

Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope

Celebrating 34 Years!



PO Box 4, Athens, OH 45701
Phone: 740-594-3339
Email: goodworks@good-works.net
Web: www.good-works.net

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)

*Good Works exists to connect people from all walks of life
with people in poverty so that the Kingdom of God can be experienced*

Dear Friends,

April, 2016

Good Works is a hub of interaction. People from different backgrounds come to us to engage in service experiences with our neighbors. For people who are not coming from a rural Appalachian culture, or whose relative financial security has insulated them from issues related to poverty, their experiences here can be surprising.

A sort of culture shock takes place. It's easy to assume that because we've lived in the same country at the same time that our lives have been similar. When we look more closely, we discover that is not necessarily the case. Our staff stands in this gap, trying to build a bridge of understanding that makes true connection more possible. We act as **translators**—telling people's stories in a way that make sense for the listener. Hopefully, by doing so, even greater compassion forms in the hearts of our volunteers, who really do want to understand.

For example, when behavioral issues arise at Friday Night Kids' Club, Emily Axe has had years of experience helping volunteers navigate these twists and turns. She explains to new volunteers, who are often college students, the need to understand the bigger picture. While they may see a child respond poorly to correction on a Friday night, Emily would share reflections about her long history with the family, what happens at home, and how poverty can cause a family to be always on the move, always adjusting. She is able to comment on the complex network that the child is involved in and the reasons receiving correction is difficult for that child in particular. The result of deepened understanding is greater patience and a more sincere connection. Volunteers can stay in the relationship until mutual trust develops and have a greater impact as a result.

Frances Bissell oversees the day-to-day operations of the Timothy House, our home for people without homes. She reflects on the unique position of the Timothy House Care-giving staff, who likewise serve as "translators" when they advocate for residents of the house. Care-givers meet with residents at least once a week, but normally more often. They hear their stories and learn about their lives, their struggles and their goals. Care-givers help residents connect with other helping people in the Athens community as well, so that they can access resources that might help them gain the stability they desire.

Frances recalls seeing a single mother going through struggles in parenting her son, and having contact with counselors who were working with this family. Sometimes there is a gap between what a person in crisis is able to articulate about their own situation and the reality of what is needed. Fran says, "We are in a unique position; we work with people in their home (at the Timothy House). We are in a position to assist other helpers to see the big picture of someone's life."

In practical terms, this is one significant aspect of what it means for us to "take up the case of the stranger," (Job 29:16). This is frequently the form our prayers take; we tell these stories to God, who already knows the people we are in relationships with. God loved them first and loves them most and continues loving them when our understanding falls short. We can't remind each other of this truth too often. — Andrea Horsch

After 10 years, Andrea transitioned from directing the day-to-day operations of The Timothy House to a broader leadership role with Good Works.



Good Works Timothy House



Friday Night Life Kids Club

IN THE NEWS . . .

- The February 20th Good Works WALK was very encouraging to us! We had a large turn-out of adults and children, and each WALK experience went very well. A heart-felt THANK YOU to everyone who supported the WALK! Together we raised almost \$55,000 towards our \$60,000 goal.
- A new season of an 8-week class we call **Neighboring 101** starts April 7th and goes through May 26. We will meet Thursdays from 12-1pm in the Hope Center on the Good Works property. This presentation/conversation is a weekly discussion group focusing on questions from the book "When Helping Hurts" by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. Contact us at 740-594-3339 for more information.
- The Transformation Station provided car #145 to a participant in March. Can you pass the word to people about donating their car to Good Works? We estimate that each family that receives a vehicle has a positive impact on as many as 4 families.
- Plans are underway to launch Summer Service 2016. We are interviewing summer interns, planning Summer Kids Discovery Club & Summer Lunch (our every-day meal for adults and children of all ages). We are also preparing for another year of our 7-week Teen Agricultural Internship, and an internship for teens to grow in their faith and serve their neighbors called The Kingdom Internship.
- On an average year, we host around 40 visiting groups who come to serve with us through Work Retreats. This spring, we are hosting several week-long groups from Nashville, Tennessee; Columbus, Ohio; Claremore, Oklahoma; and Dayton, Ohio!
- Check out the Good Works Facebook page for updates several times a week!
- WEEK OF SERVICE is a one-week opportunity for anyone age 16 or older to volunteer with Good Works and work alongside our staff and interns!
- We recently published an essay entitled *The Timothy House: Beyond The Numbers*. It is available on our website or we can send it to you if you'd like to read it.
- Friday Night Life moved from The Plains United Methodist Church back to the Good Works property on March 25th. The outside, picnic-style experience creates many opportunities for building friendships with people from all walks of life. Friday Night Life is now in its 23rd year!

IN CLOSING this month, I want to express my gratitude to you. In a culture that constantly strives for upward socioeconomic mobility, I don't take for granted what a gift your attention to vulnerable people is. It is, in fact, counter cultural. We are grateful for your genuine desire to learn with us how to love our neighbors who struggle with poverty.

Love is a verb,

Keith Wasserman