

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

APRIL/MAY 2019

“During that period of my life, I thought I would always be able to be completely independent and never have to ask for help.”

MEET MONIQUE

AFTER EARNING HER BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN 1996, Monique embarked on a rewarding career working with people who have various types of disabilities. Her work, along with being a mother of two young children, kept her busy helping others.

“During that period of my life, I thought I would always be able to be completely independent and never have to ask for help,” Monique reflects.

After finally leaving an abusive marriage, Monique found herself raising her children on her own. Although she was still determined to be independent, Monique was faced with unexpected health challenges for both herself and one of her children. Over the course of a few years, she was diagnosed with a crushed disc in her lower back, osteoarthritis, and a rare autoimmune disease. At the same time, she discovered that her youngest child has some congenital disabilities.

“The last year and a half has been very hectic with seemingly endless medical appointments,” shares Monique. “We are often very busy with therapy appointments which, at this point, appear to be long-term.”

Between her own health issues and taking care of her child, it became difficult for her to continue working full-time. Monique knew it was time to ask for help because she was struggling to make ends meet. She decided to contact Loaves & Fishes to help her secure enough food for her family.

“Loaves & Fishes has been a real lifesaver in supplying much needed food for my children and myself,” says Monique. “I also volunteer a few hours a week at one of their local pantries. This experience has made me feel part of a wonderful team who I feel has and does so much for this community.”

Even though she never thought she would, Monique has learned that its okay to ask for help. It can even lead to some valuable connections with others.



You can find Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes' 2017-2018 Annual Report by visiting kzoolf.org and clicking 'About KLF'.



*Client's name changed to protect anonymity.

ONLINE NOW

- A NOTE FROM JEN -

MEET JOAN WELLMAN, KLF CALL CENTER VOLUNTEER

Last fiscal year the time volunteers donated to KLF was valued at over \$1M. For this newsletter, we sat down with Joan Wellman, a Call Center volunteer, who is frequently the first point of contact for someone struggling with hunger when they call KLF - *Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director*

Q: How did you get your start as a KLF volunteer?

A: When I retired I knew I wanted to become involved with social justice efforts. KLF addresses food insecurity and unequal access to nutritious groceries. I started volunteering in the warehouse, then included working in the call center and in the Melzer pantry. One of the great things about KLF is that there is always room for me to learn something new.

Q: What has surprised you most during your time at KLF?

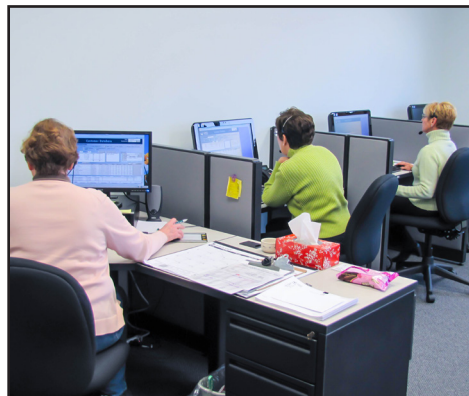
A: There have been two big surprises, one sad and one happy.

Sadly, daily hunger is far more common in our community than most people realize. I was surprised to learn how many of our neighbors, including many children, do not always know where their next meal is coming from.

Happily, the board, staff, and volunteers at KLF have the resources, the infrastructure, and the will to get nutritious food out into the community.

Q: What do you feel is a common misconception about hunger?

A: A misconception I had — and I think it's a common one — is that if you have a job, you have plenty of food. That is not true. We see hundreds of clients who are working, but whose take-home pay is too low to cover food, rent, medicine, clothing, gas or bus money, and childcare.



Call Center volunteers answering daily calls and scheduling pantry appointments.

TAKE ACTION ON THE USDA'S PROPOSED SNAP RULE!

Federal law require that states limit SNAP eligibility to just three months out of every three years for unemployed and underemployed adults without dependent children, unless they can document 20 hours of work per week. Now the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed to make those time limits even stricter. USDA's proposed rule would undercut states' ability to waive harsh time limits in areas where there are too few jobs. Work requirements on food assistance do more harm than good for those who are unemployed or underemployed. **These requirements:**

- **DO NOT** create new jobs where there are too few
- **DO NOT** provide proper education and skills to be competitive in the labor market
- **DO NOT** address barriers such as mental health problems
- **DO NOT** employer's policies on hiring someone with a criminal background
- **DO TAKE** away nutritious and healthy food from those who are struggling

The USDA estimates its proposal would eliminate SNAP benefits for an additional 755,000 adults and cut SNAP benefits on a ten-year basis by \$15 billion.

Visit kzoolf.org/advocate by April 2nd to submit your comment opposing rules that would hurt many of our Kalamazoo County residents.



