

**Good  
Samaritan  
Home**

# New Beginnings

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## We're on the web

With all the changes going on with our ministry, we knew it was important to let people know more about us. And what better way to do that than through an Internet website.

But it can easily cost thousands of dollars to design a site—that is, unless you know Ben Hunt.

Ben is a local pastor and a website wizard who volunteered to get us on the web for FREE.

So now if you want to know more details about what is going on at Good Samaritan Home, then click on [www.goodsamaritanhome.org](http://www.goodsamaritanhome.org), and read all our past newsletters, newspaper articles about us, as well as the columns John Graham writes for the several local papers. There's even a photo gallery planned showing the past three years of our ministry.



## New name, same ministry

In April Koinonia House officially became Good Samaritan Home. Although the name has been changed, the ministry is still the same.

"Our primary focus from the beginning three years ago has been to use our home, to use Christian hospitality, as a way to share our faith," Good Samaritan Home Director John Graham said.

Board chairman Paul Bersche said it is actually a return to our primary vision.

"From the outset it was our hope the Graham's home would be a safe place for anyone in need. While working with the Koinonia ministry out of Chicago we focused on just working with ex-felons. Now as Good Samaritan Home and with our added outreach programs, we are convinced we will have more impact on the



*The ministry's new name is now displayed prominently on the front porch with an antique print that embodies the welcome spirit of the house.*

community."

### Planned for 35 years

The new name for the ministry is now on display on the front porch set in an antique print and frame.

But ironically, this name was planned 35 years ago. Kathy bought an old print at a garage sale for just 75 cents that she felt embodied the warmth and love that she wanted to be the center of her home one day.

Over the years it was mostly kept in storage because it never quite fit whatever house we were living in. Although I threatened to throw it out repeatedly, Kathy insisted we keep it "until we find just the right house for it."

So when we were looking for a sign to display our new name, Kathy pulled her old 75-cent print out of the closet one more time and announced, "I think I've found the perfect sign for us."

And she was right. Good Samaritan Home—built in 1879—is about welcoming the stranger.



# Greater outreach to parolees

After two years of ministry, the board realized the Koinonia mentoring program was not helping enough ex-felons. So in the spring of 2003 when we were asked by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to facilitate a volunteer mentoring group in both Miami and Darke counties, we readily agreed.

It is called Citizen Circle, and instead of working with just three men at a time, now we can reach as many as 200 ex-felons already in the community.

"Most ex-felons really want to make it on the outside. They just don't know how," ODRC Director Reginald Wilkinson said.

Since August we have helped train about two dozen volunteers so they can mentor the parolees in their communities.

Although several of the people are what you would call "professionals" - parole officers, mental health counselors, pastors, the majority of those involved are just ordinary folks.

"I don't have a lot of degrees. I'm just a good old boy," Bradford resident Bob Reed said. "But if I can help someone to get their life straight, I'm willing to do that."

Rich Gustafson of Arcanum agreed. "It's an opportunity to give back to the community, especially with those Jesus called 'the least of these.'"

But Gustafson said what impressed him most about the Citizen Circle program is that it is a group effort.



*Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Director Reginald Wilkinson with John Graham at a community meeting for Citizen Circle volunteers.*

Even talking with someone who has been in prison can be frightening for some people. But the mentoring that happens here is done as a group, "and that is a safer way to get involved," he said.

## Statewide outreach

In December our outreach was magnified greatly when Sara Andrews, the superinten-

dent of the Ohio Adult Parole Authority, asked me to be a member of the statewide Citizen Circle steering committee. One year ago there were just three Citizen Circle mentoring groups in the state. Now there are nineteen, and it is hoped that every one of Ohio's 88 counties will have a group in place soon.

And because of the ODRC's willingness to use volunteers from the local community to help ex-felons return home, we are planning to train Circle members to begin working with ex-felons while they are still incarcerated.

Successful reentry is not about programs. It is about relationships. And because of that, it is our goal that every inmate coming back to the community will be connected with a mentor before they are released from prison.

The mentors will meet with the inmates at the prison and begin to develop a relationship with them. Then when they are finally released, the critical issues like housing and a job will already be taken care of. Most of all, they will know there is welcome place for them when they return home.

With Citizen Circle our ministry can help hundreds of people instead of just a few.

