

Good Works, Inc. – A Community of Hope

Celebrating 34 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)

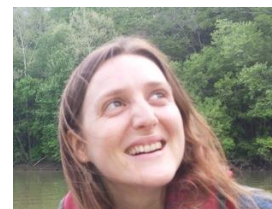
Hello dear friends,

July 2015

Summer greetings from our community to YOU!

My name is Dawn, and I help lead a Good Works initiative called Friday Night Life. This is our community meal (and so much more) for people from all walks of life. On one particular Friday afternoon, I was there but just going through the motions: keeping busy with tasks in order to avoid conversation. Heroically, I began to pick up vegetables that had been trampled into the grass. Before I could make my beeline to the trashcan, Randall began talking with me. Actually, “talked at” is probably more accurate. In my book, Randall was unkempt and unpredictable. I was afraid of him and did my best to avoid him (for good reason, I thought).

I pretended to listen to Randall while my mind raced... how can I make my exit? Holding a handful of slimy vegetables seemed reason enough to excuse myself, but Randall wasn't responding to any of the normal social cues. I don't remember what words I used, but in that moment, I silently asked Jesus for help. Even though everything in me wanted to bolt, I decided to face my inner discomfort head on and lean into the moment. At first my diversion, the squished vegetables in my hand were now teaching my heart how to love, and really listen to Randall.



As I let go of my agitation, I suddenly found the situation strangely humorous. A certain softness came over me, and him. I shed the fear that I had carried toward Randall, and he actually began to pause from his monologue and ask me questions. We conversed about gardening, a shared hobby. As if lights had been switched on in my mind, I began to *see* Randall for the first time. I saw good and beautiful qualities inside him, particularly his tenderness towards living creatures. I noticed how hard he works, and the integrity with which he stewards land and resources. I saw a gentle man, made in God's image.

It has been said of Jesus, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). Part of my experience with Friday Night Life has been learning to see people the way that God sees them: fallen yet valuable, precious, lovable and created to fulfill God's purpose on the earth. When I don't receive God's perspective about myself or others, I can easily slip back into judgment mode. I must repent of viewing people as embodied needs, rather than human beings with breath-taking capacities to love and be loved, grow and experience transformation, and to transmit life to others. Lord, help me to see people the way you see people. – Dawn Tobin

FACTS about Friday Night Life!

- Friday Night Life began in the spring of 1993 when we invited Timothy House residents who had moved out to come back for a spaghetti dinner each week. As this aspect of Good Works grew, we moved to Central Avenue UMC and later to The Plains UMC. For the past 15 years, The Plains UMC has hosted FNL six months out of the year, and we meet at the Good Works property picnic-style for the other six.
- Over the course of the year, between 200 to 300 different adults and children participate in FNL. About 100 to 150 are involved on an average Friday. Many people become connected with FNL while they live at the Timothy House and continue to participate after they move out.
- Through FNL, we serve 40+ kids and teens each year. On an average week, about 15 to 25 kids participate in our Kids' Club/Teen Club that follows dinner. Staff member Emily Axe leads this initiative along with a team of volunteers.
- We lead a wide range of activities with adults to build community among people of different social and economic groups. This includes music, bible studies, health education, games, and gardening!
- Two on-going ways we bless FNL participants is through providing take-home food, and the opportunity to be part of the team who packages it up for others. Seeing this ownership happen is inspiring! Forty to fifty families receive a bag of food each week.
- We help people feel loved and valued by celebrating their birthday. Through our FNL initiative called Celebrate YOU, we handpick a small gift for participants and surround them with words of affirmation.
- Around 50 different groups sponsor the meal at FNL each year. Dinner usually begins with vegetable appetizers and often includes fruit or a dessert!

IN THE NEWS....

- As you read this, we will be in the middle of Summer Service. This year our staff and Summer Interns are hosting 9 different Work Retreat Groups and 11 week of Service Volunteers. We are excited to extend ourselves in loving our neighbors in rural Athens County who are widowed or struggling with a disability. Through our Teen Agricultural Internship, we will be mentoring local teens in this very endeavor as well.
- We are about halfway through our 7-week Summer Kids' Discovery Club and Summer Lunch. Last year, we had about 40 different presenters who shared fun and educational activities with the kids, and we served around 2,000 meals. If you'd like to assist us with food, you can send gift cards we could use at our local Kroger or Wal-Mart. If you'd like to volunteer one day a week, contact us!

In closing this month, I want to encourage you to visit us sometime this year. Come to Friday Night Life or visit the Summer Lunch or stop over to tour the Timothy House. There have been many renovations after the 2014 fire. If it has been a while since you have been to the Good Works property; or haven't seen some of the recent changes (including the new trails), please think about contacting us to arrange a visit!

Love is a verb,



Keith Wasserman