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 Good Neighbors Appalachia



Winter 2017

Can we really change the world?

After spending a third of my life as the founding director of a non-profit organization, I've experienced enough to say *NO*...I don't see the world through rose-colored glasses, but *YES*...I do believe we can change the world!

This year, one of our summer mission groups made a [video](#) highlighting their experience with us throughout the years. It ended with this:

- 10 Trips**
- 500 volunteers**
- 65 working families**
- ...and continuing**

Wow, that is amazingly powerful!
 But it's only the tip of the iceberg!

The REAL impact is what happens *after* we work with a family or volunteer - **they become inspired to serve**: others in their community, overseas, enter a profession that helps others, or even begin their own service organization!

To grasp the full picture of this group's impact would require following the lives of all 500 volunteers and the 65 families they served, to see all the good they were inspired to do...and then following around all the people they, in turn, inspired to pay-it-forward, and then...well, you get the picture!

I often hear from families we served, excited to tell how they helped their neighbor in need, or sent their kids on a mission trip. I also hear, often, from our volunteers and their families about how they developed a passion to serve... Their stories keep me going, smiling, and believing we can change the world!

Jason Benedict

-President

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

Circled around a campfire on a hot summer night, our group of student volunteers reflected on the most memorable part of their week's mission-trip experience. Some talked about a newfound confidence in their abilities, several mentioned a new perspective on material items vs. happiness, while others noted friendships built within their group, the family they served, or members of Good Neighbors' staff... One particular member, who many said made a lasting impression, was Les Webb - and here's how he came to be part of our team:
4 months earlier...

Armed with picks and shovels in the hands of an 8th grade mission group, we began the task of digging a 1,200 foot-long trench for the waterline that would provide Les and his family with running water. Their home, built by Les' grandfather (many years ago) is situated on top of a hill that is unsuitable for a vehicle to drive-up...so you can imagine the magnitude of the chore to carry jugs of water for cooking and washing everything / everyone - especially in the icy winter!

Following several mission groups, a tireless effort by Les, and a little help from digging equipment (Thank You Donors!) the house had running water and a septic system, along with a bathroom/laundry addition and a functional kitchen.

At this point, the story could end and be toasted as a job well-done! No more trips to a freezing (or scorching) outhouse, no more trips to the Laundromat, no extra wood-chopping to heat bath water... but there is another chapter to this story.

"We learned so much from Les! He's such a great teacher - it's like my grandpa was still alive!" stated one (of many) student volunteer admirers.

We quickly realized that Les, along with his wife Alice, who raised two dynamic college-educated daughters in a one-bedroom home without indoor plumbing or switch-activated heat- had the potential to inspire our student volunteers with the richness of his life-experiences.

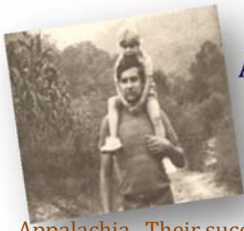
Offering to "volunteer whenever he could" we took Les up on his offer, which included volunteer staffing (sometimes 12+hour days before feeding his chickens, goats, guinea-fowls and cows). He never let us down and even enlisted his daughter to help with our groups, along with a 16+ hour journey to a fundraiser in Minnesota!

Talking with Les today, he says his perspective on "Changing the World" is different. In the past, like many of us (myself included) he wanted to "do something big - on a large scale". Now, through working with our volunteer groups and helping families, both through Good Neighbors, as well as on his own... he can see how every relationship you develop, when serving others, could potentially change the world through inspiring others to "pay-it-forward".

While Les' commitment is a big-deal to us, along with his impact on many people in our community as well as in communities hundreds of miles away, he represents just one of 30 families Good Neighbors assisted last year...each having a noteworthy story of their own!

To our donors and our volunteers, Thank you for making a *lasting* difference!





A Lasting Impact:

In the 1960's, my dad formed an organization called the Teen Corps of America. Over a 3 year period, he brought over 400 teenage volunteers from 10 states to work in the poverty areas of

Appalachia. Their successful efforts at building community centers, economic centers, low water bridges and roads was covered nationally by ABC TV and Reader's Digest...and would eventually play a major role in inspiring me to found Good Neighbors!

This year, one of the Teen Corps groups that worked in Knott County, KY (about an hour from the Good Neighbors office) got together for a 48 year reunion – and I had the opportunity to speak to them via video, letting them know that their work, nearly half-a-century later, is still having a strong impact!

In a physical/brick & mortar sense, their work is experienced by many families every day as they drive across the bridges built by the Teen Corps volunteers. Before the bridges were built, the people of northern Knott County had been trapped nearly every year by creeks that became raging rivers in the winter, cutting off access to the roads. Unable to get out for food, fuel or medical emergencies, many suffered terribly and a number of people died...but that changed immediately with the construction of the low water bridges by the Teen Corps.

Motivated by the construction of the bridges, the county paved the rutted dirt roads. Seeing that they could now bus students, the county school district consolidated schools and began busing high school students daily to the county seat.

Almost immediately, the average number of grades completed went from 8th grade to a high school graduation!

All of us at Good Neighbors would like to give a special Thanks to the generous people who donated their hard-earned money this year!

Because you gave:

- Dozens of families are living in **warm, dry, solid, functional** homes this winter.
- Our volunteers had the tools, building materials and construction staff needed to **complete** the projects.

Our Support comes from you:

- **We are funded 100% through your donations**, not government funding, making your donations **vital to our work!**

Thank you for making a difference!

At the Teen Corps reunion, one attendee after another related how deeply the experience had impacted their lives in so many ways – with many of them choosing professions that focused on helping people. A half century later, we continuously get similar comments at Good Neighbors from our teenage volunteers. **Helping others in need continues to positively impact those who help.**

In my video to the Teen Corps volunteers (now in their 60's), I had the opportunity to tell them that their impact hasn't stopped. I explained that, while growing up, I heard stories about them and read my dad's book about the experience. Their example inspired in me an interest in Appalachia and the certainty about the life changing things God can do through young people in their teens.



I explained that their example lives on in Good Neighbors and what we continue to accomplish through teenage volunteers in Kentucky to bring hope – just like the Teen Corps did nearly a half century ago.

Knott County, KY – late 1960's
-Teen corps volunteers around a campfire
- Bob Benedict (top left)

By the way, a number of those Teen Corps volunteers have now donated to Good Neighbors and some are planning to work with us in Kentucky in the summer of 2018!



In Loving Memory:

Some of the most valuable players, on any team, work behind the scenes – and for Good Neighbors, Gene Davis (our CPA) was definitely one of our MVPs.

During his 81 years, Gene's display of faith, his positive attitude and his example as a role-model inspired everyone he came in contact with. He was one of those people that you wanted to be-around and be-like!

He sat at the table with the richest-of-the-rich and the poorest-of-the poor, but his demeanor never changed. He woke-up every morning and brought his wife and her roommate (at the nursing home) food and coffee, along with sides of love, humor and inspiration/prayer (even when his wife didn't remember who he was). Then he continued, with excitement and an ever-present smile, to serve his clients as well as his church and community – right up to the day he passed on to heaven.

Though we will miss him, we will always be grateful for having known him, worked with him and learned from him...his life was well-lived!

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

- Assists **employed** people, whose self-sufficiency is threatened by a specific incident requiring **urgent / necessary home repairs**.

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.



Repairing Homes, Restoring Hope
Since 2005



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

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:

_____ A One-time Donation of

\$ _____

_____ \$ _____/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