

Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope

Celebrating 32 Years!



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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)*

Greetings, dear friends!

October 2012

This month I am especially aware of the tenacious cords of trust that are connecting us together. From the kitchen of the Timothy House where residents gather around a shared meal to your home across town or across the country, I know we are joined in heart on behalf of so many who are suffering in our community. Thank you for standing with us, as many of you have done for a great number of years! We believe God has trusted us with this ministry of caring for the widow, the fatherless child and the stranger, and we are seeking to be faithful.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Athens County, Ohio has the highest rate of poverty in the state. The poverty rate for Athens County has averaged over 30 percent for more than five years, and is more than double the state and national average.*

Today, Good Works has over 20 initiatives all focused on meeting the felt needs of people who are struggling with poverty and homelessness in rural Appalachia. We are doing our very best to offer food, shelter, safety, transportation, belonging, and spiritual sustenance to these friends. In addition, we have intentionally created contexts in which ordinary people can join with us to love their neighbor. We now offer 40 different ways for both individuals and groups to serve face-to-face with people in poverty, forming mutually transformational relationships.

One such volunteer actually saw the very beginnings of Good Works in 1981. In addition to his friendship and support of the Good Works community over the past 30 years, Mike has served inside the Timothy House once a month for the last six. Now at the eve of his time as a volunteer, Mike reflects on what he has both given and received through this experience: "Poverty is a lack of inspiration and encouragement. Those are things I can give. I have some patience... but I can develop more, and I can spend that patience on people who really need it. I can learn from Appalachian people without homes." With life experience that affords him understanding and appreciation of this culture, Mike sees himself on equal footing with those he spends time with at the Timothy House.

"I'm grateful for the part that Good Works plays in helping people live out their faith," says Mike. He feels he has found a rich Christian community among the staff and volunteers, who gather for on-going trainings three times a year. "Those are really special times— to meet with the other volunteers, pray together, and wrestle with the seriousness of the struggles."

Another volunteer, Kathryn, first witnessed the difficulties of poverty as a young person while she served at a homeless shelter alongside her mother. Kathryn began volunteering at the Timothy House in the late 90's. Now, close to 15 years later, she reflects on what keeps her coming back:

"...The motivation of my heart to spend time at the Timothy House each month with my family is like an engine re-charged each and every time I am there— I am so moved by the faces, the laughter, the struggle, the kindness offered to me and my family by the residents, the opportunity

to offer kindness...the knowledge that for at least a few hours that just maybe I am offering a presence of stability and comfort to someone who really needs it, the eye-opening awareness of profound needs in people living in my community: people that day to day are virtually invisible to me in my world. This is what continues to motivate me. I can only hope that as my mother set the cycle of Christian service in motion in my life, so our work at the Timothy House will set in motion a lifetime of awareness and service in my children."

Know that your gifts not only directly help our friends in need, but are also creating avenues for ordinary people to grow in compassion and wise love for their neighbors. Thank you for believing in us!

* Source: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39/39009.html>

IN THE NEWS: Ways you can contribute as a volunteer

- Good Works has a **Wish List** of items and needs that require a little explanation. Would you be interested in receiving this list by email or US mail? Let us know!
- Would you pass the word again about our need for vehicles? The **Transformation Station** provided car number 96 last week!
- Our meal during **Friday Night Life** is sponsored by a different group each week. Would you consider organizing a group of 7 to 14 people to sponsor a meal in 2013?
- **Senior Friends** is our initiative to connect volunteers with a senior in Athens County for the purpose of visiting and building a friendship between them. We are hoping and praying for more people to serve in this way.
- Participants in the **Transformation Station** serve with us three days a week on Good Works property and also with our staff at the homes of people in Athens County. We are seeking a volunteer who would enjoy cooking lunch once a week for our Transformation Station volunteers and our staff.
- During 2012, Good Works volunteers planted 17 **gardens** all over Athens County. If you want to volunteer once a week with our Agricultural Initiative, contact us!
- Our **mowers and other machines** break down frequently because of the on-going work we do to serve others in the community. We are seeking volunteers who like to work with their hands and have skills in fixing things!
- **Training for Life** is our computer training class we hold at the Timothy House. We welcome volunteers who want to spend a few hours each week helping our friends without homes learn basic computer skills.
- Every Saturday this fall, volunteer groups come to Good Works and are sent all over Athens County to serve people at their homes through **Neighbors Helping Neighbors**. If you'd like to join us on a Saturday, contact us and we can make arrangements.
- A new WALK video can be seen on the WALK website (www.walkforthehomeless.net). Please mark your calendars for the **Good Works WALK** on February 23, 2013!
- **Week of Service** is an opportunity for anyone, age 16 or older to come for a week and serve in a variety of ways with our community.
- Interested? More details about these and other opportunities can be found on our website under **Volunteer Opportunities!**

In closing, I would ask you to pray for us as you continue to support us. Pray especially that our hearts would be strengthened with perseverance, for we are weary. Many of the people we care so deeply about are really struggling with many issues related to their poverty, especially those who are experiencing homelessness. We too are facing new and increasing challenges as we attempt to do what is right and lay down our lives. We do know this: *God is strength of our heart and our portion forever (Psalm 73:26).*

Love is still a verb,



Keith Wasserman