

Good
Samaritan
Home

New Beginnings

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Good news in bad times

It's been a tough year – especially for the poorest among us.

Needless to say, our shelters have been full. So far this year we have housed nearly 100 people for 3,000 days, and by year end with cold weather here, we expect those numbers to increase by another 10%.

The toughest barrier our residents face is the economy. With unemployment locally nearing 12% percent, jobs are hard to find for everyone. The end result is that about 11% of the population here – and 40% of the single-parent families - live in poverty.

25 tons of food for hungry

The good news is that we have been designated the “Feeding America” agency for Darke County. This is a cooperative effort of Second Harvest, the national pantry that provides food for us, and Wal-Mart to help feed those who are suffering.

“We are committed to doing what we can to address basic, unmet needs – especially during difficult economic times,” Wal-Mart Foundation president Margaret

“With so much food now available, there is no reason for anyone in the county to be hungry.”



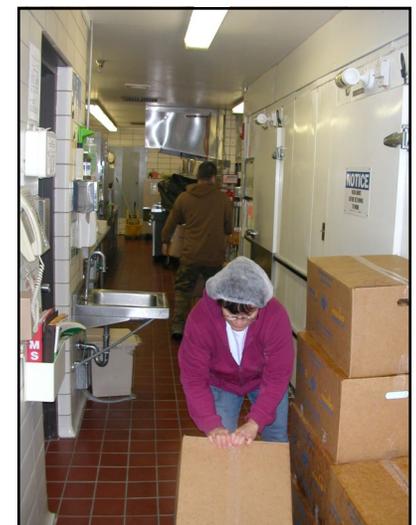
Volunteers help GSH and Wal-Mart staff with food pickup at the Greenville store three times every week since the program started in May

McKenna said. “We know there is an increased burden on our neighborhood food pantries and soup kitchens and we are working with other organizations to provide relief to communities throughout the country.”

Through the “Feeding America” program, the Greenville Wal-Mart store will have donated an estimated 50,000 lbs. of food to Good Samaritan Home by year end. In turn, we will have donated 35,000 lbs. of food to six other local service providers.

These agencies include Community Action Partnership, Darke County Home, Safe Haven, Community Unity, Church of God Food Pantry and Grace Resurrection Center Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen.

“This is a wonderful program,” GSH food program director Kathy Graham said. “With so much food now available, there is no reason for anyone in the county to be hungry.”



Darke County Home staff sort through a “Feeding America” food delivery from GSH.

Affordable housing now a reality

Never again! That's what we vowed two years ago when those three babies who had been in our shelter died in an overcrowded slum apartment fire just after leaving us. That tragedy made it all too clear that temporary shelter was not enough. Long-term affordable housing was desperately needed **because 95% of our residents are local.**



So for the past two years we have been working hard toward that goal with the purchase and renovation of three new houses.

First Transitional house

Our first step was to renovate the apartment in the unfinished half of our shelter. With the help of committed volunteers and a host of supporters who donated endless days of labor, furniture, appliances and even curtains, this spring we added 1,400 sf

where we can now house four men to live for up to one year at just a fraction of what they would pay on their own.



Second leap of faith

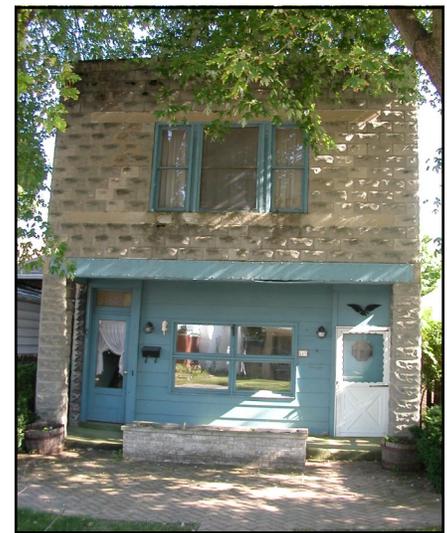
Then in July, in a step of faith, we added a second transitional facility with the purchase of a foreclosed house two blocks away. It was a grand turn-of-the-century home that needed sprucing up, and again with the help of some volunteers, we can now offer housing and support for four more men.



Radical faith

Unfortunately those two houses barely met the community need for more affordable housing, especially for women and children. So in a radical leap of faith, we bought a duplex nearby at a bargain price.

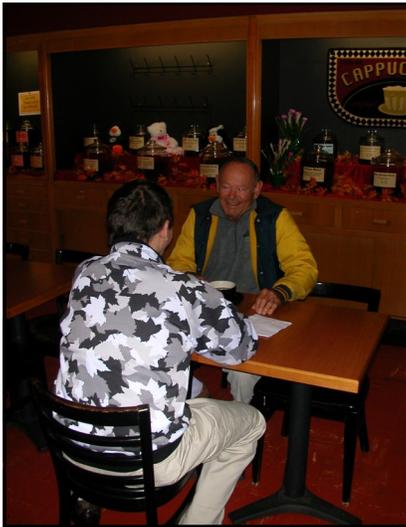
The bad news is that it desperately needs to be totally renovated from the basement to the roof. So we are again calling on our volunteers to help us house the needy in our community. When completed, this facility will help as many as 7 more people – and especially women and children - get off the street and back on their feet.



