

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

DECEMBER 2020/JANUARY 2021



MEET CORINNA

Corinna reached out and wanted to know if she qualified for food assistance. “I just moved to the area and am working two jobs. They don’t pay a lot, and I’ve been struggling lately. Can I get food even if I am employed?” We told her that anyone in Kalamazoo County is eligible for food assistance with self-declaration of need. Because her two jobs require long hours, we worked with Corinna to find a time when she could pick up her groceries. “This is so helpful,” said Corinna. “I really don’t know anyone in the area. It’s so nice to have someplace to count on.”

“Don’t think I will need food from you guys anymore. I just got a job at a factory in town!”

— Doug, KLF Client

MEET YVONNE & ISAIAH

Yvonne and Isaiah drive up to the pantry for their appointment. As staff begins to load groceries into their car, they both turn around to say thank you. Yvonne shares, “This means so much. I lost my job as a school lunch helper in March. We thought we would be okay, but then Isaiah got laid off in June. And with the kids going to school remotely and eating at home all the time... well, we just needed a little help.” Staff finish loading the car, shut the hatch, and wave as Yvonne and Isaiah drive off.



MEET DOUG

We first met Doug on a weekly delivery to a local homeless encampment. At each visit to the encampment, KLF takes food items that are ready-to-eat and don’t require cooking or cold storage. Doug was struggling to find work and had been living in his tent for several months. At our most recent visit, he came running up enthusiastically to thank us for helping him make it through his rough spot. “Don’t think I will need food from you guys anymore. I just got a job at a factory in town!” Doug shared. “I hope that I can move into an apartment as soon as I save enough.”



*Client’s name changed to protect anonymity.

— A NOTE FROM JEN —

MEET NADINA WILLIAMS-BARRETT

Nadina Williams-Barrett joined KLF as the Advocacy and Coalition Coordinator in November 2018. In that role, she oversaw activities of the Kalamazoo County Hunger-Free Community Coalition. Nadina also raised awareness of public policy issues that impacted our clients and, ultimately, their food security. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted KLF in many ways, including moving certain staff around to where they were needed most. Nadina became more involved with service delivery and has risen to the unique challenges facing our organization. While still involved in Coalition and Advocacy work, her day-to-day role focuses more on making sure food gets to those who need it most. We sat down with Nadina to get her perspective on how KLF has changed due to COVID and how state and federal policies impact food security on a local level. — Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

Q: In your previous role, you focused a great deal on food security advocacy. How has that intersected with your more client-focused role today?

A: Our curbside pick-up model still allows us many opportunities to speak with clients about the challenges they are facing. Food insecurity does not occur in a bubble; it is a symptom of greater systematic issues that impact many different elements of life. Our clients struggle with affordable housing, low wages, childcare costs, and medical coverage for their families. SNAP (the federal food stamp program) can help, but many families receive a very small amount of benefits. The average family receives less than \$250 per month in SNAP benefits.

Q: What are some of the things that you've observed or that have surprised you in your work?

A: It surprised me how quickly this organization shifted its programming during the pandemic. It was never a question of "if" we could do it—only a question of "how". We are proud of our new home delivery program because we are serving people who would never be able to travel to a pantry. Our staff and volunteers have worked tremendously hard over the past nine months. Our partner agencies have stepped up to help identify people in need. The community has supported us with generous food and fund donations. And our clients have been flexible and patient through all the changes.

Q: What are you excited about in the months ahead?

A: We are in the process of creating a new customer database that will help us move into the future. This database will provide greater flexibility in tracking information, identifying trends, and communicating with clients. As our world becomes more technological, we are excited about the possibilities that the new database will provide. Like everyone else, we have no idea what the next year will bring. However, we know that we are truly grateful to be able to do this work.



Nadina joined KLF as the Advocacy and Coalition Coordinator in November 2018.

