

Good
Samaritan
Home

New Beginnings

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More needy in '08

Although Darke County is a rural community, we face many of the same problems as big cities, but with fewer services available for help.

Unemployment in Ohio is 7.3% and locally it has been as high as 7.9%. That's why so many people who were just hanging on when times were good are now unemployed and homeless.

Fitzpatrick House Shelter

As a result of this dire need in our community, since we opened our shelter in 2006 we have given 225 people more than 3,000 nights off the streets—and 43 of them were children.



Most come with no job, no money, no food and no hope. So we give them a safe place to sleep at night and plenty of food to eat. We offer emergency help when they are in crisis. **Mostly we offer acceptance.**



Ludlow Street House

Because there is such a need for housing for those coming back home from prison, in another leap of faith, we opened another shelter on Ludlow Street 18 months ago and since then have helped 35 men get a second chance.

We believe that faith can only be demonstrated through acts of kindness to the needy in our community. And there is no group of persons in greater need than those coming from prison—often unskilled, uneducated and emotionally ill-equipped to make it on their own.

That is what former Ohio Dept. of Rehab and Corrections Director Reginald Wilkinson meant when he said, *"Most parolees want to change their lives. They just don't know how."*

That is the primary focus of this reentry program. We show parolees how to become productive members of the community through relationships with positive role models. We believe that programs don't change people. People change people.

Transitional housing

Our intent from the beginning was to offer homeless people – especially children – a safe place to stay in an emergency. But a temporary shelter is not enough. It takes long-term housing—and especially mentoring if we want to break the cycle of generational poverty that is crippling our community. Now others are seeing that need too.

In November Judge Michael McClurg met with concerned community leaders to address this issue. The consensus was what we have been saying all along — transitional housing is desperately needed in our community.



So with help from volunteers, we are working hard to finish our first transitional apartment on Third Street. Here we can offer more than just low-cost housing. There are plenty of government programs for that. But we can help with budgeting, job training, and even family issues.

What families struggling to get out of poverty really need is a relationship with healthy people; Mentors to offer a hand up, not just a hand out.



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**GOOD SAMARITAN
HOME**

Welcoming the Stranger

Visit our website
www.goodsamaritanhome.org

Good-bye to our friend

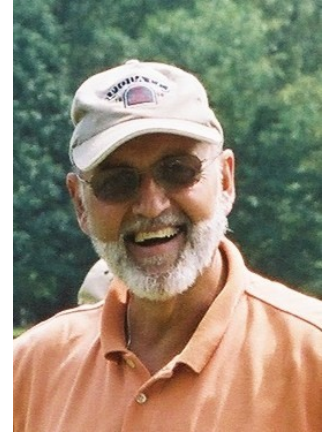
On October 30, 2008, we lost our good friend and board member Dave Folkerth. Although he battled cancer for 11 years, it never got in the way of his burning desire to help others. When he was first diagnosed, instead of focusing on his suffering, he devoted himself to relieving the suffering of others.

He served as a lay pastor and spiritual leader in his church for two years while they searched for a pastor.

He also spent countless hours as a volunteer for Community Unity – a local food pantry and place of last resort for the poor in the community. One example of his compassion was the time he had McDonald’s restaurant donate Happy Meal toys for the kids coming with their parents to the pantry for help. *“When the kids come to us, they have nothing,”* he said.

Most important to us, he committed his time and energy to Good Samaritan Home as a board member, remodeling helper, and my trusted friend and confidant. Even when near death, he gathered up all his strength to speak at the Greenville Zoning Board in our defense.

We will dearly miss our friend, but we know he is at peace with the Lord. Now God says of him, *“Well done, good and faithful servant.”*



GSH going to court

When you try to help parolees, there will always be critics. In 2002 the city tried to stop our ministry, and they are trying again. In August we received a letter stating that our Ludlow Street house, where this past 18 months we have helped 35 men coming home from prison get jobs and become productive members of the community, was in violation of the zoning laws and ***“must cease within the next thirty days.”***

We filed an appeal with the Zoning Board for several reasons.

First, several courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, have ruled that similar programs are legal in residential areas when they just offer housing. We are not a half-way house, nor a treatment center.

Second, and most important, this same zoning issue was addressed in 2002 with our first reentry house on East Third Street and the City

Law Director said that house—in the same neighborhood—was legal.



However, the zoning board still ruled against us—and there were even threats to shut down all our shelters.

We were not surprised by this ruling, because this is such an emotional issue, with so much fear and misinformation circulating throughout the community. And that fear and misinformation was brought to the zoning board by about a dozen neighbors.

So we have filed a lawsuit in court to overturn that decision.

We believe strongly that we are operating within the zoning guidelines set out by the city law director in 2002 when we first started this ministry.

More important, to close our doors, to tell all the homeless people who come to us that they have to fend for themselves on the street, is not only immoral, but would put the community at risk. By helping the homeless get a job and a place to live, the community is made safer and everyone wins. We believe the court will overturn the zoning board’s decision.

Like Dr. King said in the darkest days of the civil rights movement: **“Truth crushed to earth will rise again.”**

Unfortunately, it will cost us thousands of dollars that should go for more much-needed transitional housing.