

# The Good Newsletter

Summer/Fall 2002

Celebrating 22 years

Since 1981



Keith Wasserman  
Founder/Executive Director

Greetings dear friends from all of us at Good Works, Inc.-  
A COMMUNITY OF HOPE!

*I made the widow's heart sing. I took up the case  
of the stranger. I was a father to the fatherless.*  
(Job 29:12-17)

## SERVING. . .



## the WIDOW the ORPHAN and the STRANGER

by Keith Wasserman

When I began the ministry Good Works in 1981, I began by spelling faith R.I.S.K. and by opening the door in the hallway of life with the sign "stranger and you invited me in" (Matthew 25:35). I really had no idea what I was doing when I started taking the homeless into my home but God used my naivete and my limitations as an *asset* to give birth to a ministry that has now touched thousands of lives. I had been a follower of Jesus for about five years and while I knew God had called me to ministry during my college days at Ohio University, I had a difficult time seeing models of ministry outside of the pulpit and the pastorate. The power of the resurrection was real enough to transform this young Jewish boy, lost in the drug culture from the age of 12, into a new creation who could SEE the kingdom of God. Soon after trusting Messiah, I began to notice, recognize and perceive both the needs of the poor and a new way to do ministry with them. It was the power of the resurrection that transported me to see beyond the natural and traditional church structures into the future of possibilities. It

was faith in the one who said "I am the resurrection and the Life" that sustained me as I learned how to "spend myself in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed" (Isaiah 58:10).

Looking back, I now see God was asking me the same question he once asked Moses when he commissioned him in Exodus 4:2 "What is in your hand?" I now realize that God will use what we already have to produce life-changing ministry with the people He has called us to serve. Starting or doing ministry with the poor is not as much about the need to obtain resources in order to help others as it is about realizing, yielding and using the resources God *has already given* us. For my wife Darlene and I, it was four years after we started taking men, women and children into the basement of our home that we realized these people were called "the homeless". Many times over the years, I have asked God, "Why have you sent this person to me? I cannot help them." It is in those moments that I often hear the whisper of the Holy Spirit say to me, "I know, I have sent them to help you." Today,

Good Works, Inc. is a *Community of HOPE* which provides biblical hospitality through our shelter for the rural homeless, (The Timothy House) long term residential support (The Hannah House), job training, and creative volunteer opportunities in the context of a Christian Community.

- Empowering and transforming peoples lives
- Providing shelter for the recovering homeless through a COMMUNITY OF HOPE
- Offering life-changing service opportunities to love our neighbors

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# The Hallway of Life

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Hallway at Hannah House

In a talk I have been giving for several years, I often use an illustration of a long hallway with many doors to explain how we encounter Jesus in the poor. As we enter the *Hallway of Life*, we see several doors each with a different sign: hungry and you gave me something to eat, naked and you clothed me, sick and you came to me, prisoner and you visited me, etc. At the far end of the hallway is a door with a sign that reads STRANGER AND YOU INVITED ME IN. I don't want to suggest that my experience is normative for everyone but I do believe that there is much I can share that is helpful from my own journey. Here is the sequence of opening the door. First, we must come to a place in our life-in-God in which we believe that staying in the hallway of life is disobedient to God. This is difficult for many of us because so much of the Christian culture today 'normalizes' the hallway life as the Christian life. There are many

believers who actually think the Christian life is contained to the hallway. That is where the meetings are held, where the speakers come, where the seminars & workshops are held and where the church government meets. This is where potlucks are and where we do much of our classroom learning and have most of our fellowship. It is in the hallway that much of what we now define as 'service' takes place. Some of us have been in the hallway too long and have become both confused, deceived and anesthetized. As a result, we end up giving so much of our time, thought, work and energy to many matters, which are at the lowest end of God's priority list for us—some of which are not important at all. But we cannot see this because we have been stained or polluted by the world's point of view of the poor, especially the elderly and children (James 1:26-27). As a result, so much of our identity is shaped by our role in the hallway. I was there and God spoke to me in 1980 and said, "Open a door". So I made a commitment to open the door where the sign said "STRANGER AND YOU INVITED ME IN" having no idea what I was doing. This sense of naivete later proved to be an essential ingredient in my ministry. It was this commitment that propelled my spiritual growth. May I offer that *there may be no spiritual growth outside of commitment?* It was commitment that shaped my focus and helped me to understand what I should NOT be giving my time to. It is commitment that moved me from a shallow place to a deeper place in my own relationship with God. Secondly, I as I gripped the handle of the door, I was immediately struck by my weaknesses. I was suddenly aware of my many limitations and weaknesses and flaws. It was here that God spoke to me again and said, "Rejoice in those weaknesses so that my power can be perfected through you." Everything I had