Are you looking for someone to speak to your staff, club, or congregation?

We are happy to talk to your group about hunger in our community.

For more information, contact Greta Faworski at greta@kzoolf.org or 269-488-2617 x208.

WE'RE EXPANDING



Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes is committed to providing food that is good quality and nutritionally-balanced. To secure a wide variety of quality food at a reasonable price,

it is essential to have targeted food procurement efforts and strong relationships with food wholesalers, farmers, and grocers. These relationships have opened the doors to more fresh produce, quality protein options, and greater savings through bulk purchasing opportunities.

However, the space constraints of the current cooler and freezer at the 901 Portage Street warehouse have created roadblocks to securing this much-needed inventory. In many cases, it has been necessary to decline opportunities for bulk purchasing of frozen food because there is not enough cold storage space. It has also been difficult to maintain the useful life of fresh fruits and vegetables for the same reason.

After securing necessary funds from generous private donors and local foundations, KLF will be expanding its main warehouse freezer and cooler by 30 feet from the existing wall to create more cold storage. This expanded space will greatly enhance our ability to purchase food from wholesalers at a low cost and to extend the usable life of food donations. The expansion is scheduled to be complete by July 2019.

MONTHLY GIVING COUPONS

GIVING COUPON:
APRIL
COUPON #186

Show the community in kindness this month. Help those struggling with hunger.

Donation Amount
\$ _____

Please send your contribution by April 19th.

Food Wish List: Canned Tuna

GIVING COUPON:
MAY
COUPON #187

Consider making a Mother's Day donation this year in honor or memory of mom.

Donation Amount
\$ _____

Please send your contribution by May 17th.

Food Wish List: Canned Veggies

NEW FACES — NEW PLACES



There are some new faces around KLF these days.

Seth De Los Santos is our new Warehouse Assistant and will stay busy moving products and getting food

orders ready to head to the pantries. Seth replaces **Ray Kuerth** who has recently moved into the role of Volunteer Coordinator. If you are interested in volunteering, give Ray a call! Lastly, **Nate Mattson** is our new Financial Analyst. Nate's experience and insight will be a great addition to our administrative team. **Welcome aboard!**

2019 COMMUNITY CELEBRATION AWARD WINNERS

Willie Webster
Outstanding Volunteer Award
South County Pantry Volunteers

Individual Golden Loaf Award
Sam Clark
Jessica Suarez

Group Golden Loaf Award
KLF Call Center Volunteers

Marcia Jackson Hunger Advocacy Award
Bobby Jo Ludwick

Food Industry Supply Hero Award
Earth Fare

Community Pillar Award
Panera Bread

Anne Wend Lipsey Food Justice Award
WMed Pediatric Clinic

Special thanks to event sponsor:



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: THE GIVING GARDEN

The Giving Garden took root over 20 years ago on an acre-and-a-half piece of land at the corner of East N Ave. and Sprinkle Rd. The land, owned by Humphrey Products and Kendall Electric, was donated for use to Mike Blakely, a master gardener who wanted to start a vegetable garden that would spur an interest in horticulture as well as giving back to the community. Today, Brenda Klokman and a handful of dedicated volunteers carry on Blakely's legacy by caring for the Giving Garden, donating the produce it provides, and hosting workshops for those interested in learning more about gardening.

"It's amazing that the garden is all volunteer operated," Dave Hafer, Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes' Procurement & Logistics Coordinator, shared. "They've donated 18,500 pounds of produce to KLF within the past two years."

Klokman and her team dedicate a few hours each Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday during the growing season (roughly March through October) to care for produce they'll donate to agencies in Kalamazoo County. Each year, they carefully evaluate how the fruits and vegetables they've grown have served those struggling with hunger, and they plan accordingly for the year ahead. This year, in addition to staples like tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, and cantaloupe, they'll add tomatillos to their lineup.

While a big focus of the garden has always been to provide fresh food to others, it also serves as a place to educate the community on a variety of topics while providing an outlet for people to connect over a common cause.

"We're motivated to sustain Mike's legacy and his desire to help others," Klokman shares. "In general, master gardeners tend to be very giving people, and this garden helps instill a sense of community in those who invest their time here."

While garden volunteers humbly accept praise for the impact their hard work generates, Klokman says they're also very grateful for the community support they have received over the years — from the irrigation water to the supplemental seeds and donated plants.

The Giving Garden is always looking for fresh faces to help care for plants. If you're interested in learning more or lending a hand, visit commongroundkalamazoo.com and select 'Find A Garden'.



Giving Garden volunteers tend to produce that will later be donated to community agencies that fight local hunger.

