.

Sometimes I just need a place to cry and it's safe for me to cry there. And I can laugh there too. You're all so easy to talk to and I love that. You understand what I feel like and that's *everything*. So many people are dying to say, "Please see me, please listen to me—please help me." ATLAS does all of that.

When you're at your lowest, God's the closest—and that's what you all are to me. **Teresa**

Client Quotes

- "It's much easier to find someone to drink with than someone to pray with."
- "That 4 day hangover taught me more than all my teachers combined."
- "My girlfriend and my fiancé hate each other. Why can't we all just get along?"
- "I had no idea I'd be so comfortable here."
- "I smashed my teenager's iPhone. It felt *AWESOME!*"
- "How do you do this all day without kicking some *** before five o'clock?"



"Jude's Jottings"

A Bird's-Eye-View

Greetings from the birdcage. . .where Sweetie and I have been busy meeting and greeting all the peeps coming through the ATLAS door. And we're exhausted. This past summer was our busiest ever. We've greeted more peeps than we can remember. And did you know we have peeps coming in from outside Osceola County? Why yes we do. Our peeps flock-in from all corners of Osceola County but they also swoop-in from George, Little Rock, Sanborn and Sheldon. And they soar over from Everly, Worthington and Spirit Lake too. We even have a peep who comes all the way from Sioux Falls, SD. Now that's a long flight.

Needless to say, the staff has their work cut-out for them. The days start-out with a bang and turn into a blur. Sometimes Sweetie and I shake our heads wondering how they do it. There've even been days when nobody remembers to feed us. Now, that right there ruffles-our-feathers. But we understand they have a lot going on. And since they're a very forgiving bunch, we forgive them when they forget us.

But they never forget to make each peep feel important—regardless of where they've been or what they've been through. And believe me, some of our peeps have had their cages rattled. But our staff is so good at providing hope and kindness. Peeps discover that they matter here. That sort of thing's hard to find these days. And that must be why our doorbell keeps ringing.

So here in the birdcage, we'll try to keep-up with all the meeting and greeting. . . so long as someone remembers to feed us.

Joyfully yours,

Jude

