

Good Works, Inc. — A Community of Hope

Celebrating 41 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)*

April 2022

Greetings with gratitude!

March was full of HOPE as we welcomed several Work Retreat Groups who came to serve with us as we reached out through Neighbors Helping Neighbors and worked on Sign of HOPE. We also transitioned back to "sit-down" meals at Friday Night Life. Because of the risks of COVID, we were providing "take-away" food through January and February. WE ARE GLAD to be sitting "with" again. But, our staff at the Timothy House feel very stretched and this concerns me. Please pray that the LORD would send laborers to join our team there as we care for the people who need temporary housing, community and care!

THE DARKER SIDE

Most of those we serve through Good Works recognize that what we are doing/saying to help them comes from the sincerity of our hearts and our efforts to love God and people, as Christ has loved us. By grace. But we are human and we do fall short. I think we not only try to know when we fall short, but we also try to take responsibility both as individuals and as a community. Keep in mind that we are often "over our heads" with the needs of others who seek our help, far exceeding our capacity.

We often have HOPE for people and do our best to believe in them even when they can't or don't believe in themselves. This too is love. We often try to communicate something like *"you can do this and we want to walk with you"*. Sometimes, the actions and verbal reactions we experience from those we are helping (often sacrificially) are not ideal. Said another way, people we are trying to love and serve can sometimes say mean and hurtful things to us. Hurt people hurt people. We grieve. We pray. We make time to process these things with one another. We try to live out forgiveness and help each other heal from the hurt and harm we have experienced. As a community, it is important that we try to bear one another's burdens and not expect each other to "go-it" alone.

ONE area where these things show up is at the Good Works Timothy House. WE welcome and receive strangers, some of whom have been hurt by others and find it difficult to trust us. Many times, they have held unforgiveness for a long time and it has turned into resentment, and now they have become bitter. The process of getting to bitterness in one's life (in my view) begins when the person is hurt and angry and really doesn't know what to do with that; or, is unwilling or unable to address what happened often because they did not have good role models, or never learned how to. I don't mean to oversimplify this. Some people have experienced abuse by others and are in a lot of pain and don't know what to do. By the way, there is often a thin line separating unwilling and unable in many of the people we serve. Maybe they don't understand the good hope of forgiveness and the freedom they can experience; or, can't wrap their mind around the idea of reconciliation because they are so blinded by their emotional pain and pride.

For me, forgiveness is what makes the good news good. It is the capacity (by grace) to receive and then offer forgiveness that gives us the hope of true reconciliation with others. And living in reconciled relationships is one significant aspect of true meaning in this life. I know that not all relationships can be reconciled and this is true for many reasons. I know.

Some people who seek out temporary housing and care through the Timothy House have been so hurt, so wounded, and have become so bitter that they have developed a blindness to what others are doing to help them. Oftentimes, they cannot see or experience our sincere efforts at love. While this is actually a small number of those we serve, their words and actions still “sting” and can trigger in us pockets of our own unresolved pain. Sometimes, people respond to our kindness with anger and nasty words (and sometimes even threats), even though it is often not even us with whom they are angry. We can often detect that this may be coming our way when we hear them speak about others in ways that are disrespectful and hurtful. So, what do you do when someone you are trying to love and help has hurtful things to say to you and about you, and says things about you and the organization which are untrue? What do you do when they are unwilling to talk about what they are saying? LORD, give us wisdom and especially wisdom to see people as you do, and to love people who have been hurt by others and help them through the process of healing.

IN THE NEWS...

- We are preparing for Summer Service (#23) praying for more Summer Interns and getting ready to welcome a summer-long experience with Work Retreat Groups, Summer Lunch, Kids Discovery Club and our teen Kingdom Internship. We are still hoping for someone to provide leadership to oversee the Good Works Gardens.
- Work continues on Sign of HOPE. We are planning for a dedication and Open House later this year. Stay tuned!
- Friday Night Life starts year 30 this spring. Wow... pause. Consider that. I too am amazed that we have been able to carry out this vision to love and serve our neighbors for all of these years with the partnership of so many groups. People come for food and community and for an opportunity to serve! We give thanks!
- PLEASE tell friends in your network about the Transformation Station, and how we help people get cars when they volunteer time to serve others with us in Athens County. We really need used, working vehicles now.
- WE are so thankful for the food which continues to be donated to serve all of the meals we provide each week. We are looking for meats (especially hams, chicken & beef) for our freezers now as we prepare for summer!

IN CLOSING I want to express my gratitude to the Good Works staff and volunteers who have stepped up and have allowed me some time away. As some of you may know, I have again been welcomed by Asbury Theological Seminary to serve the community as a Visiting Practitioner. It was Asbury that awarded me an Honorary Doctorate in 2012. I am teaching and speaking in classes, meeting with students, and writing and resting. I am still carrying a lot of GW responsibilities, but from Wilmore Kentucky now through the end of April.

Love is a verb,



Keith Wasserman