At the age of 40, George Moorman was a crack addict who was on the brink of a long prison sentence. But a judge put him in a drug court program instead. Moorman overcame his addiction and, he embarked on a lifetime journey of helping improve the lives of poor kids in his community.

The transformed George Moorman earned a bachelors and two masters degrees from the University of Kentucky in Social Work. He also received his PhD from the University of Kentucky in educational psychology. “I’ve told my story and people have accepted me,” he said when he earned his doctorate. “They told me it wasn’t going to be easy, but through constant mentoring and support from faculty and students, I’ve been able to persevere.” He is the current Director of the East End Empowerment Program in Lexington and co-chair of the Mayors Alliance on Substance Abuse.

One of Moorman’s first events that he organized and implemented was the “Back to School Rally” which provided school supplies to community youth. This program grew from serving 250 students the first year to now over 3,000.

In addition, Moorman organizes an annual “Happy New Youth Gathering” where close to 500 people gather to honor youth that have died due to gun violence. Moorman explains, “The service is meant to demonstrate to the living that life has purpose and is too short to waste.”

George Moorman has received many awards for his commitment to bettering the community, reducing violence and implementing innovative ideas for advocacy programs that engage youth in positive ways. Moorman’s 10,000 hours of volunteer work was honored during the opening of Lexington Stories: Unsung Heroes, a photo and story exhibit at LexArts Gallery at ArtsPlace which honors ordinary people who lead extraordinary lives.