



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)*

May, 2022

Spring greetings with JOY and gratitude!

Since we started Good Works in 1981, we have relied upon the generosity of our neighbors to donate food and supplies. In the early days, we organized several households of college students in the Elliott Street neighborhood to "host" our residents for dinner from time to time. Also, in the early days we had a mini fridge and a microwave in the newly remodeled basement of our home on Elliott Street, which served as our shelter.

When Good Works moved to the west side of Athens (1984) to what we now call The Timothy House, we had a room for men, a room for women and a living room with a mini fridge and a microwave all on the second floor. The downstairs was an apartment for our house managers at that time, so the residents stayed only upstairs. We washed the dishes in the bathtub. My, how times have changed!

I spent an evening at the Timothy House recently. Each person staying with us was "first time" and we were the first shelter they had ever stayed in. I watched with JOY as neighbors donated trays and boxes of prepared food. I'm smiling. It feels good to serve in a place where people "remember the poor" (Galatians 2:10). Oftentimes, people take our needs list and purchase items. People frequently bring leftovers from parties, weddings or special events they have hosted. What a gift! The residents at the TH usually eat pretty well. In addition to the frozen and canned foods, there is a variety of fresh vegetables, meats, and milk almost every day donated by very kind people. This IS generosity. Sometimes it is "scheduled" and sometimes it is "spontaneous", but it is generosity. What a gift to the men, women and children who are experiencing homelessness who stay with us ... to come home to a hot, nutritious and tasty meal. WE are so thankful to be the recipients of this kindness. And you and I know we all need kindness; for acts of kindness can soften our hearts and move us towards being kind and generous.

IN THE NEWS

- WE NEED cars & trucks for the Transformation Station. We are about to provide car #192 soon. Know someone you can encourage to donate their car, truck or van? Is there a network or a place in your social media community where you can share this need?
- WE are so thankful for all of the volunteers who serve with Good Works on weekday evenings, at Friday Night Life, though Saturday Service and through Neighbors Helping Neighbors. We are welcoming new volunteers now... with gratitude!
- SIGN OF HOPE is moving along. We are about to construct the porches. We are happy to give you a tour anytime
- The wildflowers have come to life on the trails of the Good Works property! Come and walk the trails, visit the Carter Cabin for a time of solitude, stay in the Hannah House or at our Country Bed & Breakfast. Come to visit for a morning or afternoon, or schedule a service trip with us! We host service opportunities for families and Week of Service for individuals!
- We are preparing for our Summer Service Interns arrival in early June. We plan to launch our 2022 Summer Kids Discovery Club and our Kingdom Internship for local teens for 7 weeks beginning June 20th. Our first Summer week-long Work Retreat also arrives June 20th.

AS I looked around the room of volunteers last month during our Community Development Day, I heard their voices of tender love, compassion and concern for the people we are all investing in. As I listened, I could not help to think that together, as a community, we have become intentional about communicating HOPE to those who come to us. Together we are supporting and upholding people while they travel through difficult and hard times. Through the discipline of listening and by providing tangible resources, *we are communicating hope*. More importantly as we listen and pray, we intentionally take time to communicate that we believe in people, oftentimes, when they can no-longer find the strength to believe in themselves. We hope *for* people (verbally

and silently) even when they don't have much hope for themselves. Together, what we do is life-giving! As a community of ordinary people with willing spirits, we have become a community.... OF HOPE.

The Darker Side: Dehumanization

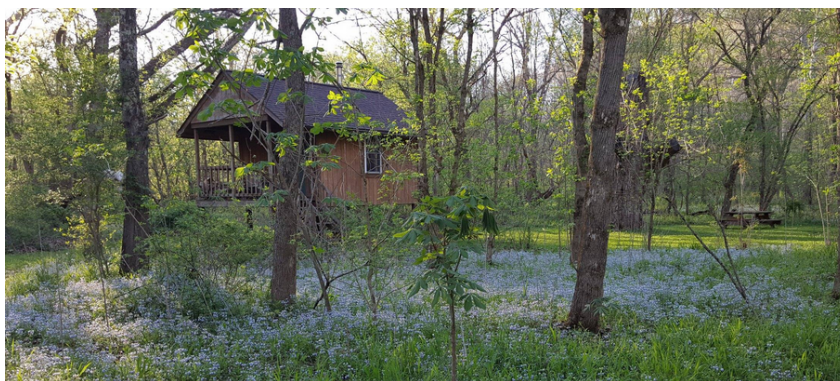
DE-humanization has become a powerful negative force in so many places. I experienced this as part of my 'learning curve' in most of the cities where I chose to experience homelessness. Each of us as we go through our days experience situations where we either feel dehumanized, or where we observe someone experiencing dehumanization. Is it possible that some of our institutions have "institutionalized" dehumanization? This is something I watch for in the Good Works community. During my journey into homelessness in Columbus Ohio several years ago, I experienced the power of dehumanization to humiliate me and distort my thinking, even though the staff were just "following instructions". I also heard/observed this applied publicly: "Would #23 come downstairs, we need to talk with you, #29 would you come down to the front desk". I know it was more efficient to operate that way, but was it really necessary? It felt dehumanizing. When I returned from my experience in Columbus, I became intent on doing our best to humanize everything we do at Good Works. I wonder what kind of evaluation tool we can use to determine if our structure has become dehumanizing in some way, and to correct it? Good Works has what we call "the ethic of inefficiency", which continually points us to the priority of people over projects. And so... we do our best to answer the phone, greet people by their name, pay attention to our tone of voice, and make an effort to use language that honors people and shows respect. We know there is more we can do. We know we fall short, but we are trying to see and address our blind spots as we care for people who are very vulnerable.

IN CLOSING I want to share a word about the Good Works staff: We feel stretched. Indeed, we are stretched and we are feeling it. At no time during COVID did we completely shut down anything we were doing. We navigated and operated with a commitment to do the best we could in the hard circumstances. And we did. I am so very thankful for the love, kindness, integrity and commitment I see in my coworkers who serve on the front lines of love, caring for adults and children who experience homelessness, working with those who participate in Friday Night Life, working along-side those seeking a vehicle through the Transformation Station, or those overseeing the volunteer groups who come to serve with us through Neighbors each year. Would you send them a note of encouragement and affirmation sometime this month? You can find all our names on the website under WHO WE ARE or you can call, text or email me and I will tell you.

Love is a verb,



Keith Wasserman



The Good Works Solitude Cabin is located on the Good Works Luhrig Road property. It was built in 1999. It was re-named The Carter Cabin and dedicated in May of 2012 to honor Robert (Bob) Carter who died in January 2012. Bob was a dear friend and was the first full time person on the Good Works staff (in addition to Keith) beginning in 1987. The Carter Cabin provides a place of solitude and rest to anyone seeking time alone.