

GOODWORKS IN LEIPER'S FORK - A GREEN DESTINATION

by Rebecca Bauer

What started out as a vision fifteen years ago for Connie Westfall has recently revealed itself as a flourishing organization called GoodWorks in Leiper's Fork. Westfall, Founding Director, has brought to light the importance of whole-life living and how a community can find solutions, big or small, to a more balanced life.

It began with the inaugural Whole-Life Living Retreat in October 2010. Over the course of two and half days, the like-minded group participated in lectures and hands-on activities. They rolled up their sleeves and dug into the cabbage and sweet potato fields, studied the structure of a straw-bale constructed house, discussed organic foods, land stewardship and off-the-grid methods. They went home awakened with more knowledge and better choices.

GoodWorks' mission is to preserve a historic homestead as a retreat and whole-life learning center. While still working on building funds and finding permanent ground, the organization currently hosts events



in and around Williamson County that give participants an authentic, green experience. Six core areas are their focus: sustainable living, historic preservation, alternative building methods, organic farming, health and wellness and personal development.

Westfall's moral aim is described in GoodWorks' motto, "Where the fabric of the old is mended with the new." She explains, "We're committed to preserve and strengthen the best of the old ways by weaving them in with the technological advances of today. The concept represents saving the best of the naturally sustainable lifestyle of the past which was steeped in tradition, community and working together, reinforced and reassembled to meet the demands of the modern world."

Annual memberships and event participation continue to build, attracting everyone from young couples to seniors. Professionals have found

GoodWorks as a new means to teach their passion. The organization recently completed a six-week class series on permaculture, birds, bees, trees, landscapes and eco-friendly products for home renovations.

Foreno van der Hulse, who holds a master's degree in sustainability, will be re-locating from the Netherlands and offering a spring workshop, "Sustainability – The World View." He says, "The mission of Goodworks really resonates with me and I hope that through sharing my experience in sustainable and personal development I can be part of bringing the mission to life."

Retreats and workshops will continue this year with plans to add a book study group, equine assisted learning, raw food preparation, quilt making and more. With goals to attract a national and international audience, GoodWorks in Leiper's Fork is an eco-destination for travelers to explore healthy solutions for improving their own lives and communities.

Westfall says, "Our quest for a historic homestead to operate as a whole-life learning center enables us to provide a viable, living teaching center where our members and guests are immersed in a life of cooperation, caring and compassion. A place where they will experience the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual relationships that leads to a life of peace, love and joy."

GoodWorks in Leiper's Fork is a 501c(3) non-profit corporation and a member of the community foundation. Opportunities for sponsorships, donations, memberships and volunteer support are available. For more information, visit GoodWorksInLeipersFork.org or email info@goodworksinleipersfork.org.

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