

FOOD FORTHOUGHT

DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020

“...the more I got to know everyone, the more I realized there wasn't any judgement...”

MEET EDDIE



AFTER LOSING HIS WIFE a few years back, Eddie was starting to adjust to a simple life of living alone and taking care of himself. His income from social security wasn't much, but he was able to make ends meet by living frugally. Although his adult son lived in town, they didn't see each other much. Eddie knew his son had issues with substance abuse, and their relationship was often strained because of it. His son had two children of his own, ages seven and ten, but Eddie didn't have the chance to see them often. The children's mother also struggled with addiction and hadn't been a very solid presence in their lives.

Eddie figured that the rest of his days were going to be quiet and uneventful. But one day, everything changed. His son's issues with drug abuse had gotten worse. He was barely able to take care of himself let alone his children. Eddie realized that, if he didn't take his grandchildren into his home, they would most likely end up in the foster care system. So he opened his doors and started the journey of raising his grandchildren. He isn't alone — it is estimated that over 2.5 million grandparents in the country are responsible for raising their grandchildren.

Having his grandchildren around definitely brought some changes to the household. Their energy was boundless — and so were the increased costs of having more people in the house. Eddie could barely make ends meet on his social security income, so he was really struggling. Even though it was difficult, he knew his only option was to ask for help. Life wasn't turning out the way he expected, and he found himself getting angry. Angry at losing his wife; angry at his son for not being able to handle his responsibilities. When he first visited Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, he lashed out at the staff and volunteers.

“I knew they were trying to be helpful, but at first it felt like pity,” stated Eddie. “However, the more I got to know everyone, the more I realized there wasn't any judgement — they were just there to help.”

Eddie doesn't know what the future holds. He has learned a lot raising his grandchildren, especially that it's okay to ask for help. “I'm very grateful that Loaves & Fishes has been there to support us when we needed it.”



HAPPY VOLUNTEER YEAR!

Resolve to donate your time in 2020 as a KLF volunteer.

We're currently looking for Call Center volunteers weekday mornings. Training is provided.

For more details about volunteering, visit kzoolf.org.



VOLUNTEER!

- A NOTE FROM JEN -

MEET GINA NOWLING, DOUGLASS PANTRY COORDINATOR

Our high-capacity pantry at the Douglass Community Association opened in 2017 and has seen continuous growth and demand since opening its doors. We sat down with Gina Nowling, Douglass Pantry Coordinator, to learn more about how this pantry location serves the Kalamazoo community.

— Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

Q: There's a welcoming feeling when you walk through the doors of this pantry; what do you attribute that to?

A: A little bit of everything. A lot of our clients know each other so they're comfortable when they come in. Our volunteers also play a big part in making this space feel warm and inviting.

Q: Do you feel the Douglass Pantry has had an impact on the northern part of the City of Kalamazoo since opening in 2017?

A: Oh, yes. This pantry serves around 32 households per shift and is like a community within a community. For many nearby, there's a vast need for grocery items, especially after people cover the rent, gas for the car, daycare; there's often nothing left for food after that.

Q: How do the organizations within the Douglass Community Association contribute to a feeling of "community" at this pantry location?

A: We're all very supportive of each other and that carries over to the people we serve. They're always checking in on me to make sure I'm safe and that everything is going okay.

Q: What type of grocery items are your clients most in need of this time of year?

A: My clients are always grateful for the groceries they shop for, but this time of year they especially appreciate hearty meats, foods that help make holiday celebrations a little more festive like dessert items, and personal care items. Toiletries are very popular year-round at this pantry.



Gina Nowling with volunteers at KLF's Douglass Community Association pantry.

OUR WAREHOUSE EXPANSION IS COMPLETE!

Thank you to everyone who attended our November 7th Open House.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: TWO MEN AND A TRUCK®

Since 2015, TWO MEN AND A TRUCK® has helped Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes fight hunger. The company has generously donated time to transport large food drive donations when KLF needed an extra hand (and truck). From Little League complexes to local banks and grocery stores, their staff is always ready to rise to the occasion of helping their local communities.

