



Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope

Celebrating 35 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)*

Dear friends,

May 2016

Hospitality brings to mind different images for different people. For some it is travel, new faces, and new adventures. For others it is clean white sheets and hot coffee. Most in America would associate hospitality with the hotel and tourism industry. At Good Works we have a *paradigm* of hospitality—one that is rooted in an ancient practice for the people of God.

The ancient practice involved the Middle Eastern tradition of welcoming visitors to a community into the homes of the residents of that community to stay overnight—literally welcoming strangers into their own homes. Creating space in both their houses and in the life of the family to welcome visitors. This is so different from the way in which our current culture moves increasingly towards insulation as a way of life. In middle America in particular, relative wealth and technology insulate us from relationships with people whose lifestyles and economics are different from our own. This paradigm becomes individualism.

But we are made for relationships!

Having a paradigm of hospitality for us has everything to do with intentionality. Some may equate hospitality with entertaining, but its roots come from the idea of loving strangers like they are our brother or sister.

"Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." These instructions in Romans 12:13 are surrounded by other, related instructions, like, "Love must be sincere" (verse 9) and "Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited" (verse 16). It is one thing to love people in theory—to romanticize the idea of loving people. It is another to regularly share space and conversation. It involves a generosity of spirit.

The paradigm of individualism makes us imagine reaching out to people all on our own—it makes us imagine reaching out as inherently dangerous. It's the context of a loving community that enables *us*, not me or you, but us to welcome with open hearts.

Three days a week at noon, everyone who is working on the Good Works property gathers for a meal together. We come together over comfort foods—soups, biscuits, meatloaf, and unending cans of green beans—lovingly prepared by different volunteers during different seasons. While the food *is* delicious, the purpose is the fellowship. Staff members, Transformation Station volunteers and other volunteers break from their work and spend the hour in conversation.

Sharing a meal gives us a starting place—by virtue of eating the same food, we already have something in common, something to talk about. As we continue to talk we discover that we have so much in common; we have common hopes for our families and community. When your stomach and heart are full they don't leave any room for conceit.

Recently we spent a staff meeting sorting through what we really mean when we say hospitality. Two themes were repeated over and over again: welcome and unconditional love. We feel very committed to the vision of welcoming and helping one another *practice* hospitality in a way that that feels safe, demonstrates respect, maintains dignity, and fulfills the mission of Good Works.

IN THE NEWS...

- We held our annual spring Volunteer Affirmation Picnic for many of our volunteers in April. We feel so grateful for these beautiful partnerships based on trust and integrity, and how together we are able to sustain a *community* of HOPE.



Spring Volunteer Affirmation



Transformation Station Celebration #148

- We are planning to launch the 16th season of Summer Service. Our interns arrive June 12 and after a week of training, we facilitate several initiatives including an every-day Summer Kids Discovery Club/Summer Lunch, our Teen Agriculture and Christian Discipleship internships, and we welcome seven week-long Work Retreat Groups.
- Our weekly class called Neighboring 101 (based on the book *When Helping Hurts*) is raising questions about the definition of poverty and exploring that poverty is not just material need but primarily the broken relationships we all have with God, with ourselves, with others, and with creation. In this context, we are examining *ourselves* and talking about helping without hurting the people we care so much about!
- We are seeking donations of food (fresh, shelf stable, and/or frozen). As you may know, Good Works provides around 21,000 meals each year to people who struggle with food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition. Any help you can provide would be appreciated. Do you want to do a “food drive” for GW?
- We have several WEEK OF SERVICE interns coming this summer. This week-long internship allows those who participate to serve in many different aspect Good Works for one week. If this interests you, contact us!
- You can support Good Works financially through our website. Click on “Make a Donation.” You can also give to honor someone you love.
- Service Living, our initiative with OU students has completed its 7th year under the leadership of Doug Schmaltz and Frances Bissell. We feel encouraged to see students experiencing transformational relationships as they volunteer through the Timothy House, Friday Night Life and through other organizations in Athens County. It is encouraging for us to hear how Service Living has inspired so many students to better understand the history, values, beauty, needs, and people of rural Appalachia.

In closing this month, I want to ask for your financial support for Good Works. This summer, we will again step out in faith to welcome about 20+ interns and many different volunteers as we engage in an intense season of mission and ministry. As you might imagine, our expenses go up significantly. We have learned to trust God and God’s people to provide. Thank you for whatever you are able to contribute.

Love is a verb,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kw'.

Keith Wasserman