

Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope

Celebrating 39 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)*



Greetings from the community of HOPE!

February 2020

We started our 40th year on January 1st with gratitude, both for what we have been trusted with and for all of you who love us, contribute financial support, time, prayer, and encouragement. THANK YOU for making a place in your heart for those of us who serve and for those we serve through the ministry of Good Works!

The Timothy House has been quite a busy place this year. We are caring for families (including both teens and little babies), as well as single men and women. We are so thankful for all of the support we receive to carry out our vision and mission to love our neighbors who are facing homelessness here in rural Ohio. We are doing what we can even though the problem in our community is much larger than in previous years. We feel stretched.

March 1st begins our 2020 season of Work Retreats. This is our 23rd year of intentionally welcoming and organizing volunteers to come to Athens and stay on the Good Works property. Most of these volunteers visit the homes of widows, widowers and those who struggle with issues related to aging, disability and poverty while others help on the Good Works properties. We have 19 groups already scheduled to serve with us this year. On most years, we host 25-35 groups who come from the all over the Midwest, and serve for a weekend or weeklong experience. This year, we are going to do our best to balance the needs at the homes of our neighbors in rural Athens County with the need to construct Sign of HOPE.

This reflection comes from Heath Curry, one of our Appalachian Immersion Interns who served with us in 2019:

When we go out to serve our neighbors, there is a relational component that we strive for. In Appalachian regions, there are many forms of poverty. Some examples are situational, generational, relative, urban and rural. There are also spiritual and social forms of poverty. I would like to say a few words about social poverty in a rural context. In a rural context, the county populations are usually 50,000 or below and services become more limited. The lack of opportunities compounds the problem even more. We helped one particular neighbor by building a ramp onto a newer trailer they have slowly been planning to move into because their existing house was crumbling. His wife is permanently in a wheel chair. The husband in the story has severe diabetes and is limited in what he can do himself. This elderly couple have lived on this property for scores. I felt very connected with this slow-moving gentleman who strived to make a life better for his wife.

The ramp we constructed could have been finished in a day or two by two experienced carpenters. It took waves and waves of volunteers over the course of several weeks and we visited with this gentleman with some groups going out once or twice a week. With one group we set the posts, with another framed the ramp and ran the stringers into an accessible slope and another group decked it out. We also fixed an existing leak over the door, replaced floorboards from water damage and ran new downspouts. Each group was excited to help this gentleman and he had a story to share every time he handed you a screw or a bolt or a scrap piece of wood. We could see the sparkle in his eyes. The expression in his face lit up and as we were slowly getting things done, we were spending lots of time talking. He shared about himself and we talked about ourselves. He shared his health issues and every time we talked or shared an experience, this brought up another memory and a joke or two. He is still a hard worker even in his slow-moving elderly frame. Every time we visited with him was another reunion. He was excited to see strangers coming to his house from hundreds of miles away who took time out of their day to visit and talk with him. Many businesses have a philosophy that time is money, but here at Good Works, time is love. This makes me excited for every visit we do. – Heath Curry

We first met Heath when he participated in the Transformation Station in 2011. He returned years later to join the Appalachian Immersion Internship and finished A.I. in early January. During his time with Good Works, he found so many different ways to express his many gifts and abilities to build up the community.

IN THE NEWS...

- We provided car #184 to a participant in the Transformation Station in January. We continue to feel so grateful for those who donate cars because we SEE these gifts significantly impacting so many families for GOOD! I will never forget the words of the man who received his car earlier this year – “This is going to change my life”
- Keith and Darlene have continued to provide care and community at their home to families that the Timothy House is not able to serve because of space limitation.
- Sign of HOPE update: We are finishing up the foundation and plan to begin the next phase of this building in early March. If you would like to come and help, contact us through email, or call Paul Richard at 740.594.3336
- Friday Night Life will begin year #28 in March. We feel so thankful for the warm and welcoming community FNL has become. People often describe FNL as a family reunion, and it is. Thank you for helping us to sustain this beautiful community every week!
- We are seeking interns both for our Appalachian Immersion Internship and for our Summer Service initiative, which begins June 7th. Summer Interns receive a stipend, commit to 9 weeks, live together in the Good Works Hannah House and help provide leadership to the 7 visiting Work Retreats who are coming.
- As most of you know, the last Good Works WALK was held in 2019. For 2020, we are developing a new experience, which will be scheduled for later this year. It will be called **DAY IN THE LIFE**. More information to follow.

In closing.... I want you to know that 2019 was a transition year for several long-term staff who had been with us for more than 10 years. I feel so thankful for each of my former co-workers who gave so much of their heart and life to the mission, ministry and people of Good Works. It has been good, very good. But we are feeling the loss.

So much of my time and energy is focused on developing and building the kind of healthy community (both staff and volunteers) who are equipped to be agents of hope and healing. And now, we wait for God to send us people with a heart to love and serve the poor, with a heart to love and serve God.

Love is still a verb

Keith Wasserman

