

Good  
Samaritan  
Home

# New Beginnings

Volume 6 Issue 1

December 2007

## Never Again!

I was cleaning off my desk this week when I came across an old picture I took of Christy Winans and her three kids. They were sitting on the steps of our shelter and all of them were smiling. Those were better times for all of us.

The kids died in the Sept. 16 Greenville house fire and Christy is alone now to face a lifetime of second-guessing her actions.

Kathy and I have done our share of second-guessing too. My mind knows we did all that we could for the kids, but my heart still aches every time I realize we will never see them again.

I showed the picture the Kathy. She cried.

What really scares me about this situation is that Christy's plight is not that uncommon. Since we opened our shelter two years ago, 85 percent of the families who have stayed there have been without fathers. Women – often children really – trying to raise children.

Add in lack of education, broken families, drugs, mental health issues, and it is a disaster waiting to happen. What hope do their kids have?

Our intent from the beginning was to offer homeless people – especially children – a safe place to stay in an emergency. But now two years later

*Our goal is to buy at least four more apartments in the neighborhood that we can then rent to families like Christy's at a fraction of the cost they would normally have to pay.*

it has become apparent that a temporary shelter is not nearly enough. What is needed is long-term affordable housing in our community.

So in 2008 our goal is to buy at least four more apartments in the neighbor-

hood that we can then rent to families like Christy's at a fraction of the cost they would normally pay.

But here's the key. It's not just help with rent that they need. There are plenty

of government programs to do that. What is desperately needed is help with budgeting, job training, family issues and a litany of other needs that are critical if we want to break the cycle of generational poverty that is crippling our community. **What families struggling to get out of poverty really need is a relationship with healthy people like you. Mentors who can offer a hand up, not just a hand out. Programs don't change people. People change people.**

Since Sept. 16 we have been wrestling with a lot of "what ifs." What if we had done this two years ago? What if we had a safe apartment for them other than that slum they moved into after staying in our shelter? What if we had mentors to help her through the hard times all parents go through?

**Well, if we get our way, there won't be any more "what ifs" when it comes to any of the other kids who come to us for help.**

**John Graham  
GSH Director**



*Christy Winans and her three children, Ja'Shawn, Jasmine and Kayla, in happier times at our shelter. All three kids were killed in a tragic apartment fire Sept. 16.*

# 2nd homeless shelter will house more people

In 2004 we were asked by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to start a non-residential mentoring program for parolees coming back home from prison called *Citizen Circle*. Since then, with the help of 24 community volunteers, we have made this reentry support program into one of the best in the entire state.

## Leap of faith

However, the *Citizen Circle* program still did not address the dozens of requests that Good Samaritan Home receives for housing assistance from those coming out of prison.

So this year, in a giant leap of faith, we expanded our vision with the purchase of a third house at 116 Ludlow Street that will be used to offer much-needed transitional housing for parolees who have nowhere to live when released.

More important, we are now able to offer them daily mentoring support in finding jobs and permanent housing.

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 out of prison—often unskilled, uneducated and emotionally ill-equipped to make it on their own.

We believe that is what former ODRC 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 transitional apartment program. We show parolees how to become productive members of the community through relationships with positive role models. We believe that programs do not change people. People change people.

## Community project

Remodeling the Fitzpatrick House shelter took nine months, but we needed this house ready in just three months to meet the ODRC contract requirements. Fortunately

we had plenty of volunteers from the community to help us. We could not have done it without their help.

## Already helped many

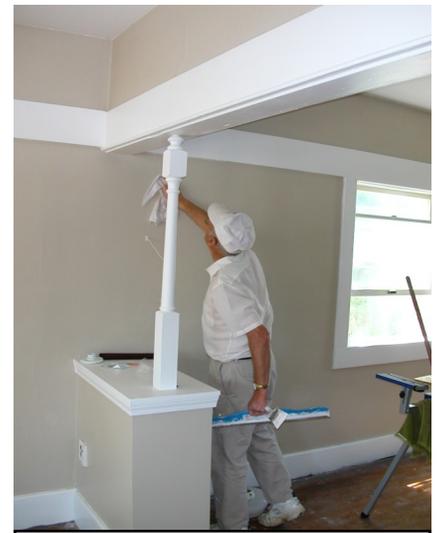
Since the new house opened in July we have already housed 12 men for an average stay of 50 days each—and seven more are committed to come as this winter and spring.

Although residents can stay for up to 90 days, most are able to get a job and their own apartment in less time.—which is a sure sign of the success of this much-needed program.

