



Good Works, Inc. – A Community of Hope

Celebrating 38 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)

January 2019

Greetings with JOY and GRATITUDE from all of us who form the Community of HOPE!



Darlene and Keith Wasserman stand in their basement shelter for the homeless. NEWS photo/SUSAN J. HINKLE

Local couple seeks home to shelter Athens' homeless

By Melody Sands
Athens News Editor

For the last four years Keith Wasserman and his wife, Darlene, have opened the basement of their Elliot Street home to homeless people.

Individuals who were poor, had been evicted, were transients or recently released from the Athens Mental Health Center could seek shelter at the Wassermans' house, which they called "Good Works."

The city police, county sheriff's departments or other social agencies, such as the Salvation Army, would inform people about the house.

However, the chore of handling the 114 people who stayed more than 300 days at their home in 1983 has become a burden the Wassermans want to change. Now they are seeking a shelter for the homeless to be run by a house manager. The local

Christian community has donated funds to the Wassermans for expenses, such as free food, sleeping space and some personal items, such as toothpaste and toothbrushes.

Some problem-solving counseling was offered to the guests, Keith said, or individuals were referred to other social service agencies.

"Our hope is that someone who believes in what we are doing will lease us a facility for free. We would pay the taxes, utilities, insurance. We would remodel and do upkeep and maintenance," he said.

"We are appealing to the community for help. We'd like to see Good Works continue. It's a burden for me and my wife, and for us to do it, we need another facility."

January 1st marked the start of our 39th year. From our small beginnings in the basement of my home in 1981 to our present day, we recognize that God has invited us into this ministry and trusted us with responsibility. We pledge to use our power for good as we continue to love and serve, and develop friendships with people who experience vulnerability, exclusion, and poverty.

Terri Woodson has been on the Good Works staff for 19 years and has held several different roles. Today, she is the key person who receives inquiries from people who are asking for help through Transformation Station, and orients them to our community. She has eyes to not only see the needs of a person, but also the *potential* of what they could be like if their burdens were lifted. This month, Terri shares these thoughts with us:

When we invite people in to participate, no matter what area, we intentionally sit down with them and listen to their interests and ideas, as well as orient them to what we are doing and how we are doing it. Out of these times come connecting points. Sometimes the connecting points are their gifts and how they can use them. Another is their perspective on life—that they know their viewpoint and their voice matters.

Many of the people we come into a relationship with have some type of a crisis they are dealing with or have dealt with. If they are coming to the Timothy House, through the Transformation Station, or are one of our neighbors whose home is in disrepair, initially they are expecting a service type of relationship. We

deliberately and intentionally seek out more, knowing that each person is made in the image of God, and wondering what can happen here. What can we offer or receive that is lasting? We know that repairs are necessary but temporary; however, we have found lasting relationships.

Time and time again we have had people stay at the Timothy House, come through the Transformation Station, or receive help through Neighbors Helping Neighbors, who decide that they want to come back and be a part of the community in some way. Many come on a regular basis to Friday Night Life where they can reconnect with people on a weekly basis, often times bringing desserts or helping hands to assist their neighbors. Older neighbors will come join us for lunch at the Hannah House after a team of volunteers has just finished working on their home. Whatever way they come, whether through the ways I just mentioned or other connecting points, we are hoping they feel like they have a loving community they can be an active part of.

These activities promote community building, companionship, creativity, and we can go on. They steer young people into healthy options for their lives. They let the elderly and disabled in our community know that they are relevant and cared about. They inspire people towards hope. Reminding them that they don't have to settle for loneliness and lack, that they are more than welcome to share their lives with us, and we would like to do the same.

Many of these people who have come over the years through these initiatives have come back to participate with us simply to be a part of the community. They may have initially needed shelter or some material item, but later wanted to share in the growing of relationships and building of hope. In any given initiative you will find them. They may be preparing take-home food bags at Friday Night Life, or going out to help us repair someone's home, or spending time with our residents at the Timothy House, and even fund raising for us for the Good Works Walk. And all the while the worth and dignity of each person is being affirmed and appreciated.

Terri is one of four current Good Works staff members who came initially as residents of the Timothy House. Following her stay there in 1996, she participated in Life in Transition, living in the Hannah House for over a year. She is married to Bill, and together they have one son, Benjamin, who is now 16 years old.

IN THE NEWS

- We are preparing for the 2019 Good Works **WALK** scheduled for Saturday, February 23 here in Athens. This interactive WALK will focus on understanding and loving the stranger. All money raised by the WALK goes directly toward forming a home for people without homes at the Timothy House. We have been striving to practice hospitality since 1981. Come and experience something new with us! www.goodworkswalk.net
- Please help us pass the word about how a donation of a car impacts the lives of those here in rural Ohio. We provided car #174 in December!
- Receipts for your gifts to Good Works in 2018 will be mailed before January 31st, 2019. If you need this sooner, please contact us.
- Pending full funding, our new initiative, SIGN OF HOPE is on schedule to break ground in the spring. We are hoping to receive the final 25% of funding in the next few months. The materials for this house are expected to cost \$150,000.00, and we are planning to do most of the work with volunteers. If you know someone who would like to participate this year alongside us as we construct this building, contact Paul Richard at 740.594.3336 or at email@good-works.net. To learn more about Sign of HOPE, visit our website, under "What We Do."
- We are planning our 21st year of Summer Service beginning June 9th. We are seeking interns who will live in Christian community on the GW property and work with us for nine weeks as we welcome different week-long Work Retreat groups. Maybe you know someone who wants to develop their leadership abilities and deepen their relationship with God who you can encourage to apply? There is more information under Internships on our website.
- 2019 will be the second year we will be offering Spiritual Formation Retreats both to Work Retreat groups and to other groups who seek us out. Our focus for these half-day or full-day retreats will be on the different practices which sustain Christian Communities: Hospitality, Truth-Telling, Promise Keeping, and Gratitude.

In closing, I am asking for your prayers. Like everyone, I need encouragement, wisdom and perspective. I know I'm doing what I have been called to do, but I need God's grace especially now as we turn the corner of another year. Thank you!

Love is a verb,

Keith Wasserman

