



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!

August 2009

Greetings with gratitude from all of us here at Good Works! Greetings from this community of hope! Greetings from us as we labor in love to our neighbors who are struggling right now.

We are so encouraged as we receive your support, prayers, letters and visits. I am tired but happy. The activities of Good Works are now 24/7, but we have an amazing group of staff and volunteers who, guided by their integrity, are carrying our vision.

This morning, as I was driving down the country road to our offices, I was marveling at the lush green growth that covers the hills surrounding us. I am regularly amazed at the fruitfulness of the land around us. I am often astonished at the varying shades of deep life-green that pervade these hills. It is difficult to stop them from growing—from moving and flourishing. And so goes our summer at Good Works. We often say that we are not about the “programs” but that we are about the people. I hope that we are as faithful and as fruitful as the hills. I hope that we are truly growing into a community that embraces our neighbor in life-giving love. I hope that our growth, too, will cover these hills in a color beautiful enough to marvel at.

And we are growing! As what we are doing has increased this summer, we believe that, by God’s grace and leading, we are seeing new things. Before I tell you more about it below, let me share one of this summer’s stories from one of our interns:

The eating part of the community meal had just ended. Folks lingered about, getting refills of cold water and enjoying the company. I sauntered out to begin working in our community garden that would grow healthy and justly produced food to help feed people at the meal. I hoped someone would follow. Soon, three guys followed me out: Frank in his 60s, Jimmy in his late teens, and Bob who is 8. We all put on gloves and began to load horse manure and straw into the wheelbarrow so we could use it to create pathways through the garden. Frank told stories of growing up in the country, baling hay, and clearing land for pasture use. Jimmy listened intently and interjected his own work experiences. Meanwhile, Bob was happily spreading the manure and finding all kinds of interesting things along the garden pathway. The conversation and work continued on in a leisurely pace; I didn’t say much. The birds sang, and the crickets played their tunes, and the sun beat down upon us as it began to creep toward the western horizon. We worked on and at the end of the second pathway. We were sweaty, tired and probably a little smelly. But I didn’t care. I was as content and peaceful as can be. We didn’t solve the world’s problems that night, we probably didn’t even solve our own, but for one hour the four of us tasted something beautiful. I believe it was a glimpse of God’s reign breaking in on the earth—the reign where all things are in right relationship with each other. It is where the elderly are revered for their wisdom and stories and where the young are continually fascinated. It is where the earth is cared for and renewal happens through death. It is where peace kisses justice and righteousness hugs truth. And so, perhaps the Kingdom of God isn’t as mystical as it seems. Perhaps it is just a pitchfork, a pile of manure, and a few friends away. – Dan Kauffman

Dan Kauffman served on the night staff at the TH during his college years. For the past 15 months, Dan has been an Appalachian Immersion intern. He has been integral in developing, expanding, and leading our farm/garden projects.

And so, as we have expanded the contexts where relationships can develop this summer (the garden in the story above being one of them), we believe and trust that something greater than lunch, something greater than gardens, something greater than meeting needs (as vital as these are) is happening. Here's a little more of what's going on:

In The News...

- Our Summer Lunch and Kids Discovery Club continues thru Friday, August 14th. Everyday (Mon.-Fri.) this summer, we have been providing the Kids Discovery Club followed by a nutritional lunch to people of all ages. We are so grateful for all who have helped to make this transformational experience possible.
- As you read, our gardening projects are growing...yes, literally. We have drastically expanded the size of our community gardens, and the food from these is going to feed our friends at Friday Night Life and elsewhere...We have also had two summer teen interns who've been helping out with this gardening projects. These teens have been in the Friday Night Life community for some time prior to this summer, and we are so delighted to have this new relationship with them. They have been learning about growing food and caring for the earth. As part of their experience, we have set up a produce stand in town, and they are benefiting directly from some of the proceeds.
- Our summer interns leave us August 22 and a new season of Appalachian Immersion interns (our 9 month program) begins September 1st. We still have space for a few more AI interns this year.
- Work Retreat groups (called Worship Teams) have been coming all summer from Wisconsin, Kansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Rhode Island, Illinois and Ohio. We are delighted to facilitate such a large and impacting presence for GOOD in our community. Groups are repairing roofs, fixing plumbing, building ramps, painting and mowing. Indeed, they are "making the widows heart sing"!
- The HOPE CENTER is in process. We would welcome skilled workers who can come and volunteer with us this fall. Contact us by e-mail or Paul Richard at 740.594.3336.
- The Timothy House has had lots of children this summer – lots of children. The challenge of living in a homeless shelter is so very difficult for these parents. Please pray for these families.
- Our 17th annual FAST FROM SHELTER is scheduled for September 18-20th. You are invited to join us. For more information, visit our webpage and click on WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW. You will see a section on the FAST.
- The Good Works Board meets quarterly for two days on the GW Luhrig Road property. In addition to being a support to me, they oversee the policies, finances and the integrity of the ministry God has trusted us with. I am so very thankful for this group of men and women.
- This fall, we are launching a new initiative with Ohio University first-year students called SERVICE LIVING with the goal of inviting these students to be involved in serving the homeless, people with disabilities and the elderly. Our intention is to help them get off campus and participate in the lives of the people of Appalachia. During the past year, we actually had more people interested in volunteering with Good Works than we were able to accommodate or assimilate.
- January 1st will mark the beginning of our 30th year. Please plan to celebrate with us!
- Current needs: Mac laptop, quality electric range/stove for HH kitchen that can take a lot of use.
- Our WALK FOR THE HOMELESS is scheduled for Saturday, January 16. It is not too early to plan to bring a group to come and support Good Works and learn about poverty and homeless. Can you pass the word about the WALK in your network of relationships? See walkforthehomeless.net
- The Columbus Dispatch and the Athens News both did articles on the Transformation Station, our program to provide cars, appliances and food to people struggling with poverty in exchange for their service to their neighbors in need. We are happy to send you copies if you request this. We now have 112 people on the waiting list for cars.

In closing, we would ask that you remember us with your gifts this month. Every August we must pay a large insurance bill (about \$13,000.00). Any help you can provide would be so GOOD.

Love is a verb,

Keith Wasserman