learned in my Christian life to that point led me to rebuke that message. I had mistakenly concluded that my failings or limitations would keep me from what God wanted for me so I thought I should rebuke or deny them. In truth, God was helping me to see that my very liabilities or limitations could become my assets if I would rejoice in them. Here lies a mystery: *God will use us in our weaknesses in ways he could never use us in our strengths.* Maybe Good Works is a testimony to my limitations more than my strengths. It is in rejoicing in our weaknesses that we unleash the unlimited power of God to work through us. I was also very much aware of my inadequacy. I FELT like I could not do this task of helping my homeless neighbors. I was often weighed down by the feelings of inadequacy. It was then that God spoke to me again and said, "Your adequacy comes from me." Here I understood that it was not about me but as the melody in my mind kept singing "it's all about you, it's all about you...Jesus." I later understood that these two "passageways" into the STRANGER AND YOU INVITED ME IN door were essential foundations for the calling God placed on my life. Finally, I opened the door and spelled faith R-I-S-K. I understood that faith to be faith must involve risk. Jesus met me in that place—the place where I encountered strangers—and revealed Himself to me there in ways I had never met him in a worship service, prayer meeting, bible study or good sermon. I experienced HIM, I came to know him there and I am coming to know him there (Jeremiah 22:16). I opened the door and saw things in that room that I could not see from the hallway. It wasn't until I opened the door that I realized how much I had not been seeing or understanding about God's heart for the poor. It was in this "STRANGER AND YOU INVITED ME IN" room that I saw the cycle of domestic violence, the drama of alcoholic men struggling with

recovery, the horror of teenagers raising children, the frustration of unemployment and what people do when they no longer love or respect themselves. But then I saw something totally unexpected. I saw other doors. They were the *back entrances to all of the other doors of the hallway*. It was here I discovered that by entering one door, somehow mystically we enter them all. The doors which open the rooms in the hallway of life are not institutions or church programs. They are neither the Salvation Army nor the Red Cross nor Habitat for Humanity. The doors that open the rooms are people—human beings that we meet intentionally and we give them something to eat or provide them with clothing or visit them or invite them into our lives. They are people that we choose to befriend because the love of God motivates us to believe that not only do we have something of Christ to give away but that these people have something to offer us that Bill Gates can't buy. And in moving from just serving the poor to knowing the poor we come to understand that there is more to this "abundant life" of following Jesus than remaining in the comfort zone of the hallway. Isn't it time we began to spell faith as R.I.S.K ? ■

*...then I saw something totally unexpected. I saw other doors. They were the back entrances to all of the other doors of the hallway. It was here that I discovered that by entering one door, somehow mystically we enter them all.*

## 2002 SUMMER SERVICE Program

This year marks the 5th year we have welcomed work camps to Good Works to serve the widows, the fatherless and the homeless. This year we have had seven interns leading the program as work camp volunteers, our *Worship Teams*, come to serve in the various aspects of our summer outreach. They come from various areas of the mid and eastern United States and are part of many different denominations. Last year, we had 489 people participate in our one day and overnight work camps. These volunteers provided over 6300 hours of service on our property, spending time at our Summer Kids Club each day and visiting the homes of elderly or disabled citizens in rural Appalachia. Our SAMARITAN PROJECTS, led by our Americorps staff Jonathan Mullins, continues to be a highlight of Summer Service. We have served 19 homes during the past year.



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Summer Interns Jared Bullis and Yukako Sakamoto with children from this years Summer Kids Club.

