

Harvesting Hope

Local Family Receives Much-Needed Assistance During Harvest

Amanda Rink, Editor

Matthew 9:37-38 states, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few; therefore, pray earnestly." It's undeniable that Grant and Nicole Woodley have fervently prayed. Those inclined to prayer might see the workers who have arrived to harvest the Woodley's crops the first week of October as an answer to these earnest prayers.

Grant Woodley grew up on a century farm southeast of Clarion. He is the son of Gary and Sally Woodley also of Clarion. While Woodley wears many hats such as Dad, soybean and hog farmer, and husband, most in Wright County know him as Pastor.

In 2015, Grant accepted a part-time role at First Lutheran Church in Clarion, co-pastoring with his wife Nicole. The pair is a dynamic duo, raising five children on their working farm outside of Clarion while holding a commitment to foster parenting and their faith.

On March 8 of this year, Woodley fell ill with what was thought to be a viral infection. A week later, jaundice set in along with an elevated white blood cell count. Antibiotics seemed to improve his condition and like most country-raised men, he went about his daily life. On Saturday, March 25, Woodley displayed stroke-like symptoms. He then experienced a seizure at Clarion's emergency room. This led to his transfer to the University of Iowa, where they addressed three brain infections and one located in his chest. He underwent multiple neurosurgeries. Woodley is now in the process of recovery, attending various exhaustive but much-needed therapies a week.

During Grant's challenging recovery journey, his wife, Nicole, received the devastating news of being diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called leiomyosarcoma. This cancer was a consequence of radiation treatments she had undergone a decade ago to combat breast cancer. Nicole underwent multiple surgeries during the summer months. Nicole is currently in remission after being treated at a specialized facility in Texas.

Although the pair is on the path to recovery, they are not without hardships. Grant is unable to drive and gets tired very quickly. This left him unable to harvest his yearly crop. Farm Rescue's volunteers answered the call the first week of October and came to Woodley Farms to assist the local family in harvesting their fall soybean crop.

Farm Rescue, established in 2005, has aided over 1,000 families. Their mission is to support farmers and ranchers who have experienced significant health issues, injuries, or natural disasters by providing essential equipment and volunteers for all sorts of farming needs. This nonprofit organization reaches across the country, helping farm families in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Once the harvest was complete Doll Distributing, the local Anheuser-Busch wholesaler, hosted a post-harvest celebration. This event expressed gratitude to Farm Rescue's volunteers and honored the Woodley family. Doll Distributing also presents a donation to Farm Rescue. Anheuser-Busch and its brand Busch Light has been a partner of Farm Rescue since 2019. They have helped raise almost one million dollars to directly support farming communities.

Most locals can agree that there are not many families more deserving of an extra hand during harvest than the Woodleys. Grant, Nicole, and their children have expressed gratitude to the community for their supportive efforts during their rough patch. Grant recently wrote in his CaringBridge Journal, a website used to spread the word about one's medical journey, *"Here's to discovering ourselves anew each day. Confident God holds us frail, impatient, petulant people with care and purpose especially when that seems so hard to believe."*



Locals Farmers, Grant and Nicole Woodley, Receive Much-Needed Assistance During Harvest from Farm Rescue.



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