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Good Neighbors Appalachia



The JOURNAL

Winter 2016



I don't always have an epiphany... but when I do, it ends up in this part of the newsletter.

Do you ever stop and reflect?

2016 has been another amazing year! The combination of hard-work and generosity, from our staff and donors, has provided dozens of families with dry, safe, warm and adequate homes, along with hundreds of volunteers having an opportunity to show & experience love in a divine way!

First of all, I want to shout "Thank You" to everyone who helped make this possible. Second, I want to divert your attention to the story on the right.

I must admit that I draw a large part of my identity from my work, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but I'm not completely sure I could deal with a debilitating injury and still keep a positive attitude.

John easily states he "just rolls with the punches", and his ability to do so, combined with a strong faith, causes him to be a happy, inspirational person regardless of whatever curveballs life throws at him. My resolution, for the New Year, is to be more like that.

Thank you, so much, for your support. You make a big difference!

Jason Benedict

Thank you for making a difference!

"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

Winston S. Churchill

"They fired me before I could even make it to the hospital!"

John was injured on the job when a gas-well drill bit, the size of a trailer, slammed into him and crushed him. On the way to the hospital, his boss called and, to make a long story short, he was let go.

"We lost everything". Unable to afford their new home on only Elizabeth's (John's wife) income, the couple and their three children moved into John's childhood home, given to them by John's father. Though definitely a Blessing, the home had *only one bedroom and needed a lot of work!*

Amazingly, though disabled from the accident and receiving no compensation from his (now bankrupt) former employer, John did not become a bitter person...a fact that was not lost on many of the volunteer group leaders.

"John's situation really puts life in perspective. He has every right to be angry, bitter and feel sorry for himself" a volunteer observed. "Instead, he's happy, grateful and his strong faith is really inspiring!"

When John prayed for help, God answered his prayers, first, through his local church who came out and built bedrooms for the 3 kids! Still, many urgent repairs were needed, including a moisture problem that was producing mold and causing the kitchen and bathroom floors to rot away...but hiring a contractor, paying the bills and feeding a family of 5, on one income, was impossible!

Elizabeth, who works at domestic violence shelter, found her income disqualified her for assistance through local agencies, until a co-worker told her about Good Neighbors...and we were blessed to become a second answer to prayer!

This past summer, volunteer groups performed major renovations to the home including extensive flooring repairs, a major bathroom renovation, a drainage trench, removing debris from under the home and installing a vapor barrier (to prevent future flooring/ mold/ foundation issues), installing underpinning, roofing, vinyl siding and guttering. Throughout each week, new friendships developed.

On Thanksgiving, John, the youngest of twelve siblings, hosted over 50 family members at their childhood home and expects even more over Christmas!

Thank you for making this possible!



My Experience

-by Summer Reese

As a volunteer:

"Going on this Mission Trip is a Must Do Experience!"

When my college offered the opportunity to go on a Spring Break Mission trip to Kentucky, I was one of the first students to sign up! I had been on a Mission Trip before (loved it), and had been to Kentucky before, but I had never been in the Appalachian area. This was going to be something new and exciting – I couldn't wait to go!

At the beginning of the trip, I was very nervous. We joined with Concordia's Michigan campus (my campus is in Wisconsin) and meeting so many new people brought my shy side out in full force! Then, we got into our work groups and met some of the Good Neighbors crew, and the excitement overshadowed everything else.

The first day was the most memorable for me. I met all the Good Neighbors staff members, met the couple we were helping, who lost their home in a flood, and also got to know the people in my group that I hadn't met before. We got so much accomplished that day, but it seemed like there was still a list of projects, a mile long, to do on that house!

By the end of the week, I had so many new friends – from my college, the Good Neighbors staff, and the couple we helped. I went home with a newfound self-confidence and ability to be handy around the house. When I received the e-mail about applying to become a Good Neighbors summer intern/staff member, I was more than ready. I went for it, and got accepted!



As a Staff Member:

When I first arrived, after the longest solo road-trip I've ever taken, I have to admit I was nervous again...but that didn't last long! I quickly observed how all the staff members fit into making Good Neighbors run so smoothly; it was truly a family setting, and one that immediately accepted me in.

It was a great feeling to know that everyone on staff was happy to answer questions or help whenever I needed it, as well as give an open invitation for me to join them and their families for dinner, games or conversation after the work day was over. It allowed me the ability and confidence to expand on what I learned at school, as well as learn new skills in construction and leadership.

I enjoyed staying at the "staff house" which offered a greater sense of independence, responsibility, and privacy (I had a room to myself) than is typical for many college students. I also became attached to my company vehicle, an old rusty Chevy 4x4 that almost never let me down!

Each time I met a new family we were honored to help, I felt so welcomed. Some were able to work side-by-side with the volunteers and me, others would spend the day talking with us and bringing us water or pop while we worked on their homes. It was always so nice to see the smiles on their faces as they saw the progress being made each day. One wonderful lady even sent a care package to my school just to say thanks let me know she was thinking about me!

Now, back in the real-world of college, life and work, these are the things that get me through the hard times – until I do it again next summer. I'm hooked!

Making a difference for generations to come!

When 14-year old Becky held-up her "Freedom Jar" with the money she had saved because she "saw mom do it", my belief was reinforced that the War on Poverty can be Won!

Families approved for our assistance attend a mandatory 5-week financial training course focusing on saving money for a portion of their home repair costs, future unexpected needs.

The concept is simple – identify items you spend money on that are not necessities (fast food lunches, energy drinks, etc.), then each time you pack your lunch or make coffee at home, take the money you save and place it in a jar at the end of the day. Saving \$5/day may not seem like much, but \$150 at the month's end - \$1,800 each year goes a long way toward being prepared the next time the washer goes-out or the car breaks down...

The real impact, though, is the increased confidence it provides along with the example it provides for the next generation!



Did You Know...

Good Neighbors offers Mission Trips:

All Year-Round for Groups of all ages and sizes.

Visit our new website at: www.goodneighbors-inc.org

Our WORK: Good Neighbors, Inc. is a 501(C)(3) charity **Who:**

- Assists **employed** people, whose self-sufficiency is threatened by a specific incident of **Home or automotive breakdown**

What we do:

- Provide needed repairs, at no charge, as a **one-time-only event**, using the labor of volunteer groups from across the nation
 - Require people we help to: **give-back a day of their time to help others** & take our **financial counseling** course

We Help When:

- We confirm: **current employment**, need, references and willingness to **take part in their repair**
- We believe our assistance will allow the recipient to continue living **self-sufficiently**



Plant a Seed. Make a Difference.

Good Neighbors, Inc. is a 501 c3 charity. Contributions are tax-deductible



Repairing Homes, Restoring Hope
Since 2005

Please Mail Donations to:

Good Neighbors, Inc.
P.O. Box 640
Staffordsville, KY 41256

Please make checks payable to: Good Neighbors, Inc.
Thanks for your support!

When you give...

it really is like planting a seed
because your gift multiplies!

**I choose to make a
difference** through:

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___ \$ _____/month

OR...

___ I would like to give by credit card online.
You may do so by clicking the donate tab on our
website at: www.goodneighbors-inc.org

___ I pledge my prayer support during the
next 12 months

___ Please contact my church about a
Mission trip - write contact info on back

___ I would consider serving on a committee
or using my professional skills to
advise/help Good Neighbors - write contact
info on back