THE BENEFITS OF GIVING

The perks of charitable giving go beyond tax breaks. Multiple studies have shown that we glean mood-boosting benefits when we choose to help others. Below are a handful of ways your good deeds get rewarded!



Boost Happiness

Several universities found that those who gave to others reported higher levels of joy and contentment than those who do not.



Activate Your Reward Center

Research shows that charitable giving creates a powerful brain response that releases dopamine and endorphins.



Increase Satisfaction

A European study found that those who give to others have greater life satisfaction than those who do not.



Improve Your Health

Johns Hopkins University found that volunteerism and donating to charity is linked to less stress and lower blood pressure.



Improve Morale

Employees who contribute time or money to a corporate cause are more likely to report improved work morale.



Spur Action

Volunteerism is contagious. Your efforts are likely to inspire others to get involved in helping your community or cause.



Make Connections

Passing along kindness via charitable giving and volunteerism has been shown to boost networking, motivation, and team building.



Take Care of Your Community

Giving to local charities creates safety nets that are better equipped to provide quick response to unique community needs.

MONTHLY GIVING COUPONS

GIVING COUPON:
DECEMBER
COUPON #204

Help a family have a happier holiday this season with a gift to fight hunger.

Donation Amount
\$ _____

Please send your contribution by December 23rd.

Food Wish List: Cooking Oil

GIVING COUPON:
JANUARY
COUPON #205

Happy New Year!
Celebrate the turn of the calendar by helping others.

Donation Amount
\$ _____

Please send your contribution by January 22nd.

Food Wish List: Beef Stew



CARES ACT AND CHARITABLE GIVING

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law in late March. The \$2.2 trillion bill was designed to respond on many fronts to the COVID-19 crisis and includes provisions related to charitable giving.

The Act includes two important provisions that impact charitable giving. These include:

- The CARES Act allows non-itemizers to deduct up to \$300 in cash giving for the 2020 tax year.
- For those who itemize, the bill lifts the cap on annual giving from 60% of adjusted gross income to 100%. For corporate charitable giving, the bill raises the annual limit from 10% to 25% of taxable income. The cap on deductibility of food donations from corporations increases to 25% of taxable income, up from the current 15% cap.



TEACHING KIDS ABOUT *philanthropy*

The holiday season is a great time of year to teach children the importance of philanthropy.

Try these easy tips to get youngsters into the giving spirit.

- ❄️ **Select a charity** to support that means something to your child (i.e. a local pet shelter, food pantry, shelter for youth, etc.). Encourage children to make a gift in honor of their teacher, coach, or family member.
- ❄️ **Create a holiday countdown basket** and add an item to donate each day (i.e. canned food, toiletries, pet food, etc.) as the holiday grows nearer. Allow your little one to donate the basket when it's full.
- ❄️ **Write letters and make cards** for those living in nursing homes or living alone. Many elderly have had limited contact with friends and loved ones since the pandemic began and would love to receive snail mail.
- ❄️ **Start a donation jar** for little ones to put found coins and tithing money into throughout the year. Let them help pick out how the money will be donated next holiday season!

A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact our community in mid-March, Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes has worked hard to meet our clients' needs in ways that keep everyone safe.

Below is a snapshot of how we've served the community since the pandemic began.

FOOD ORDERS

Provided **63,686** four-day food orders.

INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Served **16,388** unduplicated individuals in 5,585 households.

HOME DELIVERIES

Made **6,968** home deliveries to 1,030 households.

MOBILE SERVICES

Held **79** Mobile Food Distributions throughout Kalamazoo County.

YOUR GENEROSITY MAKES THIS POSSIBLE!

HUNGER IN RURAL AMERICA

Some may think that America's heartland, where the majority of our food is grown, would experience lower rates of hunger than other parts of our country. The reality is that **87% of US counties hardest hit by hunger are rural.**

In 2019, an estimated **2.3 million households in rural communities faced hunger**; we know that number has only increased since the pandemic. The percentage of those living in poverty (13%) is also higher in rural areas than in urban areas (10%).

