

# 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)*

Fall Greetings to the Community of Hope!

October 2016

This is a busy season in Athens, Ohio. We are connecting with many college students and professors at this time, and we have begun our season of fall Work Retreats. We are encouraged by these opportunities to connect with people who really do care and genuinely desire to grow in compassion.

Members of the public or visitors to our properties will sometimes ask us what our agency does. The truth is, we shy away from calling ourselves an agency. While there is nothing wrong with that term, we know that what we do emerges from who we are. God is forming us into a loving, welcoming and healing *community*—one in which mutual, respectful relationships with people in poverty are not only possible, but essential.

These words from Psalm 68 describe our heart, "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families" (verses 5 & 6). Over the summer, the interns who were living in the Hannah House discovered that one of the residents of the Timothy House was having a birthday. A few of them conspired to find out his favorite dessert and then made him a plate of peanut butter cookies from scratch. It wasn't their *job*—it was the attentiveness that comes from feeling like a family.

These actions can feel unremarkable at times. We can take for granted that people can be kind, but there is something especially *good* about God's character on display. Lonely people are placed in families. More specifically, *we* become a family for lonely people.

Like a family, sustaining a community requires both the desire for deep unity, and a willingness to do the hard work of preserving that unity. It requires yielding to each other and owning a commitment to work through conflicts. In a close family, if one member is suffering everyone is affected; in a community, we yield some of our independence when we come to understand that our own wellbeing is dependent on the wellbeing of the other members.

After coming to Good Works as a resident of the Timothy House, Eva became a fixture of Friday Night Life for many years. In the last decade of her life her declining health made it difficult for her to come to this gathering. It was beautiful to see God's faithfulness to Eva, and to see our

community at its best, as different people were present in her life in different ways over those years. A young woman was her weekly ride to Friday Night Life for a season, and then a pair of brothers brought her regularly. As those people moved away, new people embraced her.

Was her life less lonely as result? If her ride fell through, did it matter to her? Clearly, obviously, yes. Community feels the most vital for the most vulnerable. The nature of the family of God, however, is that her life made our lives richer as well, and her presence is still missed. Perhaps we have something to learn from the better-or-worse, permanent nature of a family.

In a community that includes people who are vulnerable, we sometimes experience our own woundedness in a new way. Recently, a friend finished her internship with Good Works. In reflecting on her time here, she said that she had come, in part, because she saw this as a place where she could use her gifts to share love with people in the midst of their brokenness. She discovered that the woundedness of our neighbors touched some pain in her as well.

Her journey is echoed in all of our experiences. Encountering people whose vulnerabilities are not so easily hidden makes tender places in our own lives feel exposed. This is community, too—when we bear with one another and become safe for each other. Instead of denying our weaknesses, we can allow God to redeem them—to turn them into our strengths. – *Andrea Horsch*

#### IN THE NEWS....

- On Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> we are hosting/sponsoring an all day seminar called **GOING DEEPER** where we hope to learn together about what it looks like to share our lives with people in poverty. We will start our day with a presentation by Keith on Foundations of Fruitful Relationships. To learn more about the seven different sessions being offered, visit our website, email us or call us.
- This fall, we are expecting 11 different groups to join us as Work Retreats. These groups participate in relationships with people we are loving and serving through Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Good Works Gardens and The Transformation Station.
- Jimmy Blackwell recently joined the full time staff. He comes to us through Asbury Theological Seminary. Jimmy served as a summer intern in 2016, and will be part of the Hannah House team.
- The Transformation Station (TS) recently made car #150 available to a family! Thank you for passing on the word about our need for cars! Participants in the TS work alongside Work Retreat groups as they volunteer time and receive points to obtain a car.
- We are currently seeking the donation of a rototiller, a tractor, and new mattresses for twin beds. An updated needs list is on our website under Current Needs.

There are many days when what we do is filled with JOY, but there are also days when what we do to welcome and love people who experience poverty and homelessness in Athens is hard. Sometime, the pain of people's lives and their emotional distress cause them to be very ungrateful and demanding to those of us on the front lines. The staff of the Timothy House is persevering, and they are doing a wonderful job taking care of each other. We don't live to be appreciated. I know that. We know we don't do this alone; it takes a community. I want to express our deep gratitude for your support.

Love is still a verb,



Keith Wasserman



TS Car Celebration #150