

Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope



Celebrating 33 Years!

PO Box 4, Athens, OH 45701
Phone: 740-594-3339
Email: goodworks@good-works.net
Web: www.good-works.net

Keith Wasserman, Founder/Executive Director

*"I made the WIDOW'S heart sing, I took up the case of the STRANGER, I was a father to the FATHERLESS."
(Job 29:12-13)*

"People without homes...don't stereotype them. There is no shame in being homeless. It's a situational thing and people resolve it. Not all of them are drug addicts: they are just people who got into bad situations, maybe made a few bad decisions and are working to make their life better. They need all the support they can get."

— Teresa, a former resident and current volunteer of the Good Works Timothy House

Dear friends,

April 2014

Hear it from Teresa, who was staying at the Good Works Timothy House this time last year. After losing both her parents and her younger brother, Teresa relocated to North Carolina to be closer to relatives. Unfortunately, the move did not work financially, so she came home to Athens County. When staying with friends proved to be unsustainable, Teresa decided to come to the Timothy House.

"My first night there, I was terrified," Teresa shared. "There were a lot of people staying there, and it was such a different atmosphere. I remember I was hiding in the dining room. That night was Ruthanna's volunteer night, and she pulled me out of my shell a little bit. People made me feel comfortable, and eventually I lost my shyness. Everybody on the staff was really supportive and I made friends with people who I am still friends with now."

These days, Teresa and her son spend their Tuesday evenings back at the Timothy House as volunteers. She explains why: "At least in part it was Ruthanna— if she didn't come to me that first night, I don't know how I would have done. I wanted to do that for somebody else. I really felt kind of called to do this. I really liked the staff and didn't want to lose connection with everyone."

Each year, about 70 people serve as weekly or monthly volunteers at the Timothy House. One dedicated friend named Gifford has been serving on and off since 1984. He reflects, "One thing I've learned is that we are all human beings. We all make mistakes... some of us end up in prison and homeless and others of us don't." He continues, "Many people think volunteering is a one-way process, but actually there's a two-way process— the residents receive some help and those who are serving also receive some help. I met wonderful people; both staff and residents have given me hope and courage."

Maggie, an Ohio University student who has been volunteering for the past three years points to something similar: "I've learned acceptance and a beauty in all people, and particularly an empathy for people who are different from me. This experience grounded some of the values I had learned, particularly in the Catholic faith— of helping my neighbors, simplicity and getting to know the outsider. The Timothy House really gave me a context to act upon these values."

Thank you friends, for your love for your neighbors who are without homes and for helping us create this context where compassion, understanding, hope and courage can prevail! – Dawn Tobin

A little HISTORY...

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Good Works celebrated the beginning of our 34th year this January! It all began on January 1st, 1981 when Keith Wasserman, supported by several friends, opened the newly renovated basement of his home on Elliot Street to Carol who was experiencing homelessness. What is now called the Timothy House moved to its current location on the west end of Athens in 1984. That was 30 years ago!

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Twenty years ago, in the spring of 1994, we purchased the **Good Works Luhrig Road** property in large part through the amazing generosity of its former owners. Today, through God's faithful provision, Good Works operates without any debt!

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Can you believe it? 2014 marks the 10th year of the **Transformation Station**: Countless individuals and families have received cars, furniture, appliances, bicycles and non-emergency food through our vision to build relationships with those in need based on the values of dignity and sweat equity. We provided car number 121 in March. *Thank you* to each of you who have shared vehicles, appliances and furniture with your neighbors.

A little NEWS...

- The **2014 Good Works WALK** on February 22nd was a great encouragement to us, with nearly 600 people participating! We held three different WALK experiences, aimed to inspire adults and children of all ages to "open the door" of a relationship with someone who doesn't have enough to eat and who doesn't have a place to sleep at night. Together, we raised almost \$51,000 towards the operation of the Good Works Timothy House. *Thank you* to everyone who supported and participated in the WALK!
- We launched our **new website** in February! If you haven't seen it, take a peek and let us know what you think: www.good-works.net
- Keith has been invited to serve the community of Asbury Theological Seminary again this spring as a Visiting Practitioner. He will be back in Athens in early May. You may remember that the seminary awarded Keith an honorary Doctorate in 2012.
- Almost every weekend in the fall and spring we host **Work Retreat** groups who learn and serve alongside us. This spring, we have an active line-up of churches and student organizations including several weeklong groups from Vanderbilt University and Wright State University. Through our **Neighbors Helping Neighbors** initiative, we connect these volunteers with people (primarily widows and people with disabilities) who have requested our help. Many joyful days are spent visiting, mowing, painting, building... and receiving Appalachian hospitality!
- As many of you already know, Good Works will be receiving \$64,000 less funding this year due to our decision not to continue to receive a State grant based on how the State was requiring us to violate the civil rights of those seeking shelter in order to receive their funding. If you'd like a copy of a letter explaining this matter, let us know. In the meantime, please pray for us and for funds to be provided in this financial gap. We invite you to support us as we embrace the consequences that result from doing what is right.

In closing this month, I want to encourage you to consider the impact you can have upon others when you give yourself and your time. Consider Teresa's story about how Ruthanna had such an enormous impact upon her. When people feel understood, respected and loved, they are profoundly impacted for good. If you've not yet considered volunteering with Good Works in some way, please take a look at the Volunteer Opportunities on our website. Sharing with and serving others is truly life-giving (1 Timothy 6:17-19)!

Love is a verb,

Keith Wasserman