Helping parolees has never been a popular program. But we do it because these men are literally the “least of these” that Jesus said we must serve if we want to take our faith seriously.



Like all our houses, this new transitional home for parolees needed a lot of remodeling to make it livable. Much of the work was done with volunteer help.



Don Kaiser did such a good job helping us remodel the Fitzpatrick House shelter in 2005, that we asked him to help us with our new house as well.

# Busy year at first shelter

Although Darke a rural community, it faces many of the same problems as inner city communities, but with fewer services available to them. For example unemployment locally is 6.2 percent – and has been as high as 7.9 percent, and so many people who were barely paying bills are now unemployed and homeless.

As a result of this dire need in the community, **since we opened our homeless shelter, we took in 60 people in 2006 – including 24 women and children; and in just the first nine months of 2007, we have sheltered another 62 people – including 27 women and children.**

Most come to us with no money, no food, no job and no one to help them. Worst of all, most have no hope. So we can give them a safe place to sleep at night and plenty of food to eat. We offer emergency help when they are in crisis.

Good Samaritan Home has partnered with several local organizations to better serve the needs of the homeless in our community such as: Darke County Job & Family Services, Ohio Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction, Community Action Partnership, Community Unity and United Way of Darke County, to name just a few.

## More than facts and figures

Those are the facts and figures, but here is the flesh and blood of what is happening at the shelter.

When **Rob** came to the shelter he had been sober for just three weeks. Although he got a job and attended AA meetings

faithfully, his past came back to haunt him when he was arrested for an outstanding warrant. That cost him 45 days in jail and his job.



*Rob with his mentor Dan Glover from the Evangelical United Methodist Church in Greenville.*

When he was released, he came back to the shelter and we helped him get another job. Unfortunately, he still had more old charges to answer for and was again facing more jail time.

This time we went to court with him and convinced the judge to let him stay in the shelter under house arrest instead of going back to jail.

“Whatever we can do to help him keep his job, we will do,” GSH Director John Graham told the judge.

She agreed and Rob was able to keep his job, continue his AA meetings and his relationship with his mentor Dan Glover.

**“Alcohol is like being insane. Now that I’m sober I can see the other side and I really don’t want to go back again,”** Rob said.

**Jennifer** has been battling a myriad of emotional, physical and mental issues all of her life. Because of this she would often act

out in anger and even violence. The end result was that Jennifer had been jailed for an assortment of misconduct charges “at least 15 times” she admitted.

So when Darke County Municipal Court Judge Julie Monnin asked if we could take Jennifer into our shelter because she had run out of options, we readily agreed.

But rather than just give her shelter, we connected her with Kathy Kenworthy. Kathy is an Edison College intern who has been working with the female shelter residents this fall.

“I think I have found my calling,” Kathy said.

*“The merciful will be found consorting with publicans and sinners, careless of the shame they incur thereby. For the only honor and dignity they know is their Lord’s own mercy, to which alone they owe their very lives.”*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer,  
The Cost of Discipleship



*Edison College intern Kathy Kenworthy talks with GSH Director John Graham about Jennifer.*



**John Graham**  
**Director**

P.O. Box 382  
Greenville, OH 45331

Phone: (937) 547.6337  
Email: jgraham19@woh.rr.com

**GOOD SAMARITAN  
HOME**

*Welcoming the Stranger*

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

### 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.

## Now a United Way partner

From our first meeting, it was evident that John and Kathy had passion for their work with homeless people.

The most impressive and motivating factor that stuck in my mind was they are truly a caring family wanting to better serve Darke County. It is an uplifting experience to see a couple take such a large risk, investing their retirement and savings to help others.

This will now be the second year that the Good Samaritan Home has been a partner with the United Way. Looking at the statistics alone showed us this project needs major backing. Not only is their shelter full much of the year, but along with

the Community Action Partnership shelter, both agencies have



*Darke County United Way Director Lauren Henry with Good Samaritan Home Director John Graham. GSH has been a partner agency for two years.*

provided 6,000 nights of shelter for homeless people in Darke County.

But Good Samaritan Home offers more than just shelter. They have many great volunteers who serve as counselors for residents as well. This extra support built into the program also showed the United Way board that they do not just house the homeless, but help them on a path to self-sufficiency.

The United Way board and I feel confident that we will become a bigger player in funding the Good Samaritan Home and its programs.

Lauren Henry  
Director  
Darke County United Way