CANvas PROJECT GIVES BACK THROUGH ART



See samples of Hershberger's artwork, like the mural featured above, at gobonussaves.com.

We are looking forward to the upcoming **CANvas Project**, an Arts Fair collaboration between the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (KIA) and Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes (KLF). A canned food drive will be taking place at several area locations, including the KIA, during April and May. These donations will provide supplies for a sculpture that will be created on the Rotary Stage in Bronson Park during the 2019 Arts Fair. Patrick Hershberger, aka Bonus Saves, will use cans of all sizes and colors to create a sculpture as fairgoers watch his art-making in action. The Arts Fair will be held Friday & Saturday, June 7-8. Once the sculpture is complete and has been admired, KLF will be the beneficiary of all the food donations. Stop by the KIA to donate your cans or make a donation towards the project at kzoolf.org. Any monetary donations designated for the project will be used to purchase additional cans for the sculpture... and eventually our pantries.

TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's honor or memory. Donations made 1/1/19 - 2/28/19.

IN HONOR OF

Lee Accorso
Sam & Barb Accorso

Marsel & Ahmed Al-Jaouni
Karen Ann Klott

Adam Anderson & Staff
Rosemary Barnum

Anne & Dick Anson
Father Michael Hazard

Daniel Betke
Martha & Jon Betke

David Betke
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Art Cole & Sally Reames

Father Kevin Covert
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Kristine Mauro
Joseph Mauro

Pete McWethy's Birthday
Christina Madden

Bishop James Murray
Friends at The Fountains

Chuck & Lana Ocvirek
Rachel Packer

Father James O'Leary
Rosemary Barnum

Our Family's February and March Birthdays
Bob & Loree Bagley

Michael Rice
Millie Lambert

Guy & Maryhelen Shawkey
Art Cole & Sally Reames

Joyce Thrane
Father Michael Hazard

Sister Mary Joan Walsh
Rosemary Barnum

Betty Wells' 90th Birthday
Bernie & Helen Rodee

IN MEMORY OF

Cindy Beachler
Charlotte Hubbard & Marshall Beachler

Rita Bober
Michele Dytyniak

Patrecia Breen
Kay Baetsen

Gene Calloway
Flo Friender

Karen B. Cernik
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Jennie Wolbers
Dennis & Rosalyn Wolbers

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For corrections, mailing
database updates, or to
receive our newsletter via
email, please contact KLF's
Development Director,
Greta Faworski at
269.488.2617 ext. 208 or
Greta@kzoolf.org.



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WWW.KZOO.F.ORG

Our Mission

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes will feed hungry people and engage our community in the fight to end hunger.

Our Values

- Respect
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Stewardship & Accountability
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Urgency
- Service



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS' STAMP OUT HUNGER FOOD DRIVE ALL DAY MAY 11

LOOK FOR YELLOW FOOD COLLECTION BAGS IN YOUR MAILBOX
AND LEAVE NON-PERISHABLE FOOD FOR YOUR MAIL CARRIER

All Donations Stay Local and Benefit:

- Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes
- The Salvation Army
- Portage Community Center
- Christian Neighbors

Special Thanks to NALC Branch 246 and
the United Way of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo



Last year, our community generated 72,026 pounds of food through the NALC Food Drive.

Since 2001, the NALC Food Drive has generated 1.9 million pounds of food, an average of 116,977 each year, for our community.

APRIL/MAY 2019

CONNECT WITH US



KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A



STAFF / BUSINESS OFFICE

269.488.2617
Joan Atwell, Call Center Coordinator
Bill Brown, Warehouse Assistant
Paul Bushek, On-Call Warehouse Staff
Carol Cormack, Office Coordinator
Rebecca De Los Santos, Human Services Coordinator
Seth De Los Santos, Warehouse Assistant
Greta Faworski, Resource Development Director
Linda Fuhlbrugge Fox, Program Manager
Lizbeth Fuentes Rosas, Program Coordinator

| | |
|--|-----|
| EXT. Joe Galaviz, Warehouse Coordinator | 211 |
| 201 Dave Hafer, Procurement & Transportation Coordinator | 212 |
| 217 Kim Hinds-Lepsy, Melzer Pantry Coordinator | 221 |
| 217 Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director | 213 |
| 222 Denise Koning, Human Resources Director | 224 |
| 210 Ray Kuerth, Volunteer Coordinator | 209 |
| 217 Nate Mattson, Financial Analyst | |
| 208 Currently Vacant, Dev. & Communications Coord. | 206 |
| 214 Gina Nowling, Douglass Pantry Coordinator | 225 |
| 201 Nadina Williams-Barrett, Comm. Engagement/Advocacy | 218 |