This will be our biggest remodeling project yet, requiring renovation from basement to roof. But it will directly address the long-term housing need we anguished over as a result of the fire in 2007.

Mentors are the key

It has been our belief since we first started this ministry in 2001 that we had to offer more than emergency food or housing services. Programs don't change people. People change people. And that is why we have recruited a host of volunteer mentors who are willing to commit their time, talent and compassion to help hurting people.



Ron Bonfiglio has been meeting with Tony every week for nearly a year. Mentoring is never easy, but programs don't change people. People change people.

What does a mentor do?

Ron Bonfiglio meets for breakfast with Tony every Tuesday to mostly discuss his finances. "We talk about his goals, where he wants to be in five years."

Ron said the time that mentoring requires each week is well worth it—for both of them. "I get satisfaction that I am helping someone, and I



Mike Hogg has benefitted from mentoring James more than he anticipated he would.

think I have made a difference in his life."

Everyone benefits

Mike Hogg met James at the *Citizen Circle* parolee support meeting six months ago. James spent 10 years in prison, and especially in today's weak economy, he was struggling to find a job and get back on his feet. They now meet one and sometimes two times a week to discuss James's struggles and successes.

"Mike has helped me in so many ways," James said. "Mostly its knowing that someone will listen. It is a good thing to have someone you can count on to help you through tough times. He's a godsend. He really is."

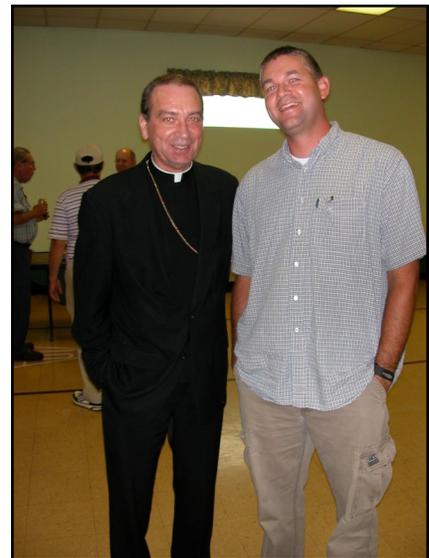
Mike said he has seen a change in James as a result of their mentoring relationship. "He is more willing to share, to be more open."

Mike has also noticed that James thinks more about his decisions before he acts. "He is actually more careful with his spending."

But James is not the only one who has benefitted from the relationship. Mike has as well. "This sort of thing is outside my comfort zone. James' background made me nervous. But it has made me more understanding, more accepting and open to other people."

"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,



Archbishop Dennis Schnurr visited the GSH mentor training session in August. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has supported the program with a grant for the past three years. Parole officer Chris Neikamp met with the bishop to explain the importance of mentors in rehabilitation.



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www.goodsamaritanhome.org

Another GSH degree planned

After working as a manager with McDonald's restaurant for 14 years, Kathy Graham retired in June to be more actively involved in the GSH programs.

But to better prepare herself, and to better serve the residents, she determined to finish her life-long dream of graduating from college.

Eighteen years ago she studied elementary education, but was not able to finish her degree. Now she plans to get her Associates degree in Social Work.

"I want to be better prepared to help our residents, especially our mamas and babies because they are my first love," she said.

She is one of the few students who can actually apply her classroom lessons immediately after class. "I am learning to listen and ask more questions. I am also learning how to find resources for our residents. And I am especially learning to document, document, document!"

GSH board chairman Ron Bonfiglio said he feels this degree is a real plus. "I think she will be an asset to our organization."

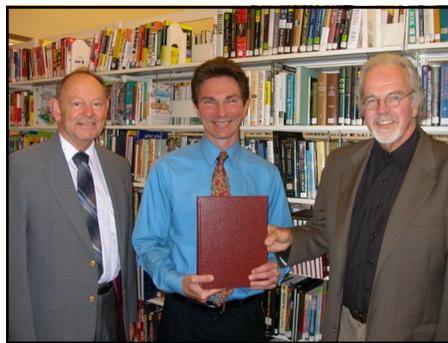


Graham completes doctorate

In March, 2009, GSH founder and executive director Dr. John Graham completed his doctoral studies in mentoring at Northern Seminary in Chicago.

His book, titled "*Citizen Circle: A Mentoring Model for Rehabilitating Ex-felons in Darke County, Ohio*," represents a three-year study of the positive impact that mentoring can have, not only on the parolees involved, but also the mentors and the community as well.

"Our philosophy is that programs don't change people. People change people. And this study has clearly shown this to be the case. Everyone in this program was greatly impacted by it, especially me," Graham said.



GSH board chairman Ron Bonfiglio (left) met with Greenville Public Library director John Vehre to present Dr. Graham's three-year study on mentoring.

The Darke County reentry mentor group, called *Citizen Circle*, is considered by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to be one of the best in the state.

The study was the first of its

kind dealing specifically with mentor growth. At the end of the project, 45% of the mentors increased in their understanding of criminal justice issues, 67% showed spiritual growth, and 100% showed increased compassion and acceptance of the worst offenders in the program.

"All learned that real ministry happens best with those the community rejects as beyond help, with those Jesus called 'the least of these brothers of mine.'"

Dr. Graham is also a member of the ODRC reentry steering committee, as well as a consultant for a three-year parolee reentry study that ODRC is doing in partnership with Florida Atlantic University.