## The Continuum of Success

*We have not achieved success until they become a participating and functioning member in a local Christian Community*

We are often asked about how much success we are having with the people we are trying to help. The best answer to this question is to explain the "continuum of success." One end of the continuum is marked by the words of Mother Theresa, "God has not called me to be successful, he has called me to be faithful." At this end, we realize that our success is attached to our faithfulness (obedience) to do what we already know we should be doing. As we are faithful to walk in what we know and practice what God has already shown us, we please God

and achieve complete success. Then, God "glues together" our acts of faithfulness and gives them back to us in the form of faith. As a result, we are able to trust HIM for more and more. Our faithfulness to Him increases our faith in Him.

As we move along the continuum of success toward the other end, we discover it is not enough to provide another human being with food, shelter, jobs, housing, friendship, counseling or help. It is not enough that we invite them into our Christian community and they come. It is not enough that they become a

Christian themselves. We have not achieved success until they become a participating and functioning member in a local Christian Community. When this happens, we have achieved success. The paradox involved here is that this goal is unattainable apart from the willingness of pastors and local churches to become involved in the lives of the poor and others who cannot repay them. In the end, the total success of our ministry is connected to the free will support offered to Good Works by average Christians in our community. ■



**SERVING. . .**  
*the* **WIDOW**  
*the* **ORPHAN**  
*and the* **STRANGER**

(Continued from page 1)

Good Works serves between 200-300 men women & children each year from a seven county area in SE Ohio in our Timothy House (our emergency shelter) and provides additional long-term care through our Hannah House. In addition to shelter, we now provide a weekly community outreach event called Friday Night Life, a weekly and summer KIDS CLUB, a mentoring program and three small businesses all in an effort to provide a hand-up and not just a hand out. Our summer work camps for youth and adults were developed both to teach service (worship) as discipleship and to provide practical help to the most vulnerable citizens of rural Appalachia. We now call our summer work camp volunteers "Worship Teams" because the work they do is as valuable to God as the praise and adoration in any Sunday morning celebration.

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***Our vision is simply three fold:***

1. To love God and our neighbors in Jesus' name as an act of worship. (Matthew 25:31-46)
2. To provide an avenue for the body of Christ to love and serve and thereby expand their perspective and experience of both discipleship and worship.
3. To welcome "not-yet-Christians" to work with us as we love and serve in Jesus' name in the HOPE that they may be drawn to the life which is in Christ.

Looking back over the past 22 years, we now better understand that doing ministry with the widow, the fatherless and the stranger is clearly another aspect of true worship. The thin line between loving God and loving our neighbor will always remain unclear. In the end, the work we do—the work of loving our neighbors -- is all about worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth. Therefore, whether people are grateful or ungrateful is irrelevant. Humanly speaking, we all desire to be thanked and appreciated but I believe God wants us to live on a higher level where our esteem, worth and identity come not from those being helped by our efforts but rather from our Heavenly Father. Our service must ultimately be worship to "please the father." It is His voice we must hear in our spirit that ultimately sustains us in the hard work of love -- "You are my beloved in whom I am well pleased". ■



*January 1st of 2002 marked the beginning of our 22<sup>nd</sup> year of intentionally loving our neighbors. God continues to provide GRACE in the work of love! In the end, all we are trying to do is love God and love our neighbor. In the end, nothing else really matters. Really. But the work of LOVE is not possible apart from spiritual discernment.*

**DISCERNMENT**

**D**iscernment is necessary to negotiate life and essential to really help people grow and change. A component of Godly wisdom, discernment is an invisible force which directs us and guides us. I am not sure how much we can help anyone apart from having and using discernment. By its nature, discernment is spiritual and is developed in our lives through our senses. Reading about discernment or watching it in others is instructive but not developmental. Discernment is developed and worked in our lives through what scripture calls "constant use." Using faith mixed with wisdom, we can learn to use discernment to glorify God as we love and serve people in need. Discernment has everything to do with knowing God's ways and knowing ourselves at the same time. Discernment is what happens when we engage all of our senses together with our past experiences and our present circumstances to make a judgment (a decision) about a particular person, situation or activity. That decision must then be offered to God as an offering of worship. Our volunteer opportunities are intended to provide an atmosphere to learn discernment.

