

# FOOD FORTHOUGHT

FALL 2021



## MEET ANTHONY

The last time Anthony visited a KLF pantry was before the pandemic. When he calls, he apologizes and tells the Call Center volunteer that he hates asking for help. We explain our new curbside pick-up system, and he says that this model will make it much easier on him; between work and picking the kids up from school, it can be tough to add anything extra to his schedule. Anthony makes an appointment later that day. Before hanging up, he asks, “By chance, do you have any birthday cakes? My son turns 15 tomorrow, and we don’t have a cake for him.” We tell Anthony that a generous donor gave us lots of cake mixes, frosting, and candles especially for situations like these—we will include one in his food order. “Thanks—this is really going to help make it a nice day for our family.”

“You know, this place was my lifeline when my kids were little. I was a single mom, and there was never enough money to last the month. Just keeping up with rent was hard enough.”

- Camille  
Former KLF Client

## MEET RANA

Rana is an international student pursuing her master’s degree in Kalamazoo. She emails the KLF information line and asks if it’s possible to get some assistance with food. “I only have a small stipend, and most of it goes toward housing,” Rana explains. Because she doesn’t have transportation, Rana is relieved to learn that food can be delivered. “My studies and campus work require me to be at the university most of the day, so it is difficult for me to take a city bus anywhere.” Rana goes on to explain that she only eats halal and is once again relieved when she learns that KLF has halal chicken and beef in stock. “Thank you so much—it is nice to know that there are caring people who want to help others.”



## MEET CAMILLE

Camille pulls up to KLF with a food donation. She was just at the grocery store and decided to pick up a few extra boxes of cereal and granola bars. After handing her donated items to a KLF staff member and taking her receipt, Camille begins walking back towards her car, then pauses. “You know, this place was my lifeline when my kids were little.” Camille continues, “I was a single mom, and there was never enough money to last the month. Just keeping up with rent was hard enough.” She opens the door to her car, but before she gets in, Camille says, “I am doing alright now, thank goodness, but I know there is someone out there today who is going through exactly what I did back then. I hope those things will help her.”



## A NOTE FROM JEN

### CHECKING IN WITH RAY KUERTH, KLF VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

If you have ever volunteered with KLF, you are probably familiar with Ray's energy and enthusiasm. He is often the first person you will encounter before being directed toward your volunteer assignment. Ray joined KLF as a Warehouse Assistant in 2017 before moving into the Volunteer Coordinator position in 2019. We checked in with Ray to get his perspective on volunteering at KLF, including changes that have occurred considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

— Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

**Q: Because of COVID-19, many non-profits were forced to limit or eliminate volunteer opportunities. How did KLF approach this challenge?**

**A:** While the number of volunteers has dropped dramatically for many reasons, we never stopped having volunteer opportunities available even at the beginning of the pandemic. These opportunities are limited and look different, but we still need help from volunteers daily.

**Q: In what ways has volunteering changed at KLF?**

**A:** Before COVID, we had nearly 400 volunteers each week supporting our work at pantries, mobile food distributions, in the warehouse, and at special events. In March 2020, that number went to zero overnight with pantry closures, stay-at-home orders, and general concern for health and safety. Even when people began to feel comfortable with returning, we had to limit numbers in our facility for social distancing purposes. The work has also changed. With our curbside model, volunteering can be more physically demanding and offers less interaction with clients, something our volunteers loved. We used to have corporate groups assisting us frequently, but many of those groups are still not allowed to engage in community service due to COVID. To be honest, it's an ever-changing situation, and we are just trying to take it day by day.

**Q: Do you currently have volunteer needs? If so, what are they?**

**A:** Yes, we do have volunteer needs. We frequently need help in the warehouse assembling food boxes, homeless encampment bags, and weekend food packs for the schools. There will also be upcoming mobile food distributions and food sorting, especially as we get closer to the holidays. If anyone is interested, feel free to reach out to me at ray@kzoolf.org for more information!



Ray helping at this year's Dollar Drive-Thru.

