

Good Samaritan Home

New Beginnings

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Faith is love in action

We have been saying all along that reentry programs such as ours for people coming from prison are critically important. All the research has been showing that for years.

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cal faith and commitment, we purchased not one, but three new houses in Sidney and Dayton that have increased our housing ministry capacity 500 percent!

Faith means serving

Our faith statement these past 10 years has been to simply ask what is the need in the community, and then try to help meet that need. That was the reason we opened our homeless shelter in 2006, our reentry house in 2007 and our transitional house in 2009 – because so many people in need were coming to our door asking for help.

Faith means conflict

But it's not always been easy. Three times throughout these past 10 years the city has tried to shut down our houses.

Yes, these battles have been exhausting, and yes, we have been discouraged at times. But every time we were at our lowest, God's presence has surrounded us with an overwhelming calmness, assuring us that we are not alone.

So even in the midst of conflict, we have always committed to grow our ministry to meet the needs that



Jimmy has been in all of our housing programs during the past 4 years. As an ex-offender, battling mental health issues, and with only his meager Social Security income and no one to help him manage his money, he was often broke, homeless, and sleeping in a car—until it was repossessed for some reason he never could remember. On several occasions he nearly died on the streets in winter. But now in our transitional living house, he has a safe, warm place to live, more than enough food to eat, and even some money saved in the bank—something he never could do on his own. “This is my home now,” Jimmy said to Kathy Graham when cold weather first came in November.

come to us. And that is why this past year, when asked by parole officials to take more residents, **in an act of radi-**

Faith is about grace

Why? We did this because the need for this type of “boots-on-the-ground” ministry is never-ending.

But more important, we did this because, at root, **this ministry is about the moral and spiritual right of every person to have a second chance. It's about grace.**

That is the basis of our legal system and, more important, it is the foundation of our faith. Helping hurting people, regardless of what sin they may have committed, is what the Church is commanded to do.

So no matter how uncertain our finances may be, no matter how intense the criticism, and even no matter how severe the legal threats, we are not discouraged. We are focused on simply doing God's will, whether it is remodeling a deteriorating building, offering shelter to a homeless person or giving an ex-offender a chance to make something of his broken life.

Major program proposed

There are more than 2,000 people in Miami, Darke and Shelby counties on parole or probation. Often many of them have no job, no place to live and no one to help them reenter the community and restart their lives.

To address this issue, in 2010 Good Samaritan Home was awarded an Ohio Dept. of Criminal Justice Services grant to facilitate the formation of an ex-offender reentry taskforce.

For the past 20 months, 90 people from 50 different agencies in the three counties, including government, law enforcement, social service providers, as well as local citizens, and even many ex-offenders themselves, met together to address specific reentry needs such as housing, employment, mental health/substance abuse, etc.

The Taskforce found there were multiple needs in all areas that must be addressed if these 2,000 ex-offenders currently under supervision locally, and the 400 more who are coming back here every year from prison, are to become part of the community again—and the public safety is to be maintained.

Findings

Given the current economic climate, it was not surprising that the primary need of the majority of ex-offenders sur-

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veyed was employment. But housing is often a problem, and counseling, as well as family issues, the report showed.

We also found there were many gaps and overlaps in services among the agencies in the community due to a lack of communication, cooperation and coordination of services.

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Recommendations

The Reentry Taskforce strongly recommended that a major Ex-offender Reentry Coalition be formed in Miami, Darke and Shelby counties that

will partner all the service providers together with a common goal.

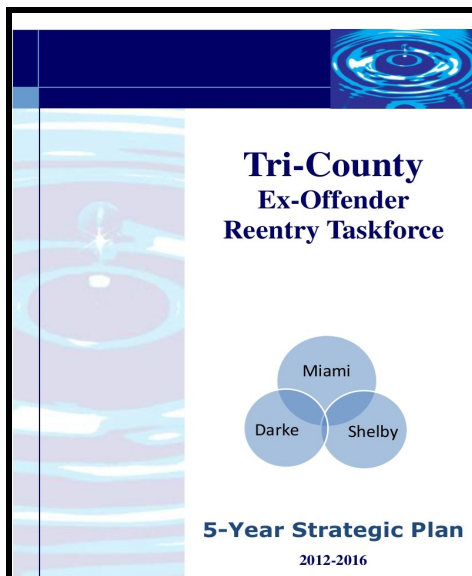
Second, the Taskforce recommended that several key staff

be hired to give ‘boots-on-the-ground’ help to all those coming from prison locally. This would include a director, service coordinator and especially an employment specialist who would act as the liaison between employers looking for good employees and ex-offenders looking for someone to hire them.

Third, it was recommended that priority be given to finding affordable housing for ex-offenders, much like the housing GSH has been doing for four years in Greenville.