Giving back to the community is at the heart of the TWO MEN AND A TRUCK® organization. In 2018 alone, franchises donated more than \$3 million worth of moving services to people and organizations in need. This fall, the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek franchise hosted their first ever Movers for Meals food drive to benefit KLF.

“We knew we wanted to do something for the community this fall,” said Sarah Shaw, Marketing Manager for the franchise. “From there we asked our professional movers to vote on what meant most to them, and they wanted to fight hunger in Kalamazoo.”

The team coordinated with local businesses and organizations to serve as drop-off locations and generated 250 pounds of food (that’s over 200 meals!) for people in our community.

“Our franchise has worked with Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes in the past and has been able to build a relationship with the KLF team,” shares Shaw. “We know that when we donate time or food items to KLF, they will help support those families who are most in need in our community.”

In addition to helping KLF, TWO MEN AND A TRUCK® Kalamazoo/Battle Creek has donated time to help raise awareness and funds to prevent child abuse, donated toys to children at Bronson’s Children’s Hospital, and also collected essential care items for women in need. They look forward to hosting their 2nd Annual Movers for Meals in the fall of 2020 and hope you’ll help them in the fight to end hunger.



A TWO MEN AND A TRUCK® employee helps unload donated food at KLF.

WELCOME, PATSY!



We are excited to welcome Patsy Burnett to our team! Patsy has joined the KLF Services Department as a Program Manager. In this role,

she will be overseeing the Call Center and general operations of the Grocery Pantry Program network. Prior to joining KLF, Patsy served as the Emergency Assistance Coordinator at the Portage Community Center. In that role, she was responsible for coordinating the KLF food pantry at that location and, consequently, brings a great deal of experience with our pantry system. Please help us in welcoming Patsy to the KLF team the next time you’re in the building!

HOSTING A HOLIDAY PARTY?
UTILIZE OUR HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE KIT!
 You’ll find a collection of information and printables to encourage guests to get into the spirit of giving this season.
SEE OUR FESTIVE DESIGNS AT KZOOOLF.ORG

MONTHLY GIVING COUPONS

<p>GIVING COUPON: DECEMBER COUPON #194</p> <p>Tis’ the season to extend a hand to those in need. Happy Holidays!</p> <p>Donation Amount</p> <p>\$ _____</p> <p><i>Please send your contribution by December 20th.</i></p> <p>Food Wish List: Cooking Oil</p>	<p>GIVING COUPON: JANUARY COUPON #195</p> <p>Happy New Year! Kick off 2020 with a donation to fight hunger.</p> <p>Donation Amount</p> <p>\$ _____</p> <p><i>Please send your contribution by January 17th.</i></p> <p>Food Wish List: Beef Stew</p>
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FIGHTING HUNGER

LOCAL YOUTH ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Generosity has no age boundaries. We continue to be humbled and encouraged to see kids and teens of all ages going out of their way to help others. Whether independent efforts or large group activities, it's clear that youth in our community have inherited the philanthropic spirit of Kalamazoo County. There are countless examples of different school buildings and groups helping throughout the year. We appreciate them all more than can be adequately expressed. Here are just a few youth-led charitable ventures scheduled during this holiday season.

KC Feeds Kzoo



The students of **Kalamazoo Central High School** are stuffing the bus — and then some. Each year, they continue to increase — and meet — the goals of their KC Feeds Kzoo Project. Led by teacher advisor Rex Hafer, last year the KCHS students raised over \$7,000 and 11,000 pounds of food. See how you can help this year:

Old Dog Tavern Benefit Concert

Thursday, December 12th From 6 - 9 pm

Stuff The Bus at Harding's Market on West Main Street

Saturday, December 14th from 9 am - 2 pm

Unable to attend either event? Help them reach their goal by donating at kzoolf.org and designating KC Feeds Kzoo.