## BACK TO SCHOOL!

To say that it has been a rocky journey for Kalamazoo County school staff, families, and students over the past 18 months is an understatement. Prior to COVID-19, KLF operated a multitude of school-based food assistance programs. Those programs ended abruptly in March 2020. While we intensified our efforts to support families through our Grocery Pantry Program, we missed our school-based efforts.

With Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) returning to in-person learning, we are pleased to resume both our Weekend Food Pack Program and our 11 School-Based Pantries! Our packs provide easy-to-carry, kid-friendly food to approximately 500 students on Friday afternoons to bridge the weekend meal gap; they're provided to both KPS and Comstock Public Schools. School-Based Pantries operate in 11 KPS school buildings including elementary, middle, and high schools. While most pantries provide full food orders to families, they are often used by students to get snacks, single food items, or emergency food packs to take home. These programs wouldn't be possible without our partners in the school buildings and at Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo.

During the past 18 months, KLF offered monthly mobile food distributions at schools throughout the county to provide more resources and connect with new families. These special food distributions will continue during the school year and will be scheduled at specific times when school is not in session such as winter and spring breaks.

YOUR GENEROUS SPIRIT HAS INSPIRED OTHERS TO GIVE

## A GIFT HAS BEEN MADE TO



## IN YOUR HONOR

THIS GIFT WILL HELP PROVIDE FOOD TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST. KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES CAN TURN EACH DOLLAR DONATED INTO ENOUGH GROCERY ITEMS TO MAKE THREE FULL MEALS.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

SEE MORE INFORMATION AT [KZOOLF.ORG](http://KZOOLF.ORG)

### Get a jump on holiday giving and food drives with our Food Drive Checklist and Food and Fund Drive Kit!

In the kit you'll find graphics promote your drive, donation notification cards, and more. Look for the **Host A Drive** and **Holiday Food Drive Kit** buttons on our home page at:

**KZOOLF.ORG**



## REQUEST FOOD BARRELS

Borrow our collection barrels for your food drive! To make a request, visit the link below.

[kzoolf.org/food-barrel-request/](http://kzoolf.org/food-barrel-request/)

### MONTHLY GIVING COUPONS

GIVING COUPON:  
**OCTOBER**  
COUPON #212

This fall season, make a donation to help those experiencing hunger.

Donation Amount  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your contribution by October 8th.

Food Wish List: Soups/Stews

GIVING COUPON:  
**NOVEMBER**  
COUPON #213

Get into the spirit of giving! Give a little to those who may otherwise go without.

Donation Amount  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your contribution by November 12th.

Food Wish List: Canned Veggies



THE ONSTAFF GROUP  
DOLLAR DRIVE-THRU  
**\$8,499 RAISED**  
We appreciate everyone who who helped make this year's event a success.

## STAFF UPDATES

**Sara Johnson** has joined the KLF team as our new Administrative & HR Coordinator. In this role, Sara will assist with human resources and general administrative duties. **Erin Lowe** has joined KLF as our new Development & Communications Coordinator. This role oversees the management of our donor database and gift acknowledgments. Erin will also be managing our social media and helping with outreach events. Both individuals bring a wealth of energy and talent to the organization.

Two former KLF staff are embarking on new ventures, and we wish them the best. **Jada Redd** has relocated to be closer to family, and **Mandakini Brophy** has just started a master's degree program. We have also said goodbye to long-time Call Center Coordinator, **Lizbeth Fuentes-Rosa** who has left to explore other opportunities. During her time at KLF, Liz did a fantastic job managing the day-to-day operations of the Call Center, working closely with our clients and volunteers. We will miss you, Liz!



Welcome to the KLF team, Sara (left) and Erin (right)!

## COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM

**For adults 60+ years old.**

For those with income at or below 130% of the poverty line.

Monthly non-perishable food distributions at residential sites and community centers.

To enroll, contact Senior Services at 269-382-0515.

You may also enroll the first Wednesday of each month from 9:30-11 am at the Salvation Army on Burdick Street.



## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



Lindsey Visser of Crisp Country Acres at her family farm in Holland, MI.

In 2020, when the pandemic brought the day-to-day functions of normal life to a screeching halt, Lindsey Visser at **Crisp Country Acres** had a lot of extra produce on hand. She and her family operate a 130-acre farm in Holland, Michigan, and take pride in supplying many Southwest Michigan restaurants and farmers markets with fresh food. When COVID-19 restrictions forced many food-service businesses to close, Lindsey and her team had to get creative. They opened an online store, started mini farmers' markets, and worked with local businesses to increase offerings at their on-site farm store so customers could have an easy, low contact place to shop for local produce, meat, cheese, and other goods.

One bright spot in the pandemic was Crisp Country Acre's continued support from **The Fetzer Institute** in Kalamazoo. Rather than discontinuing their routine produce order when their in-house kitchen closed, the Institute asked that their weekly delivery be diverted to Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes; this was a big help to the farm, especially during the early days of the pandemic. "We really appreciate how they supported us throughout the pandemic and how they support the community," said Lindsey.

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of both The Fetzer Institute and Crisp Country Acres. Their partnership continues to help dozens of people access fresh food each month through our Grocery Pantry Program.

## OCTOBER SNAP UPDATE

This October, benefits for food stamps (the SNAP program) will rise more than 25 percent above pre-pandemic levels. The increased assistance will be available indefinitely to all 42 million SNAP beneficiaries with an average monthly per-person increase of \$36.

This increase to benefits will be the largest boost the program has ever seen. A \$36 increase is a boost worth celebrating, especially for those continuing to stretch program dollars amid pandemic related inflation; the extra dollars will provide welcome budgetary wiggle room.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, energy price inflation increased 17.4% in July compared to 16.9% in June, and food price inflation increased sharply to 3.1% compared to 1.9% in June. These increases mean that individuals and families with already-stretched budgets are having to allocate more funds to expenses like utilities and gasoline to get to work and school, oftentimes foregoing grocery items to cover additional expenses.

While the decision to permanently increase SNAP benefits for millions is helpful, the continual rise in the cost of living hinders much progress towards alleviating food insecurity. Ultimately, this SNAP increase may be a wash, but it sets a precedent for allocating more resources to fight hunger.



Nearly 5 million seniors rely on SNAP for food each month.



## Save the Date

The Maple Hill Holiday Parade

**Saturday, November 20<sup>th</sup> at 11 am**

Maple Hill Auto Group is excited to continue a tradition started by Irving S. Gilmore in 1962.

During the parade, food and fund donations will be collected for Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes.

# TRIBUTES Generous donations made in someone's HONOR or MEMORY. Donations made 7/1/21 - 8/31/21.

## IN HONOR

**Sue Beadling**  
Corinne Herschleb

**Kristi Blythe**  
Prudence D. McCabe

**Julene Burlington**  
Carol & Rex Grant

**Dave Eshuis**  
Phyllis M LeRoy

**Diane Gill's 60th Birthday**  
J. Dale & Cheryl Westbrook

**Joan & Tom Goddard**  
Lori Franklin

**Jim Hankey**  
Corinne Herschleb

**Pat & Don Hetrick**  
Corinne Herschleb

**Jill's Dad's 90th Birthday**  
Sara Dana

**Jennifer E. Johnson**  
Katie Timber & the SPCA Staff

**KLF Staff**  
Caitlinn Cochran

**Evan & Sharon Kokales**  
Maria Tower

**Phalon Lewis**  
Tricia Williams

**Cary Mannaberg & Trish Harris' Wedding**  
Betty Schimmel  
Diana Chappel  
Elliot Schimmel  
Eva & Walter Mannaberg  
Jacqueline Elizalde  
Jacquelyn Esterline  
James Mitchell  
Joan Hawxhurst & Steve Bertman  
L. Allen Holcomb  
Larry & Jerrilyn Holcomb  
Paul & Sara Holcomb  
Roslyn & Richard Cooper  
Sue & David Goldenberg

