

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,

November, 2019

Hello from Good Works on this beautiful fall day! Leaves are changing and falling in Southeast Ohio. A day like today makes it easy to be thankful for God's goodness and faithfulness, and for the beauty of this place.

Recently, one of our full-time staff members, Garrett Smith shared his thoughts about the goodness of the Friday Night Life (FNL) community, it's role in his life, and the hope FNL brings to people who participate. He talked about despair and the refuge that can be found when relationships lift up one another and provide each other hope:

Poverty causes despair.

Despair often causes people to lash out at those close to them. I have seen a lot of families that are without money push each other away over small things. Sometimes families band together more, though. One particular family in the FNL community is very close in spite of whatever is going on with their financial situation.

The people who are sharing their lives with one another at FNL are tending toward the direction of wanting to invest themselves into a community instead of pushing people away. FNL is a healing place where we can move into the positive direction of those feelings, wanting to knit ourselves into relationships. Because of FNL, there are dozens of kids coming from very unstable homes who have developed a network of friends in a safe place. They see a family extended beyond their own family, and with take home food (the extra bag or two of groceries that Good Works provides to people at FNL who sign up), they see a chance to help out *their* family.

Assisting with the take-home food is what drew me to Good Works initially. I felt like I could help in this arena, whereas at home I felt like I was falling apart. I was in a very bad mental state while being homeless and living with friends, and then also for about a year after that. But here I was able to set that aside and focus on helping people, loving a community of people, and being loved by a community of people. Friday Night Life was the first experience for me of finding a place.

I kept coming back to FNL because I was getting food to take home and a good warm meal. I started to build friendships with people. One of the staff started asking me to help out with take-home food. I thought it was a "one and done." I didn't expect to keep helping every week, but I was asked every time I came. It ended up being what I did every week for two years. The Good Works staff at that time pulled me in and made me feel useful.

When I'm at FNL, I don't feel like it's a job. It doesn't feel like I'm at work, because I've participated for 6 years now. Today my role is to form a bridge between residents of the Timothy House and people who participate regularly.

All summer, a single mom and her two kids rode a Good Works van from the Timothy House, where they were living, to FNL. The mom got several hours of space from her kids, and was able to participate in adult relationships while her children were being supervised. She was more energized and able to handle her kids after a time of rest. Her children got to interact with adults (Kids' Club volunteers) who had a lot of stability in their lives. It was good especially for her son, who doesn't have a dad or stable man in his life. The kids think they are coming to FNL to have fun, but they are coming and experiencing a touch of the kingdom of God even if they don't realize it.

Garrett Smith joined the full time Good Works staff in 2018 soon after graduating from Ohio University. He serves as a House Supervisor at The Timothy House. Garrett went through a season of homelessness and lived with a friend of his family for several months after finishing high school in 2012. He began participating in Friday Night Life in 2013 and started volunteering at the Timothy House later that year. Garrett was also a Summer Service Intern in 2015 and 2016.

*I would have despaired unless I had believed
that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. –Psalm 27:13*

IN THE NEWS

- Friday Night Life (now in year #27) has moved from the Good Works property to The Plains United Methodist Church until April 2020. It is a privilege to be able to continue our ministry in the village of The Plains. We have many openings for groups to sponsor the meal for FNL in 2020. Please pass the word, will you?
- Progress continues on Sign of Hope (SOH), the home we are building near The Timothy House on the west side of Athens. The lot is now home to a large pit that will soon be a basement. If you know of someone who would like to explore volunteering their time and skills to help us build SOH over the next year, encourage them to contact us! We are seeking individuals and groups to help us!
- We celebrated car #183 through Transformation Station (TS) in October. The woman who earned this car had to wait after completing her points until a vehicle was available. We are grateful for the several people who responded to our need for vehicles by donating their own cars. Thank you for communicating our need for cars!
- Summer Service Internship applications for 2020 are now available. Maybe you know someone you can encourage to apply. This nine-week paid internship is an opportunity for college-aged people to develop their understanding of leadership, and live in Christian community while they discern their calling to a lifestyle of service. More information is located on our website.
- Ami Snyder began her new role as Director of Care-giving this month. Ami will oversee the day to day operations of the Timothy House—supervising the care-giving staff and looking after the well-being of residents who reside there. Ami works alongside Garrett Smith, Ray Taw and Caitlyn O'Connell each day.