Finally, and most critical, the Taskforce recommended that volunteer mentors be recruited from churches in the three counties—people who take literally Jesus’ command to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves—even our neighbor who has been in prison.

“In these tough economic times, with so many government services being cut, we all need to work together to make our communities better,” GSH director Dr. John Graham said. *“This project is a perfect example of that cooperation. More important, it has the potential to make a significant impact on the safety of our three counties.”*



Helping “least of these”

When we started this ministry of “radical hospitality” to men coming from prison in 2001, we soon realized that even rural communities like ours have many of the same problems that big cities have, but without all the resources. So much so that we were constantly getting calls for help even before we opened our doors.

Meeting need in community

So in faith we bought and remodeled a 100-year-old building across the street and took in our first homeless person in December, 2005.

Since that day we have never had an empty shelter.

Homeless not who we expect

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Like most people, we thought “the homeless” were the hardcore unemployed, alcoholics and drug addicts. But what we found is that a lot of people are just a job layoff, a medical emergency, or a divorce away from homelessness.

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Most want to get a job, most want to be paying their own way, but most have no family or community connections and they simply don’t know how to change their situations.

When possible, rather than give them a hand out that only lasts for a short time, we try to give them a hand up that can last for a life time.

We do that because we believe that faith can only be lived out through acts of kindness to the needy in our community.

When we all do that, we not only change them, but we change us, too.

Feeding America

But it’s not just the homeless who have been our focus, but the near-homeless as well. For the past two years GSH has been the lead agency in our county for the “Feeding America” program. This is the joint effort of Second Harvest, the national food pantry that provides food for us, and Wal-Mart to help feed those who are suffering in these tough times.

In our first seven months of the Feeding America program in 2009, the Greenville Wal-Mart store donated 46,000 lbs. of food, which we then distributed to seven other pantries and service agencies in the community.

In 2010 the amount of food we were able to distribute in the community increased to more than 77,000 lbs.

And in 2011, if donations continue as they have this year, **we expect to distribute 120,000 lbs. of food to those in the community who don’t have enough food to eat.**

“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.”

“Whatever you did for the least of these, brothers of mine, you did for me.”
Matthew 25.40



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

Fitzpatrick Home Homeless Shelter

	<u>Residents</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Meals</u>
2006	59	1,339	2,700
2007	80	1,469	3,000
2008	88	1,442	3,000
2009	76	1,432	3,000
2010	74	1,777	3,500
2011*	75	1,500	3,000

*Projected



Dr. John Graham

Executive 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

New ministry houses

Last December when the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction asked us to add more reentry beds, in an act of faith we bought a foreclosed house in nearby Shelby County to double our capacity.



Then in March we were again asked if we would be willing to expand into Dayton. So in another act of radical faith, we bought a 4-unit apartment building in the heart of the crime district where safe housing was almost non-existent.

But those beds filled up so quickly—with more calls for help coming every day—that we soon had to add yet another house in Dayton.

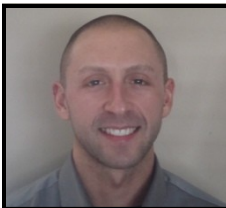


Needless to say, it was a real leap of faith to expand so much so quickly—especially in these tough economic times. But that's what faith means—*“confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”*

And as happened so often in the past 10 years, God has always provided us the money and the means every time we have expanded.

Meet our new staff

To manage our new houses in three different counties, we had to hire four new people. In Sidney we hired **Darin Dodds** to be our house manager. He and his wife, Jill, have two young daughters. Darin is finishing his Associates degree this year and plans to eventually get a graduate degree in Social Work. *“Of all the needs in our culture, I feel called to help these guys coming from prison.”*



In Dayton we hired **Jermaine Tims** to be our North Main Street apartment manager. He served in the Air Force for 6 years and is now completing his BA degree in Healthcare Management. He also

works part-time for the Montgomery County Dept. of Developmental Disabilities.

“I find great pleasure in being able to assist people in turning their life in a positive direction.”

We also hired **Brian Gilvin**, to manage the Hillcrest Avenue house. Brian is completing his graduate studies at Bethany Seminary in Richmond, IN, and is the part-time pastor of Mack Memorial Brethren Church in Dayton.

“I see this as an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus. God has given me many second chances, and I look forward to extending that same kind of ministry.”



And finally in Greenville we hired another local pastor, **Jon Keller**, to oversee the programs there. Jon has a Bachelor's degree in Accounting, but became a youth pastor to make a greater impact on the future of the community. For the same reason he will be working with us.

“I see God doing a great thing through the ministry of Good Samaritan Home and I am very glad to be part of it.”

What we wanted in each of these men was a heart of compassion for hurting people. One bit of sage advice that we received early on in this ministry was that **“people don't care what you know. They just need to know you care.”**