**Kristine Mauro**  
Joseph Mauro

**Carol Mitchell**  
Anne Fackler

**Chuck & Lana Ocvirek**  
Rachel Packer

**Michelle Oliva**  
James Gluys

**Roy Olton's 99th Birthday**  
Pamela Olton

**Andrew Raz**  
Roger Prior & Barbara Page, MD

**Cheryl Rodbard**  
Ellen & Yaron Anitai

**Judy Sarkozy**  
Linda & Charles Hall

**Jack & Roy Ann Smith**  
Donna Emerson

**Jodi Stoffer**  
Gail Warren

**Don & Linda Todd**  
Corinne Herschleb

**J. William Whitlock**  
Flo Friender

## IN MEMORY

**David Arnold**  
Fred Douglas  
Marion Lanman

**Adolfo Luis Rojas Barquero**  
Rochelle Rojas

**Marshall Beachler**  
John Beachler  
Ms. Charlotte Hubbard  
Ronald & Mary Norris

**Carol Bosley**  
Scott Bosley

**Phillip Carey**  
Margaret & Tim Franklin

**Tom Carr**  
Marge Carr

**Dr. & Mrs. Moises Cillan**  
Lauretta Cillan-Chung, M.D.

**Irving & Anna Clauser**  
Rebecca Evans

**Gloria Copeland**  
Brian & Carol Copeland

**COVID-19 Victims**  
Eilene Summe

**Rita Damon**  
Lorene Cook

**Robert J. DePierre**  
Patricia DePierre & Robert Lihosit

**Brian Desmond**  
Lorene Cook

**James & Lucille Dillon**  
Robert & Norberta Renaud

**Chuck Fievet**  
Mike, Therese, & Bryson Ku

**Art & Becky Flegel**  
Lawrence & Ardith McPhillips

**Nancy Flipse**  
Janice Collins  
Joyce & Ray Carruth

**Barney & Florence Westra**  
Karl W. Westra

**John Westra**  
Karl W. Westra

**Joe Foster**  
Edward & Marilyn Davis

**Geri Gerhard**  
Dave Gerhard

**Barb Gipson**  
Gaydene & Dale Gipson

**Becky Hanson**  
Diane Boley

**Peggy Hegel**  
Dennis & Janice Burke  
Kathryn VanArendonk

**Bob Hegel**  
Susan & Nicholas Beute

**George & Ruth Kinas**  
Janie & Robert Kinas

**Marguerite Kolb**  
Grant Kolb

**Frank Kovach**  
Barbara & Mark Pearson

**William & Gladys Kozar**  
William & Ellen Kozar

**Vicki Kuss**  
Portage United Church of Christ  
Robert & Mary Butler

**Susan Lake**  
Kerry Lake & Paul Arkininstall

**Del Lamson**  
Kim Lamson

**Mike Liepman**  
Howard Steiner

**John Link**  
Jackie Ruttinger

**Maxine L. Louden**  
Lori Klutts

**Linda Renaud Lutz**  
Robert & Norberta Renaud

**Colleen Magnan**  
Mr. James A. Magnan

**Katie Maltby**  
Dorothy Miorin  
James Miorin  
Larry & Carol Johnson  
Pamela Rups  
Susan Ponto  
Thomas & Mary Platte

**Marilyn McKinley**  
Janet Henderson  
Lon Smith  
Mary & Norman Carlson  
Mary E Lybik  
Paul & Pat Bonney  
Phil Combs

