

## **The Story of Robert**

### **By Paul Richard**

For about a year I had the privilege of helping out with night shift at Timothy House. As Director of Operations I don't normally need to do this, but from time to time we are short staffed and I get to help out in this role.

One person I met during this season was Robert. He struggled with alcohol but was seeking freedom from it. He willingly lived within the structure of the house, though sometimes his poor decisions would put him on restricted schedule. He called one evening at about 10:50. He was about 5 miles away without a ride, because they had bailed out on him. He still wanted to get into the house for the evening. I consulted and he was approved to come back in for the night, even though he was going to be late. He got there looking concerned about not having a bed for the night, and relieved to learn he had one. I of course had to make sure that he had not been drinking before I could let him in the house.

After about 6 months I stumbled into Robert again in a very unexpected place — Bob Evans. He had moved out of Timothy House and been hired for this job. I had gone in to have dinner with my family and he was our server. As a server he was a little rough on the edges, but still as polite and friendly as he was at Timothy House. And he was enjoying his work. It was good to see him and to catch up on how he was doing. I was also glad to see him smile, which was a common expression on his face.

Robert reflected on the Timothy House while I talked with him. He said that he did not know what he would have done if not for the shelter. He had made some bad decisions, and he accepted responsibility for these, but he was still without a place to live. Timothy House became that place and also helped him work through some personal things in his life. What I noticed was that he looked back on his time there with a smile, thanking me and the rest of the staff for the help we provided.

It was good to see Robert again. It was like seeing an old friend.