# New building purchased

## Will provide temporary housing for needy

From the beginning of our ministry, we knew our outreach in the community was too limited.

"Can you help my son. He is homeless and I'm not able to help him?"

"There is a boy at my house and he just needs a place to stay until he gets his feet on the ground."

"I heard you help people and we have no place to stay tonight and I'm afraid for my babies."

These are typical of the calls for temporary shelter that we have gotten these past three years. Although we wanted to help them, we weren't set up to take in strangers.

Then when I learned there were nearly three dozen families in the county left homeless because of fires just last year, we decided we had to do something to help these neighbors.

"What we need is more space," I told Kathy each time we had to turn someone away. "Better yet, we need another home specifically to help local people in need."

But each time she reminded me there was no money to even think about another building. It would take a miracle for our vision to come true, she said.

### A miracle - twice

But when Kathy's parents



*Good Samaritan Home ministry has expanded its outreach to the community with the purchase of an apartment building at 449 E. Third St.—directly across the street from our current location.*

died recently, they left her a small amount of money in November. Our first reaction was to use it for ourselves—for our retirement.

But then we read that passage in Matthew 25 about the servant who failed to use the money given him wisely. *"I was afraid and hid your money in the ground,"* he confessed when confronted by his master.

So in faith, Kathy and I committed to use her parent's gift as a down payment on a building that will expand our ministry to hurting people in the community.

"But where?" I asked Kathy. "The ideal building is right across the street, but it's not for sale."

And here's the second miracle. We checked and sure

enough, they were willing to sell it to us, and at a price we could afford.

### Your help

So now we need your help. The apartment will need some renovation—mostly painting, insulating and carpeting. And we will need to furnish it as well. Beds, furniture, draperies, kitchen utensils, anything you can donate. We would like our friends in need to feel at home, if only for one night. So anything you can help with will be much appreciated, but no donations will be used

toward the purchase of this house.

We hope to open this new home soon—hopefully by the end of March. But to do that we need your prayers, your labor and your financial support to make welcome our guests in what we are now calling the *Fitzpatrick House* in honor of Kathy's parents.

**Will you help us help your neighbors in need?**



*The new building was dedicated to Kathy's parents, Bill and Helen Fitzpatrick, whose donation funded the down payment.*



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## GOOD SAMARITAN HOME

*Welcoming the Stranger*

Visit our website  
[www.goodsamaritanhome.org](http://www.goodsamaritanhome.org)

## Good Samaritan Home remodel nearly done

For the past three and a half years we have lived in a major construction project to make our 125-year-old house a place where hurting people could find welcome, safety and healing.

There were times—especially when it was just 55 degrees in the house all winter – when we didn't think we would ever see our dream come to pass.

But last Christmas the kitchen was completed, by Easter the living and dining rooms were done, and by July the master bedroom was finished. Although the new oak flooring is not done yet, for the first time since we moved in, we feel like we have a home at last.

More important, we feel like we can finally offer hurting people in the community a safe place where they can find acceptance—and our dining room table will serve people



Kathy's dining room table is the center of our ministry to those hurting people who come to Good Samaritan Home for help.

in both houses.

Although restoring this old house

### Our History

Good Samaritan Home was started in 2001 as Koinonia House, a residential mentoring home for Christian men coming out of prison. But when we realized we were not reaching the vast majority of needs in the community, we expanded our vision, changed our name and added to our building to help more people in need.

### Our Mission

We believe that faith can only be lived out through acts of kindness to the needy in our community. That is what Jesus meant when he said, “Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” For us that means using our home, our time and our lives to show Christ.

### Our Vision

Our goal is to help heal broken lives in the community with whatever means we can. By doing that we not only change others, but we change us as well.

is not our real ministry, it is a symbol of our ministry of restoring broken lives. It is like the motto on our website says, *“With enough work, enough time and enough help from the whole community, broken lives, like a broken house, can be made new.”*

To be honest, it has not always been easy. Rebuilding lives is like living in an emergency room. It can be messy, but the alternative—to do nothing, is not an option.

In Hebrews 11:1 it says, *“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”* We bought this house on faith. We lived through the dirt and cold on faith, and most of all, we welcomed strangers into our home on faith. We did that because without someone opening their lives to us, none of us would know Christ. Can we do any less for others?