*"But solid food is for the mature, who through constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil"*  
*(Hebrews 5:14)*

# Shelter for the least of these...

Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. (Matthew 25:40)

*"Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self control"*

One of the strategies God has revealed to us with regard to helping the homeless has everything to do with helping men and women to re-build inner strength and discipline (holy habits) into their lives so that they can trust themselves. Does it surprise you that many of those we are learning to love fear making a commitment because they are not able to trust themselves to carry it out? Many of those we are serving live at the whim of both circumstances and emotions. When someone comes to live in one of our ministry houses, we welcome them into an outward structure (home rules now called "The Way We Are"). These rules,



...the  
**Timothy  
House**

along with the community of other residents, volunteers and staff help create positive momentum to sustain and motivate homeless people to make good decisions. This structure serves as a vehicle to help people establish healthy habits that lead to healthy decisions that can lead to fruitful living. This structure is not an end in itself, but rather a means to the end. The end is freedom. The end is to help each person establish the inner discipline to rebuild and re-establish their lives in patterns that lead to life. This is one aspect of bringing good news to the poor. ■

## THE TIMOTHY HOUSE

Homeless people need advocates; someone who can listen, understand and represent them in their time of need. I suspect there are people in your neighborhood or life that need you to represent them from time to time. The role of being an advocate for people who have no power and no voice in our community is another aspect of what it means to be "A Community of HOPE." When people experience injustice at the hand of the powerful, they lose hope and succumb to their own weaknesses. Homeless people, because they are often disconnected and lack support from the community, need you and I to care enough about them to listen to the cries of their heart and to "take up their case."

The Timothy House remains the most intense aspect of Good Works. We are serving between 200-300 homeless people in this house each year. We have been blessed with a regular group of about 50 volunteers each month. We are daily challenged by the people who come to us for help. In addition to the single men and women we serve, we continue to see homeless families along with very vulnerable children.

My name is Jessi Dobos and I am a House Supervisor and Caregiver at the Good



Patrick Filipiak and Jessi  
Dobos

Caregivers at the Timothy House

Works Timothy House. My job is to meet with residents, to help them determine what the issues are in their lives that have led to their homelessness, and help them to work on those issues. I have been here at Good Works for about two years and have grown and been stretched in many respects. In particular, as a caregiver, I have learned that doing the most loving thing is not always the most painless thing. People who are in the crisis state of homelessness need help in a wide scope of ways. Some need encouragement, some need gentleness, others need empathy, while still others need definite boundaries and firm guidance. The challenge is determining which person needs what. Sometimes it is difficult to say "no" because our culture teaches us that love means saying yes, and making things easy for people. But we believe that teaching people to take responsibility for their lives often means holding them accountable. I am still growing in this area, trying to find the right balance between tough love and gentle love. I believe that God is really growing me in this area of my life, in discerning how to respond to people. Thank you for being supportive of what we are doing here: helping others grow, and growing alongside them. ■

## FRIDAY NIGHT LIFE

January marked the beginning of our 10th year doing a "soup kitchen in reverse." Because of the generous support from Central Avenue UMC Church, Good Works has been blessed with a wonderful facility to host our weekly Friday Night Supper, our Friday Night KIDS CLUB, a coffee-house and a gathering of prayer and bible study each week. I continue to be amazed at how this event impacts so many lives. We are now serving an estimated 80-90 men, women and children every Friday Night and we are finding that we don't have enough room to seat everyone each week. We have been blessed with more than 500 volunteers in this piece of Good Works this year. The meal, the KIDS CLUB, the coffeehouse and the time of special prayer is what doing "church in reverse" is all about. Friday Night Life will again move from the basement of Central UMC to The Hannah House property for the months of May - September. At The Hannah House, we gather to eat picnic-style, play volleyball, basketball, and ping-pong. Friday Night Life returns to the Central UMC basement in early October. ■