IN CLOSING, I offer three lessons I have learned from my years of ministry and service: (1) Leadership is lonely. (2) Ministry is fragile and, (3) real fruit, the kind that remains, takes years. In January I will start year #40 with Good Works. THANK YOU for walking alongside us, for strengthening us as we “spend ourselves” (Isaiah 58:10) on behalf of those we are loving and serving, and as we bear the kind of fruit that remains.

Love is a verb,



Keith Wasserman



Friday Night Life meets at The Plains UMC now through April 2020.



About 50 groups sponsor Friday Night Life each year. They provide food for 100-140 adults and children.



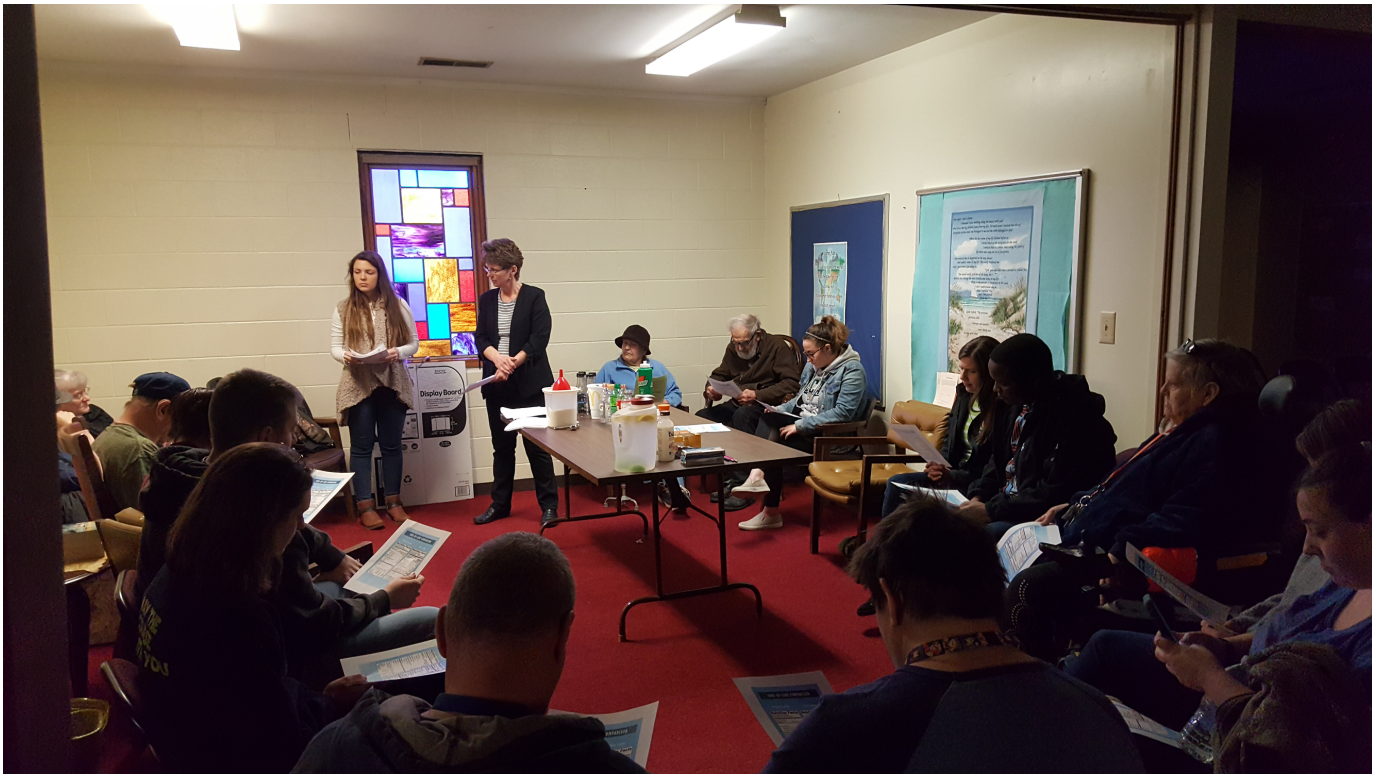
Caitlyn O'Connell and Nick Smith lead our Friday Night Life Kids/Teen Club each week. We host 25-35 kids and teens every Friday Night from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm.



Celebrate YOU was created by former GW staff Dawn Tobin many years ago. We make time to celebrate people on their birthdays with words of affirmation, prayers and small gifts.



Friday Night Kids Club has been going strong for 27 years. We have 8-12 volunteers who come each week and serve as mentors from 4:30-7:30 pm.



On several Friday's throughout the year, we host health education classes. This class was brought to us by a group of local dietitians. This presentation and discussion was about the amount of hidden sugar in soft drinks.