

Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope

Celebrating 30 Years!



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*"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)*

October 2010

Dear Friends,

Thank you for continuing to listen to the stories of this community, to what we celebrate about and to our needs. We are grateful to serve our neighbors in poverty as an extension of the love of God in our hearts, and of your continual generosity.

Last week, I found that *listening* created a healing potential during our Friday Night Life gathering. About 100 of us drew together under the picnic shelter before the meal: students, people living in the Timothy House, good friends from a visiting church, eager children, and many participants who find real sustenance through this shared meal.

Some Fridays, clamor gets the best of us, even though we repeat our motto often: "When someone is speaking, every one else is listening." But this evening, attentiveness was in the air.

Just a day earlier, a tornado spun through The Plains, the small town outside of Athens. Many of our friends who participate in Friday Night Life live there, and for a few, the twister brought much fear and damage to their homes.

The group under the picnic shelter listened well as people took turns sharing: "I am thankful to be alive." "I am thankful for protection." Others repeated their close encounters with nature's violence. The moment was poignant—being together each week lets us learn to hear each other, in our pain and relief.

Giving voice. Hearing. Understanding. We believe these practices inform what it means to love each other.

When poverty involves relational isolation, the simple act of listening, listening well, breathes healing. Feelings of loneliness, and the lies they engender, fall away. Truth says: *Yes, you belong. Yes, you have something to contribute.* At Good Works, we continue to remind each person, especially those who are experiencing weakness, of their value in this way. We want to keep asking ourselves, "How can I be a better listener?"

We find that being silent, whether alone or together, is a starting place. As we open ourselves to hear the voice of God, we have a deeper well of compassion out of which to listen to each other, and to our neighbors in need.

The Saturday after the tornado found The Plains community rallied in clean-up action. I am sure that there were many bold stories heard and told. Thanks for being part of ours!

In the news...

- Speaking of the **tornado**, thank you for the concern and care you have sent our way. We have been able to direct some of our Work Retreat volunteers toward clean-up efforts. As The Plains community and various agencies are organizing for long-term recovery, Good Works is discerning what role we might step up to.
- Almost every day, we receive phone calls from people who are at the end of their rope and need somewhere to stay. *Thank you for providing the resources that make it possible for us to invite them in.* We are continuing to seek PEOPLE who want to invest themselves in the lives of the **Timothy House** residents. For information on how you can volunteer, visit our web page and click on Volunteer Opportunities.
- We have enjoyed some very sweet celebrations as a few more friends have received good, working vehicles through the **Transformation Station** recently. What a delight to offer an empowering way for people in need to get access to reliable transportation! *Can you continue to spread the word about our need for working vehicles? There are over 100 people on our waiting list to get cars.*
- Planning has begun for our 2011 **Walk for the Homeless**, scheduled for Saturday, January 15th. Can you come this year? Can you promote the WALK in your community? To download sponsor forms and for more information, visit walkforthehomeless.net.
- Our new initiative in partnership with Ohio University, **Service Living**, is now in its second year. We are so excited to see 30 plus students signing up for our “Transformation Groups”—relational, service opportunities designed to share the culture, beauty, history, values and needs of Appalachia. Several of the service opportunities include working with Three Rivers Self-Help Housing to build affordable homes, visiting residents with physical and mental disabilities at Echoing Meadows Residential Center, and doing agricultural projects at the homes of seniors in Athens County.
- **Neighboring 101** is our weekly class designed to bring together people to explore how we as a community can love our neighbors. This fall we are reading the book *When Helping Hurts*. We have been very encouraged by the participation of people from about 13 different local congregations.
- **Harvesting vegetables** from the garden on the Luhrig Road property brought smiles to many faces this month! After dinner, some Friday Night Life participants took a walk to the garden to get their hands dirty and carried home tomatoes, cantaloupe, peppers and more! A big thanks to the hard work of our teen interns and volunteers this summer.

In closing this month, I again want to express my gratitude for the sustaining grace to carry on with our many efforts to love God and love our neighbors. Thanks for your friendship and for your loving-kindness, which sustains us!

Love is still a verb,



Keith Wasserman