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# MINISTRY UPDATES



**Matt and Beverly Hale**  
*Life on Life Mentoring  
 Coordinators and Navigator  
 Campus Ministry Directors*

## LIFE-ON-LIFE MENTORING

*Directed by Matt and Beverly Hale, Life-on-Life mentoring is coming to the close of its first full year. In partnership with The Navigators campus ministry, Good Works trains OU students to be in long term relationships with kids from single parent families who are involved with our Friday Night Life and Summer Kids Club ministries.*

Hi. We're the Hales (Matt & Bev), newlyweds who share a position at Good Works. Our main responsibilities are managing Friday Night Life (which includes a community dinner and activities for all ages) and directing the brand new Life-on-Life Mentoring program (in which college students invest their lives in the children of our community). We believe God is using us as a bridge between college students and the rural poor, with each side receiving blessings from the other. Relationships are rising up out of Friday Night Life and the mentoring program; they are strong relationships, marked by trust, hope, and shared resources. Guests of Friday Night Life are starting to dismantle their walls of fear and distrust; the kids have finally found solid role models; and many volunteers have said, "I want to do this kind of work for the rest of my life." This all stems from a core belief Good Works has instilled in us: Every person we encounter is of great worth. Something we have always loved about the philosophy of Good Works is the belief that we are all valuable and we are all in need. Our need and our value display themselves in different ways (physically, emotionally, spiritually, etc.), but because we all share these two things, we can relate to one another with both confidence and humility. ■

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## Project 2000 update

### GOOD GIFTS

Our first small business is now in its 4th year of helping those struggling with poverty in developing nations as well as here at home. While we now have a permanent Good Gifts shop open to the public each day, (Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) the most significant way we have found to sell these beautiful hand-crafted gifts is to come to church events or civic clubs and businesses. Would you consider inviting us to bring Good Gifts to you? You can reach us at 594-3336.

### COUNTRY BED & BREAKFAST!

Our third small business "Country Bed & Breakfast" opened May 6th. We are excited to launch another training site where citizens who are struggling with poverty can learn the character, work and social skills necessary to succeed in the job market. Our vision is to provide a "hand-up," not a hand-out. To make a reservation call 594-3336. ■

GOODWORKS



GOOD GIFTS



BED & BREAKFAST



## THE HANNAH HOUSE

*In addition to serving men and women who come for our LIFE IN TRANSITION program, we have been serving lots of guests (both short term and long term). God has opened our heart to open up HH to several International students who need a temporary home. Last year, we renovated our large living room and built two 15-bed dorms to accommodate our visiting work camps. Todd Tatum continues to provide pastoral leadership to the interns and guests on a daily basis.*

My name is Todd Tatum and I am the Pastor/Hannah House Manager for Good Works. I oversee our long term Life In Transition Program, for people who have found themselves homeless. I have been with Good Works for almost two years.

What are some things that I have learned? One is that there are many different factors that cause people to become homeless. Some people are homeless due to making bad choices in their life. Some people are homeless due to the system, or their lack of knowledge in knowing how to use it. Some are homeless due to situations that are just out of their control, like a loss of a job, or becoming sick and having health problems, etc.

The bottom line is that there are people that need help for whatever reason. This is what I really like about the philosophy of Good Works—we are all about helping folks no matter who they are. The ultimate goal is to help them help themselves. Give a little guidance and encouragement, in the hope that they will be better off after being with us, than they were when they first came to us. Loving your neighbor as yourself. ■



Todd Tatum  
House  
Manager  
at  
Hannah  
House



Walter  
a current  
resident  
at  
Hannah  
House

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## BIBLICAL GRIEF

As you may already know, Hannah House is a place where recovering men and women can live for up to 2 years in a supportive yet structured Christian Community; where love is balanced with accountability and responsibility. Each person who applies to enter the Life In Transition program at HH must go through a 30-day process that includes a two-part application and several interviews with the staff. From the beginning, Hannah House has been designed not as a professional recovery center but rather as a place where

the body of Christ can work together to help hurting men and women “rebuild the inward ruins” (Isaiah 58:12); a place where growing Christians can love and support people struggling to get back on their feet. Our vision is that everyone who comes to live at HH will, like the boy Samuel in 1 Samuel 3, learn to hear the voice of God and become a prophetic influence into their own generation. But God has clearly given us the understanding that this ministry’s success will depend upon volunteers (laborers) who are so radi-

cal in their desire to follow Christ that they agree to move into Hannah House for 6-12 months and mentor a person in recovery. I truly believe God has given us this model of discipleship. Would you pray that God would move upon the hearts of single men and women to serve HIM in this vital need? I know that there are single men and women who want to serve Jesus in this way. Will you pray we will find them? Will you ask God to lead them to us? ■

