

Good Works, Inc. – A Community of Hope

Celebrating 36 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)
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Dear Friends,

Greetings on this sunny and crisp day from our community of HOPE! Frequently in the winter, attention turns to people without homes, and curiosity stirs about what it means to welcome people facing these situations. Neighbors inquire of us how things are going at the Timothy House, and want to know about the kinds of successes we are having.

I came to Good Works as a Summer Service intern in 2002. The benefit of some longevity gives me the ability to recognize that particular summer as a difficult one at the Timothy House. Many of the residents I met during those ten weeks were hanging in there, working jobs and saving money while still finding reasons to laugh. Others were having a harder time and, it seemed to me, working against their own self-interests. While I had enjoyed my role that summer, even been thrilled to do it, at the end of the summer, I found myself less than certain about the measure of impact we had.

Real change in someone’s life unfolds along a much longer timeline. When we welcome strangers into the Timothy House and provide them with a listening ear, a warm bed, food and a hot shower, we have already succeeded in some way; we have done our part to alleviate some of their immediate suffering. But can we do more? It may be beyond our scope to expect that we will end poverty in the lives of everyone we help, but can we hope that the person who has come to us in need will leave with a new perspective, new friendships, experience healing, discover practical guidance and new resources to navigate their life?

We can hope that we will help them uncover their own unique capabilities, and find lasting, life-giving healthy friendships in a community where those abilities are welcomed, nurtured and put to use. This happens when communities make an intentional effort to include people whose poverty and associated issues have squeezed them out to the margins. Communities that become transformative are those who break the molds of income level, age, race, and background, and do it on purpose.

If communities achieve this sort of mutuality across divisions, it will be because they recognize the difficulty that occurs on both sides of the equation. While established, financially secure members might question how welcoming others will change the nature of their group, people in poverty are likely to question if their presence will be seen as a problem or if they will be seen as a project instead of person. One example in our rural area is when people in poverty desire to become fully involved in a community, but they don't have transportation. *Will I have to ask for a ride and reveal my poverty? Do people think I'm important enough to pick me up? I want to be there—how much do they want me there?*

In spite of the barriers, obvious and invisible, we *do* see success. Former residents of the Timothy House are having life-giving experiences and using their abilities in meaningful ways. Some are leading addiction recovery meetings in local churches. Some are volunteering at the Timothy House right now. Others are serving regularly at Friday Night Life. And still others are serving on our staff. They are at work building these bridges of hope with people who otherwise may remain excluded. People who come to us in need, stay and serve because they find a place—a home and family, and because they are received with tenderness, compassion, joy, expectation and accountability. -*Andrea Horsch*

IN THE NEWS....

- The 15th Good Works WALK was held February 18th (photos below) on a warm and sunny day in Athens. About 400 adults and children participated in 5 different engaging experiences. We are so grateful for the support we received. As of today, we are only about ½ way to our financial goal of raising \$60,000 for The Timothy House.
- We have many volunteer Work Retreat groups coming to Good Works this spring. We continue to be so grateful to facilitate transformational experiences for those who come to serve with Neighbors Helping Neighbors.
- Last fall, we established a new initiative called LifeTogether, which meets from 5-7 pm on Sundays to welcome and integrate those who are seeking spiritual growth and community.
- Training for Life is the name of our computer-training program, which has continued for more than ten years at The Timothy House. Residents can get training in software and go online to apply for jobs and write résumés.

IN CLOSING, I want to offer these thoughts: L O V E is a hard thing to measure. It is also hard for our minds to keep track of love. The nature of love requires us to NOT keep a record. And yet, love is intentional (involves planning) and sacrificial (involved various levels of inconvenience) and requires commitment, endurance and perseverance. Oftentimes, we lose perspective and can't SEE all of the many loving ways we have shared our time, our emotions and experienced stress as we care for others. And depending upon how we were raised, how we see ourselves and on how we believe God sees us, we can become discouraged, grow weary and lose perspective. I leave you with this. I share it for you and for me:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. - Galatians 6:9-10

Love is still a verb,

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