

Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope



P.O. Box 4, Athens, OH 45701
phone: 740.594.3339
e-mail: 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 29:12-17).

Celebrating 27 years!

Greetings from Good Works--A COMMUNITY OF HOPE!

We are wrapping up a W O N D E R F U L summer of lots of activity, service and compassion demonstrated to the rural homeless, at-risk children and widows here in Appalachia! Our summer interns left August 18th. We had seven different groups of 15-25 youth and adults who came to us from Illinois, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Ohio. Here are a couple of reflections from our summer interns:



People often ask me what I want to do with my life, and I never have an answer. Once you move into the end of your college years, people assume that you have a plan for your life. Just recently, I started responding with, "I just want to love people." I think it has been working at Good Works that has made this statement authentic. This summer, I started loving people through spending time with them. Many of us struggle with desperate feelings of loneliness even when there are people all around us. It's these times when we forget to consider the women who have lost their husbands and are dealing with kids who refuse to visit unless they need something. Add this to being homebound because of the inability to drive or lack of transportation. Systems like health care and social security are a constant uphill battle, and they are barely surviving financially. They don't have anyone to fight with them or fight for them. It's funny though, in the midst of all of this, they just want company. They just want to laugh. As I leave this summer, I hurt thinking that these women may not receive any unpaid visits without ulterior motives until I come to back to visit in a few months. This is an embarrassing but true reality. My friends like Ella, Thelma, Betty, Gail, Shelby, Eva, Carol, and Billie Jo have taught me love in the form of time and conversation. What a light burden to carry in order to mend someone's loneliness.

-Elizabeth Franko

Coming into this summer internship, I did not know what to expect. Even though I had been to Good Works twice before on weeklong mission trips, I did not know what it would be like to be an intern and actually lead work projects myself. Nor did I know just how wonderful it would be getting to know the different people who came on the mission trips or just how tough it was to say goodbye each week to a wonderful team only to start over the next day with a new group. It was also very rewarding to see young people learn from their experiences with helping those who are in much less privileged circumstances than them. One such experience involved a woman named 'Margaret.' One afternoon, I led a small group of three high school students out to her home to deliver a load of firewood that we had chopped earlier that day. As we pulled into her driveway, I saw a broken-down car at the bottom of a long driveway. This driveway led up to a small house with holes in the siding, a couple wooden porches that had many holes and were unsafe to walk on in some spots, at least eight or nine dogs nearby, and at least two dog piles for every dog. That stench drifted through the air and only worsened each time the wind blew our direction. I couldn't believe it. This woman lived in circumstances that could be mistaken for a third-world country in my very own state! Who was I to complain about anything? We visited with 'Margaret' after unloading the firewood and heard about many of her sad stories of misfortune. It was a taxing experience. The first several minutes of our trip back to Good Works was filled with a heavy silence that hung in the air with a ripeness we could nearly taste. The first words I asked the three speechless high schoolers were, "So you think you have problems?" I then gave them some perspective about how the things they think are important and painful now pale in comparison to what this woman has been living every single day. They took this back to their work group, and it was a powerfully moving experience for that entire team. I will never forget that day, and I know that the work group from that week won't be forgetting about this anytime soon.

-Brian Steele

HOPE AND POSSIBILITIES: We are launching a new initiative this fall called HOPE AND POSSIBILITIES. The project has been in my heart for a long time but has only recently come into existence because of a combination of local church support and the right person to lead this initiative. The goal of H & P is for Good Works to make a person available everyday to meet face-to-face with people struggling with poverty and assist them with their emergency needs. We intend to spend more time learning as much as we can about programs and opportunities available to low-income people as well as intentionally build relationships with landlords and key people in utility companies. H & P will be supported by several local congregations and is designed to be a unified effort to take our care for the rural poor to a deeper level.

IN THE NEWS: We are still seeking cars for the Transformation Station. Can you pass the word about our need for cars? We provide these cars to citizens who struggle with poverty through a “sweat equity” economy of time concept. Each person volunteers to serve others; and in exchange for their service, we provide them with a working car. We have almost 50 people on the waiting list... We do not have any residential interns this fall, so we have stopped the Life in Transition Program at Hannah House temporarily. Please pray with us, that godly young men and women will consider a year of service with Good Works so that we can restart this long-term transitional housing opportunity at The Hannah House... Please consider Good Gifts when you think about Christmas gifts this year. Our Ten Thousand Village store is open every day and has a wide variety of hand-made fair trade gifts from developing nations. All profits for Good Gifts go to create job-training experiences for the people we are learning to love... We still have a few openings for short-term mission teams to visit us this fall on the weekends. Contact Paul Richard if you would like to schedule a group to come serve widows and citizens with disabilities here in rural Appalachia... Our massive insurance bill came due on August 15 and ended up costing us over \$11,000.00. This is the single largest expenditure Good Works has. If you can help us with some of these costs, it would certainly lessen our burden... As many of you already know, we are scheduled to go before the Athens Zoning Board of Appeals on Tuesday, September 11th at 7:00 pm to request permission to use the property next door to The Timothy House (93-95 Central Avenue) as a shelter for homeless families. If the city grants our request, we will then start a capital campaign to purchase this house. Would you write a letter of support to the City on our behalf? You can mail or email it to us... Our Christmas party for the participants in the Friday Night Life community will be December 21. We are seeking the donation of \$10.00 “gift cards” (food, gas etc.) to give away to those who participate in Friday Night Life... The 2008 WALK FOR THE HOMELESS is scheduled for Saturday January 19th. This year we are planning a special “KIDS WALK” for kids and their parents and a “MYTH WALK” to address some of the myths about poverty and homelessness. We are looking for “cheerleaders” who are willing to encourage their friends to participate. If you are willing to be a cheerleader, can you contact Cory Blackwell by email or telephone 740.594.3339?

TRANSITIONS: This is a major staff transition year with several long-time staff moving to their next assignment and new staff coming. Rosenna Hickman will be leaving the TH at the end of August after almost 3 years. Anne Wilson has already arrived and started as a Caregiver. We first met Anne when she was a summer intern in 2003. Travis and Emilie Jones have finished two and a half years with us as House Managers of the Hannah House. Kayte Thistlewaite, who has been overseeing our Senior Care, computer training class, and Friday Night Kids Club will become the hostess of the Hannah House this fall. Charlie Blachford, who helped to develop the GOOD JOB! Program for homeless people seeking employment, has returned to New Jersey. Chris Linscott is now working with these and other new projects. Cory Blackwell joined our staff in early August to assist with some of the leadership roles here, and Paul Richard returned from being away 8 weeks this summer. The primary strength of the Good Works community continues to be THE PEOPLE and their integrity.

CURRENT NEEDS: Ground beef, sugar, ketchup, canned tomatoes & sauce, paper towels, toilet paper, anti-bacterial hand soap, 13 & 30 gallon trash bags, Hydrocortisone Cream, non-alcoholic liquid cold & cough meds, Athens Transit bus passes, postage stamps, and a digital camera. We are looking for a volunteer who knows how to lay carpet and is willing to come assist us sometime this fall. Do you know someone you might be willing to ask?

In closing, I want you to know that the summer is traditionally a very hard time financially for Good Works. If you are able to support us with a generous donation, we would really appreciate your help right now.

Love is a verb,
Keith Wasserman

