



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)*

Dear Friends,

March 2019

Greetings with JOY and gratitude! I want to begin our letter this month by expressing my heart-felt gratitude to each of you for your kindness and generosity both to Good Works and to those we are working hard to love and serve. The work we are doing requires a lot of focus and concentration by each of us. Your kindness is holding us up!

As I look down the corridor of 2019, I see Good Works (and the community we are developing) continuing to provide HOPE for so many of our friends who are facing daily difficulties. So many good things are taking place every day in and through our community. The people we are building trust with are experiencing love, and friendship, and HOPE. This is good. This is our mission. We are grateful. As many of you know, Friday Night Life (FNL) is now in year #26 and serves such a wide range of adults, teens, and children every Friday from 4:30-7:30 pm. This has become more than just a weekly event—it has become a community. The groups who sponsor provide a hot, nutritious, sit-down meal. The food is important, and we are grateful. The social and spiritual nourishment is also important. Our intention is that the atmosphere of FNL feels safe for everyone. When people feel listened to, they feel understood, and respected, and loved.

Come and watch as person after person, young and old, experiences the warmth and kindness of this setting. Come and see how the hardness of someone's demeanor is changed into tenderness because of love. Listen to the sound of joy and laughter expressed from person to person.

Every week, I am connecting with those who participate in Friday Night Life. This is an expression of love that comes in the form of sharing a meal. We have folks come from all over Athens County with the desire to share this meal with us. When I think of a meal, I think of family and friends coming together and sharing what they have. Each person gets enough of what they are needing and leaves full.

The need to be filled in a person's life that brings them to FNL is actually not always clear. Sometimes we need our bellies full, this is true, but our lives also need to be filled with thoughtful conversation, warm hospitality, and the understanding that we are happy to be seen, heard and loved. The Friday Night Life meal comes together by sponsoring groups from different churches and community organizations (some of which you may have participated in personally). Groups and recipients often leave with so much more. In providing the meal we do not always realize how much we need the conversation, friendship, and kindness that is offered by all those who participate in Friday Night Life. Every week I am amazed that it comes together and, I am always happy to be leaving "full." —Steve Rogers

Steve Rogers began his season with Good Works in 2009 as a summer intern and came on the full-time staff in 2011. He first served in the arena of Community Life, overseeing the Hannah House Community and then transitioned to the Timothy House and served as a Care-giver. Steve now serves on our Admin team, working with Friday Night Life.

IN THE NEWS

- 2019 is the start of our 39th year. I feel amazed and grateful at the grace of God, which has sustained us for 38 consecutive years.

- About 300 adults and children participated in the Good Works WALK, which took place on February 23rd. This was our last WALK, and we will be sharing more about this next month. There is an essay explaining why this is the last WALK, a written copy of Keith's speech, and a link to a local front-page news article located on our website under What's Happening Now.
- The Timothy House provided 111 adults and children with around 3,300 nights of food and shelter in 2018. Honestly, it *feels* like we served a lot more, in part because we met face to face with 153 individuals prior to some of them coming for shelter. The staff and volunteers who serve there carry a lot of responsibility, and the work we do together is both hard and wonderful. People are loved there and we know it. We provide a safe, clean and temporary home for adults and families with children while they identify, own and work on the issues that have caused them to experience homelessness. For most of this year, we had three families with very young children as well as several single men and women living in the house.
- Last year, Good Works hosted 29 Work Retreat Groups and completed 106 projects at the homes of 42 families (primarily widows and citizens struggling with aging issues and disability). We were able to do this with the help and partnership of 370 volunteers through Neighbors Helping Neighbors. All of this is made possible through your support. We have almost every weekend filled for the spring and summer, including several weeklong groups who are coming to serve alongside us in March!
- We have had several staff transitions in the past four months, and this has created some new challenges for all of us. We are so thankful for the wonderful season we have had with Jimmy and Emily Blackwell (Emily served with Good Works for 10+ years) and Fran Bissell (who served as the Director of Care-giving at the TH for several years). We were happy to welcome Aaron Duncan to the full-time staff last fall. Aaron is serving on the Administrative Team, using his talents in the areas of technology and his skills with Neighbors Helping Neighbors!
- We are glad to have four men of different ages and backgrounds serving in our residential internships right now, building relationships across different initiatives at Good Works, and preparing to provide hospitality and leadership to Work Retreat groups who visit this spring. We are currently accepting applications for our Summer Service Internship.
- Plans for Sign of HOPE are moving along. We are close to our goal of raising the funds for this new initiative and new house. We are hoping to break ground later this spring or early fall once we have the funds we need.

Finally, we are doing our best to carry responsibility across different areas with JOY and gratitude! We see our volunteers and interns having very rich experiences and growing in their abilities to form good relationships with good boundaries that are full of joy with the people we serve. At the Timothy House this week, a resident told me that she had never lived in a place where people were so nice to her and really listened. Thank you for being part of making this possible.

Love is a verb,



Keith Wasserman



Caitlyn O'Connell serves alongside Nick Smith on the Friday Night Life Kids Club team. They have 8 volunteers and work with 25-30 kids each week



Friday Night Life is held at The Plains UMC through April