Living in a remote community comes with a unique set of challenges that include limited transportation options, food deserts, and little-to-no access to food pantries. Additionally, many jobs concentrated in rural communities pay low wages and are often seasonal. Programs like SNAP as well as mobile food pantries play a critical role in combating hunger in these underserved areas. Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes serves all of Kalamazoo County, including the outlying rural communities.

Source: www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america



DEBUNKING THE MYTHS SEPARATING HUNGER FACT FROM FICTION

✗ MYTH: America doesn't have a hunger crisis.

✓ FACT: There are over 35 million people struggling with hunger in the United States; that amounts to the combined populations of Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois.

✗ MYTH: Hunger exists because there is not enough food.

✓ FACT: Abundance, not scarcity, best describes the world's food supply. In fact, the world produces enough food for every human being to have over 3,500 calories per day.

✗ MYTH: Someone overweight isn't experiencing hunger.

✓ FACT: Although it may seem contradictory, obesity is common among those experiencing hunger. Households trying to stretch food budgets often opt for less expensive high-energy foods. High-energy foods are usually high in calories and low in nutritional quality.

✗ MYTH: People struggling with hunger are usually homeless or unemployed.

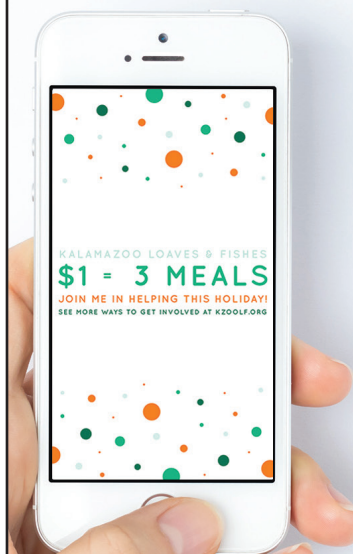
✓ FACT: The majority of those struggling with hunger in the United States work full or part-time. In addition, one in four people who are food insecure doesn't qualify for federal nutrition programs like SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

✗ MYTH: People on SNAP are lazy and unemployed.

✓ FACT: The majority of people utilizing SNAP are employed, live in a household with at least one employed individual, and/or are enrolled in higher education. This year the number of Michigan residents participating in the SNAP program spiked 74% from 661,047 to 1,150,697.

'TIS THE SEASON TO SHARE A MEAL

FIND EASY-TO-USE GRAPHICS AND PRINTABLES
FOR YOUR HOLIDAY FOOD OR FUND DRIVE!



SOCIALLY-DISTANCED
FOOD AND FUND
DRIVE IDEAS

SOCIAL MEDIA
GRAPHICS

POSTCARDS

DONATION
NOTIFICATION
CARDS

AND MORE!

KZOOOLF.ORG/2020-HOLIDAY-FOOD-DRIVE-KIT/

TRIBUTES Generous donations made in someone's HONOR or MEMORY. Donations made 9/1/20 - 10/31/20.

IN HONOR

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Mary Deyoung

Brian Clay
Shirley Scott

Pam Dalitz
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Shirin Fattah
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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.



Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

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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.KZOOOF.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



FIGHT HUNGER

KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES 2020 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

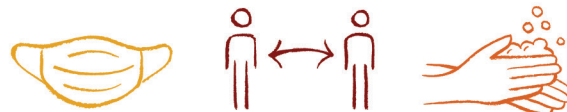
It takes creativity and innovation to keep our five food programs running during a pandemic.

IT ALSO TAKES YOU

Please consider making a donation this season to support programs that allow hundreds to access wholesome, nutritious groceries each day. Each dollar you donate provides three full meals and piece of mind for so many who are struggling right now.

Donations can be made via mail or online at kzoolf.org.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
STAY SAFE & HEALTHY!



DECEMBER 2020/JANUARY 2021

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