

# Good Works, Inc. – A Community of Hope

*Celebrating 36 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)*

To the Community of Hope,

June, 2017

*Job 29:16 “I was a father to the needy”*

Hello from Good Works! We are coming to the end of a very full spring season. The month of June is upon us, and I think it is appropriate, in light of Father’s Day, to reflect on the importance of fathers: their presence and their absence. My friend and co-worker, Nick Smith recently said, “There’s a rhetorical question that people walk around asking themselves: ‘Am I worth it?’ Oftentimes, if you’ve had a good dad, you will find yourself saying yes. If you haven’t... that can make you believe the answer is no.”



Maybe that question is less obvious to those of us who have taken for granted the gift of a good father. There are, however, among my coworkers, men who lost their fathers early in life, and others whose fathers were swept up in addiction or mental illness. Yet, amazingly, these men play a huge role in our community’s ability to “*rescue the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless, who had none to assist them*” (Job 29:12). Part of God’s redeeming work has been to transform them into people who supply the kind of stability for others that fathers make possible.

Nick is one of these men. He leads a team of volunteers who intersect with kids ages four to seventeen every week during Friday Night Life. These kids are often coming from poor families, sometimes growing up with an incarcerated parent, and are figuring out how to carry the weight of adult responsibilities at a young age. They are facing a lot of adversity, but Nick sees a world of goodness in them. He wants people to know that these kids are not stereotypes; they are smart and kind, creative and witty in a way that won’t come through in standardized test scores. Their good characteristics don’t easily stand out when they are viewed as a demographic. Nick says, “Compassion is difficult to see unless you see it up close. Not a single Friday night goes by when a kid doesn’t express personal concern for my own well-being.”

Nick describes working with these kids as a form of justice; “Children afford us the opportunity to cultivate compassion for people, because you can’t deny the effects of injustice on children. Some paths get laid out in life before we have a say in the creation of those paths. We shouldn’t entirely dismiss personal responsibility, but children help to orient the compass of our compassion and tendency toward justice.”

The team of volunteers Nick leads is generally made up of college students, and most recently, has been comprised of some community members and a group of very dedicated medical students. Nick’s

description of what it means for these kids to have stable adults in their lives is unmistakably parental.

“Having someone who consistently shows up every week, who is reliable and has integrity in the eyes of that child, who has earned the right to be heard and proven that they care... I think there is a lot of justice and mercy that results from the presence of that type of person in a kids’ life. When kids feel that security, they use it; they want to share about themselves. We aren’t just providing one safe adult, we are providing a community of adults who are safe and loving and care about the kids. One adult is powerful and good and can create a lot change, but a community can care for, raise and support its children over many years through the love of many different people.”

Psalm 68:5-6 says, *“A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families.”*

It is humbling that God can use a community like ours to love people in the way God loves them. We are grateful today for the many people who surround us and make this work of love possible. While those of us on the staff personally enjoy many enriching friendships with our neighbors, we truly do serve as a connecting point for people from many different walks of life. And those people, our volunteers, carry the torch in many relationships from one semester to another, one year to another, and sometimes from one decade to another.

*-Andrea Horsch*

#### In the NEWS

- Our 20<sup>th</sup> year of Summer Service begins in a few weeks. Our summer interns arrive June 11<sup>th</sup> and we are expecting seven different weeklong groups to come and join us from June 19 to August 4<sup>th</sup>. We are planning two teen internships in addition to our visiting Work Retreat Groups.
- This summer we will launch our 10<sup>th</sup> year of Kids’ Discovery Club, our day camp for elementary school aged children from all walks of life. Summer Lunch provides an everyday, hot, sit-down, nutritious meal for adults and children. Both events take place at The Plains UM Church. Know someone interested in being a volunteer once a week?
- We are recruiting interns for our Appalachian Immersion Internship that begins in September. Maybe you know someone who wants to explore a deeper life in service to the people of rural Appalachia through Good Works.
- You can learn about some recent Good Works events from our web site under the What’s Happening section.
- WEEK OF SERVICE is an opportunity for anyone age 16 or older to spend a week with our community in service. To learn more, visit our web site and explore the section on “Internships.”
- The Transformation Station continues to provide appliances, bicycles, furniture, food and cars to the people of southeast Ohio. We are getting ready to provide car #160.
- We continue to be so very thankful to everyone who surrounds and supports the community that is formed and sustained through The Timothy House. Many adults and children continue to find a temporary home there along with the stability and HOPE that comes through structure and the kindness of staff and volunteers. It’s amazing to consider that Good Works has provided temporary shelter to people without homes for 36 consecutive years.

IN CLOSING, I want to again say THANK YOU for your gifts and support in so many different ways! I also want to encourage you to come and visit us this summer or fall. We have been hosting many guests and are grateful to continue to provide hospitality. Come for a morning or afternoon or overnight and see this amazing process of “connecting people from all walks of life with people in poverty so that the kingdom of God can be experienced.”

Love is a verb,



Keith Wasserman