

Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope



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Celebrating our 30th year

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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It's not just about roofs and porches. It's not just mowing lawns and painting walls. It's not just acts. It's people. *People*, you know. It's strangers in need turned neighbors, now friends. It's relationship. Learning. Humility. It's paint, but it's presence too. It's lawns, and it's love.

Greetings from rural Appalachia and this community of *hope*! A lot is going on here this summer...a lot! And with all of our visiting groups, with eight summer interns, ONE of the facets of Good Works that has dramatically increased this summer is Samaritan Projects.

Since the late 90s, Good Works has been going to the homes of widows and senior citizens in and around Athens County to *love our neighbors* in tangible and visible ways. It is visiting our neighbors who have difficulty maintaining their property for physical and/or financial reasons. But it's not just trying to mow lawns, repair roofs, build steps and ramps but trying to build people a home in our hearts. Trying to create a space where "the served" can become our *friend*. Where dignity can be spoken and restored. Where loneliness can be visited.

And so, I want you to hear this story from one of our neighbors, who gave us these kind words. We will call this friend Marla. She is one of the 60+ families we are loving and learning from.

Hi again! I wanted to again personally thank all those involved in seeing to it that I am safe with a new step ramp that is nearly finished at my place. Above all, I have to say thanks to those that are doing the work. They made me feel comfortable and safe to be with.

As I spend much too much time alone, having people around frightens me. Never once did I feel uncomfortable with the people coming and going; everyone went out of their way to be nice and friendly, keeping me at ease. I am most thankful for each and every one of them.

Seeing the steps near finished and using them has been a blessing. I feel safe with them, and above all, I do not think I have ever seen such a fine-looking set of steps in my life. They are beautiful to see, safe to use, and a real joy in my heart. Words cannot express how I feel right now.

It's been a long time alone, and I am scared of leaving home, that I might fall again. But never have I seen people like this, that seem to really care about my well-being—people that do not know me, yet they offer friendship and grace. This is God's work for sure, and I am so thankful.

It is the work of love and worship. It is the work that takes itself to the home of one who has been alone "much too much." And, in the process—in the building of ramps, mowing of lawns, in conversations with our neighbors, in listening and learning—we find...we find that indefinable goodness that comes when I realize that maybe Marla's not the one "being served." That maybe I am the one learning. Maybe I am the one who is lonely. Maybe I just cover it up better, am less truthful with myself. Maybe Marla...maybe Marla is building *me* something...

In the news...

- Good Works Hope and Possibilities is heading into its 3rd year. We are partnering with local churches to provide and find assistance for the emergency situations of our neighbors. In the first six months of this year, Hope and Possibilities has received 229 calls from people seeking assistance, and our staff person Chip Guyton has met with 87 people. In all of 2009, Chip had 375 calls and met with 142 people. Just this year, Good Works has partnered with 14 different local churches.
- Appalachian Immersion is a 9-12 month paid internship with Good Works that usually begins in the fall. Appalachian Immersion is a significant aspect of what goes on here throughout the year, as interns are entrusted with leadership in a wide variety of programs and activities. Are you or someone you know looking to find discipleship and leadership opportunities through serving with those on the margins of our society? Check out our website and click on “internships” to learn more!
- The Summer Kids Discovery Club is in full swing at The Plains United Methodist Church. Led by our staff and interns, about 35 kids have been coming every weekday for this free kids program. We are so grateful for these relationships and to see little faces that we’ve not seen since last summer...And the Summer Lunch, also at The Plains UMC, is bubbling along. Every weekday this summer, we are providing this free meal that is nutritious and open to the community. We are so grateful for the people who have donated food and funds to make this healthy lunch possible—and tasty!
- What do North Carolina, Illinois, Virginia, and New York all have in common? We have work retreat groups from all of them (and more!) this summer. Throughout the summer, we have been and will be hosting week-long groups who come to worship through service. These groups are heavily involved in the work of Samaritan Projects that I described—as well as nearly every other facet of Good Works.
- We’ve partnered with Hocking-Athens-Perry County Community Action this summer to provide summer-long employment to teen girls. Led by one of our female summer interns, these girls have been developing the Good Works’ gardens, managing gardens at the homes of our senior neighbors, and more. We are grateful to get to know these girls, now friends.
- The HOPE CENTER, our new facility for group gatherings is moving long beautifully! We are finishing up drywall and building the large outdoor deck. Do you know a bricklayer, a dry wall finisher, or an interior painter? We are looking for volunteers with the skills to help us finish the vinyl siding, install light fixtures, and help build a deck. Contact Paul Richard at our email address or at 740.594.3336 if you think you can help.
- With more than 130 people on the waiting list for cars through the Transformation Station, please pass on the word of our need for cars in good working condition. So far, 70 cars have been provided to volunteers.

Gratitude is the attitude, and thanksgiving is therapeutic! These are our heart-felt feelings for each of you as you support the vision we are living! As I said, there is A LOT going on here this summer. THANK YOU for making this “A LOT” possible, see-able, doable, and (in some cases) taste-able.

Love is a verb,



Keith Wasserman