

Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope



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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)*

Celebrating 29 Years!

February 2009

Greetings from the Community of HOPE called Good Works!

Phones ringing in the middle of the night. Doors knocking in the middle of the day. Beds full and filling. As we’ve turned the corner to another year, we continue to see and hear our neighbor, our friend, the stranger, the widow and the fatherless reaching out for help, reaching in for strength. And as we are privileged to be a part of the lives of these neighbors, we continue to see and nurture the glimmers of love and hope in these desperate circumstances. Let me share a couple stories from our staff:

It’s been so beautiful to see the changes that have taken place in my friend “Audrey.” When I first met her, she was facing some major crises in her life—one of them being losing her housing and having nowhere to stay. She seemed to be struggling a lot from the effects of isolation; she was defensive about everything and appeared uncomfortable with who she was. This was a difficult and challenging season for her and her family, and honestly I was a little fearful to enter into relationship with her during this time. When I interact with Audrey now, some months later, I can hardly believe the change, growth and healing that has taken place. Instead of isolation, I see the formation of true relationships and involvement in a loving community where she cares about and is cared for by others. In place of defensiveness, I see openness, humility and a willingness to be honest, forgiving and to talk things through. I see in her a new self-assurance—a belief that she is of value, that she has much to offer. I am encouraged and hope-filled, as I see her communicate these things in my life and in the lives of those around her. — Anne Wilson (Before returning to Good Works as a full-time care-giver at The Timothy House, Anne served as a Summer Service intern in 2003.)

It was a normal birthday party with family, friends, presents, cake and ice cream. Only it wasn’t normal; it was in a homeless shelter. “Beth” had been living at the shelter for a few months with her mother, father, and brother. She was turning 12 but had to have her party in a homeless shelter. When I heard this would be happening, I was curious to see how Beth and her family would take it. I worried that this joyous occasion would remind them of their unfortunate circumstances. I had never seen “Rob,” Beth’s stepfather, become emotional. He normally cracked jokes and kept things inside himself. But with tears in his eyes, Rob said this was the best birthday party his daughter ever had. He said more people came out to this party than if they had had one at their own house. Indeed, there were a couple of volunteers and staff who came over specifically for the party, just to show Beth love. And most of the residents stayed around, wishing Beth a happy birthday and sharing in the festivities. He didn’t say much else, but the look of love in his eyes told me everything. Here, in the midst of supposed darkness and despair was hope and love reborn through the residents, volunteers and staff of a homeless shelter. I wondered to myself how many other 12-year-olds had had such a special birthday party where love, and not necessarily just gifts, was communicated in such a powerful way. Isn’t this what the family of God looks like? — Dan Kauffman (Dan is a full-time Appalachian Immersion intern who lives at The Hannah House. He is currently leading our farming and agricultural expansion and was the person most responsible for the addition of chickens to our small farm this year.)

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Since 1981

IN THE NEWS...

2009 WALK FOR THE HOMELESS was simply wonderful. We were so encouraged to see SO MANY friends (about 500 people participated) come to support this event on one of the coldest days of the year. The morning began at minus 4 degrees, but the day warmed up. Participants experienced five different Walk events that emphasized the issues people experiencing homelessness face: (1) The Myth Walk focused on the many false myths we have come to believe about poverty and homelessness. (2) The No Room at the Inn Walk took participants to different places people sleep in Athens when they cannot stay at The Timothy House. Two local Pastors spoke at that Walk about the Pastoral Letter to the City of Athens that was signed by 18 local pastors and asked the city to set aside a zone where the homeless can legally be helped by organizations like Good Works. (3) The Tent City Walk took participants to a “tent city” where several formerly homeless residents of The Timothy House shared heartfelt stories about the difficulty of being homeless. This Walk then traveled through the Timothy House and stopped at Central UMC where Dan Kauffman and I shared about what it was like to be homeless in Cincinnati, Ohio last August. (4) The Homeless Simulation Walk took a large group of participants through an exercise of what it would be like to be homeless and have to intersect with public assistance, the legal system and the shelter system. The experience revealed how homeless people are often forced to choose between two very bad options. (5) The Mini-Walk took a group of participants to St. Paul’s Catholic Church where they discussed a video on homelessness and mental illness. At this point, people have contributed \$45,000.00 towards our \$50,000.00 goal. We are grateful.

THE HOPE CENTER—As you may already know, it is our vision to build a new facility this spring on the Good Works Luhrig Road property to provide space for meeting together. Good Works has very limited indoor group meeting space, and this facility will allow groups of 25-30 to gather for reflection, community building, education and worship. The facility will be built by volunteers, so if you have construction skills and want to help, please contact Paul Richard at 740.594.3336. I am also writing to invite you to our groundbreaking, which will take place on Saturday, March 7th at 1:00 pm at the Good Works Luhrig Road property. Please join us, and stay for a time of refreshments.

SUMMER SERVICE—We are in the process of interviewing prospective interns for our 12th year of Summer Service. We are scheduling visiting groups and planning our Summer Kids Discovery Club and outreach. In 2008, Good Works hosted almost 500 volunteers who came to visit us and participated in our outreach projects. We had about 60 kids participate in the Discovery Club last year, and we were able to provide a hot, nutritious lunch to many other adults who came for the lunch hour.

GOOD GARDENS—Dan Kauffman is helping our community to expand the land we are planting this year as well as the vision for how we might help others grow food. We are planning to start a community garden near the Timothy House and, if funds permit, we intend to plant gardens at the homes of our friends who are widows or who have disabilities in the smaller towns in Athens County.

CURRENT NEEDS

General needs: Ground beef, regular/decaf coffee and filters (10-12 cup basket-style), coffee creamer, sugar, honey, paper towels, toilet paper, dish soap, liquid floor cleaner, liquid laundry detergent, spray disinfectant, hand sanitizer, 30-gallon trash bags, deodorant, food handling gloves, all sizes of zip lock bags.

In closing, THANK YOU for your partnership and generosity. While challenged by the economic times which are upon us, we trust God and trust you to help us as we extend ourselves to those most in need of help at this time.

Love is a verb,
Keith Wasserman