Loy Norrix Peace Jam



Peace Jam is an international education program with the goal to inspire a new generation of peacemakers who will transform their local communities and the world. Each year, the Peace Jam program at **Loy Norrix High School** has put this mindset into action during the annual Maple Hill Holiday Parade. Snow or shine, members of Peace Jam walk the parade route several times collecting food and fund donations for KLF. **This year, Peace Jam was able to collect 250 pounds of food and nearly \$2000 which will be matched by Maple Hill Auto Group.**

MAPLE STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL

Coin Drive



It started out as a simple idea of donating pennies with a modest goal of \$900. But the students of **Maple Street Middle School** far exceeded their goal and raised just over \$3,700 during their first ever December coin drive. The coin drive is scheduled for **December 2nd - December 20th** this year, and they plan to surpass last year's totals. Want to help out? Stop by the main office to donate your coins!

PORTAGE NORTHERN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Empty Bowls



Art students at **Portage North Middle School** will once again create clay bowls to raise awareness of hunger in our community. **On December 5th from 5:30 - 7:00 pm, PNMS will host their 3rd Annual Empty Bowls Charity Event.** The public is welcome to attend. Students will sell their creations and there will be raffles to raise additional funds. This event has raised over \$2,000 for KLF in the past two years. The Empty Bowls Project is a movement started by artists and crafts people to support food-related charities. Other schools in Kalamazoo County have held Empty Bowls events including Prairie Ridge Elementary, Edison Elementary, Spring Valley Center for Exploration, Arcadia Elementary, and Northglade Montessori. Want to host an Empty Bowls event? Contact Mandakini Brophy at mandakini@kzoolf.org or 269-488-2617 ext. 206.

TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's honor or memory. Donations made 9/1/19 - 10/31/19.

IN HONOR OF

Lee Accorso
Sam & Barb Accorso

Elsie Baur
Carol E. Bailey

Sue Gilbertson-Beadling
Corinne Herschleb

Marge Carr's Birthday
Barbara Guse

Pam & Al Cox
Jane & Jon Streeter

Organ Donors
Peter Burtis

Lucille Dooley's 100th Birthday
Nancy & Ron Crowell
Sandra J. Kristen

Peggy G. Drew
Sister Jeanne M. Grennen

Elizabeth Dykhouse
Kristin Tyrrell

Harold Fitzgerald
William Fitzgerald

Garret Laab's Birthday
Melissa Hull
Lara Latham
Lisa St. Peter

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Ken & Judy Sarkozy
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Kathy Shultz
Jane & Jon Streeter

Margie Sherwood
Kathleen Sherwood & Karen Cathcart

Carol Warner
Charles & Marva Dickson

Cheryl Westbrook's Birthday
John & Diana Haskins

Kalamazoo Central High School Class of 1954
Ladies of the 80s

Kalamazoo Civil War Round Table
Roxanne & James Frey

IN MEMORY OF

Barbara Allen
Cheryl & Burton TenBrink

John R. Bittner
Mary Gomez
Sherry Lane

Linda Black
Douglas & Clara Paine

Maria Brandao
Barbara & Robert Havira

Patrecia Breen
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Rosa Linda Olivarez

Brian Louis Oman
Don & Mary Lou Oman

Scott Orr
Stephen Humphrey

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Randy & Linda Willmeng

Our Parents—Dick & Anne and Hub & Bobbi
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Robert & Norberta Renauld

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Paul & Diana Swope

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Henry & Johanna Yzenbaard
Mike & Shirley Lohrberg

Database Updates? For corrections, mailing updates, or to change how your newsletter is delivered (via USPS, email, or both), please contact Mandakini Brophy at 269.488.2617 ext. 206 or Mandakini@kzoolf.org.



KALAMAZOO
& LOAVES
& FISHES

Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

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KALAMAZOO MI
PERMIT NO. 1693

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KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49001-3005

FOOD REQUEST LINE: 269/343-3663
P 269/488-2617 · F 269/343-3669
WWW.KZOOLF.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

30 accessible Kalamazoo County pantry locations.

Being greeted by a caring volunteer when you shop.

Having a choice of quality produce, meat, dairy and grains.



Various food distribution methods to meet various client needs.

Food waste reduction within Kalamazoo County.

KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES
2019 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

THE LITTLE THINGS MATTER

Your support allows KLF to focus on the little things that make a big difference in our community.
You can help by making a donation via mail or online at kzoolf.org.

DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020

CONNECT WITH US



KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A



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