**Marilyn Mizesak**  
Sandra L. Simonds

**Lawrence Morton**  
Lee Morton

**Jo Anne Nelson**  
Cheryl & Bruce Briney  
Kim Chandler

**Sara Oliver**  
Catherine A. Larson

**Charles & Helen Overbey**  
Ann DeZwarte

**Toni Perricone**  
Martha Holley-Miers  
Trevor Myers

**Tom Pyke**  
Susan Pyke

**Dee Wielenga Renaud**  
Robert & Norberta Renaud

**Jessica Renaud**  
Robert & Norberta Renaud

**Alvina & Oswald Renaud**  
Robert & Norberta Renaud

**Rick Rodbard**  
John Lewandowski

**Antonia H. Rostami**  
Mr. Jeffrey Rostami

**Darrell M. Rostami**  
Mr. Jeffrey Rostami

**Marilyn Scheel**  
Mr. John F. Scheel

**Martin & Emma Schmitt**  
Robert & Norberta Renaud

**Navjot Singh**  
Jaswant Singh

**A.W. Sinha**  
Ms. Elizabeth G. Roelofs

**Joani Siwik**  
Christine & Andrea Siwik

**Tom Sunday**  
Ms. Charlotte Hubbard

**Debra Jean Spalding**  
Steven Patterson

**Ilan Stenesh**  
Harold & Sherry Bate

**Doug & Marie Renaud Stone**  
Robert & Norberta Renaud

**Josie Hoekstra Talsma**  
Gertrude Hoekstra

**Jerry Taylor**  
Greg & Colleen Schultz

**Aron Thall**  
Anonymous

**Merrell & Mae Tucker**  
Diane Dobbins

**Shirley Tyndall**  
Danny & Shirley Thompson

**William VanMeter**  
Ms. Elizabeth G. Roelofs

**Roon & Olga Visser**  
Ineke Way

**William J. Vullo**  
Jim Eickhoff  
Lisa Cisler

**Carole Walsh**  
Ronald & Nancy Honeysett

**Amelia Wilhelm**  
Layla Jabbori

## DATABASE UPDATES?

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



Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## DID YOU KNOW?



Since its inception, KLF has held steadfast to its **Stakes in the Ground** – guiding principles that help define who we are as an organization and how we approach our mission. Below are just a few of these fundamental values.

**SELF-DECLARATION OF NEED:** Service is provided to individuals who self-declare need of emergency food assistance. No income verification is required, and we remain judgement-free on circumstances surrounding an individual's need for food assistance.

**ALL ARE WELCOME:** KLF is a secular organization that offers our services to all. KLF is an independent non-profit organization without religious ties to any one denomination/faith.

**PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY:** KLF's service delivery model would not be possible without close relationships with other human service agencies, schools, faith-based organizations, and volunteer groups. Addressing hunger is only successful if it's a community-wide approach.

**REDUCTION OF FOOD WASTE:** If we have an overabundance of any food item, we share with other non-profit food providers to avoid waste.

**ADVOCACY:** KLF not only provides direct service, but also engages the community through raising awareness of hunger and collaborating with other community stakeholders to address the root causes of food insecurity.

FALL 2021

### CONNECT WITH US



KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A



### STAFF / BUSINESS OFFICE

269.488.2617  
 Desmond Allen, Warehouse Assistant  
 Bill Brown, Delivery Coordinator & Program Float  
 Jillian Bryant, Program Coordinator  
 Carol Cormack, Office Coordinator  
 Seth De Los Santos, Melzer Pantry Coordinator  
 Greta Faworski, Associate Director  
 Leonardo Fernandez, Program Assistant  
 Kristen Heggie, On-Call Program Coordinator  
 Jeff Herman, Warehouse Analyst  
 Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director  
 Sara Johnson, Administrative & HR Coordinator

EXT.  
 217 Larry Kelly, Program Assistant  
 219 Ray Kuerth, Volunteer Coordinator  
 210 Erin Lowe, Dev. & Communications Coord.  
 222 Nate Mattson, Financial Comptroller  
 221 Gina Nowling, Douglass Pantry Coordinator  
 208 Humza Rahman, Program Assistant  
 217 Suzi Secondi, Warehouse Manager  
 201 Bob Stansifer, Warehouse Director  
 214 Jay Steeb, Program Assistant  
 213 Tyesha Williams, Warehouse Assistant  
 224 Nadina Williams-Barrett, Program Manager

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