## THE FAST FROM SHELTER

The 12th annual FAST FROM SHELTER was held on GOOD FRIDAY ) in Athens on the Courthouse steps. We had quite a large turnout this year. It was miserably wonderful! The FAST was a fast from shelter and not a fast from food. We “abstained” from shelter for 15 hours and hung-out in “up-town” Athens on the Courthouse steps. Each hour, we came together for a time of worship, song and sharing. It was a wild time of song and street evangelism. What a GOOD Friday it was! The 2003 FAST FROM SHELTER will be held on Friday, April 18th. ■



Not only did the people of Mt. Zion UMC participate in the fast, they also helped out with projects at Good Works and in the community.

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*Love God. Love your neighbor. In the end, nothing else really matters.*

## **OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP GOOD WORKS**

- Would you like to have Good Gifts come to your group event? 594-3336.
- Would you consider sponsoring a DAY-IN-THE-LIFE of Good Works? Contact Craig Garrison at 740/594-3339. Sponsors are asked to give \$68.00 a month.
- Want to have one of our staff come and talk about Good Works? 594-9000.
- Want to join our "event" fund-raising team? We are looking for workers.

## **Needs List:**

Lawn mowers  
String trimmers  
Large Garbage Bags  
Leaf Rakes  
Vacuum cleaners  
New or used Bob Cat  
Golf cart  
Cash register for Good Gifts  
Round Up (weed killer)  
Garden Hoses  
Shovels  
Pitch fork

## **ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER**

We are sending you this newsletter in the HOPE that you would partner with us as we love the widows, fatherless and homeless. If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, simply let us know and we will remove you from any future mailings. Call us at 740/594-3339 or e-mail us at [goodworks@pobox.com](mailto:goodworks@pobox.com)

## **What's on our web page?**



- Our Work Camp Handbook (including family work camps)
- Keith's homeless stories & a recent talk by Keith
- A Christian Worldview: Our Philosophy of Ministry
- Good Gifts & Country Bed and Breakfast
- Solitude Retreat Cabin
- History & Philosophy behind The Hannah & Timothy Houses
- Staff information and photos
- Project 2000 update with photos
- Previous newsletters & Bible Studies

### **Bible Studies on our Web page :**

- 30 Day Devotional on the Poor in Scripture and Society
- God's Commitment to the Poor in the Early Church
- The Widow, the Orphan and the Stranger
- The Poor and Oppressed in Scripture

## **Internship Opportunities**

### **HANNAH HOUSE INTERNSHIP**

Hannah House interns serve from 6 months to 1 year and live on the second floor of Hannah House. They learn how we provide biblical hospitality and share living space with someone who is recovering from a life-controlling problem in the context of Christian Community. For more information about our internship, visit our web page and click on internship opportunities or contact Paul Richard at 740/594-3336

### **TIMOTHY HOUSE INTERNSHIP**

Ordinary members of the body of Christ who want to explore their calling and go deeper in their service to the poor can come along side our core staff through a 10 week internship opportunity. Interns serve once a week from 4:15 pm- 9:15 pm at the Timothy House. Contact Craig Garrison at 740/594-3339 for an application and more information.

### **Current Projects:**

Garage and Storage Building  
Bridge over Factory Creek  
Outhouse for Cabin

We will be needing help this fall on these projects

### **Hannah House Building Project**

We are beginning a fund raiser to replace the siding, windows and roof on the Hannah House. We will need \$35,000 to do this project. So far we have raised \$3,880. Can you help us?