

FOODFOR THOUGHT

SUMMER 2023



MEET CLARA

Clara first reached out to KLF in 2020 when the upheaval of the pandemic was making it difficult for her to afford groceries. “I was back on track for a while,” shares Clara. “Then my apartment complex raised everyone’s monthly rent significantly. I couldn’t afford to stay even though I had lived there for four years.” Clara disclosed that she doesn’t have family in the area, so really has nowhere to turn when times are tough. “I have a new job working 2nd shift. It pays well, but I just need a little help as I recover from moving and all those expenses.”



MEET HAROLD

Harold recently sent a letter to KLF with a donation, expressing his thanks for the home delivery program. “I am 81 years old and can no longer drive,” Harold writes in his letter. “I’ve always loved to cook. But getting groceries is so tough for me these days. It’s expensive, and I have such a hard time getting out of the house. Your delivery program has been a lifesaver.” In his letter, Harold continues to say that he appreciates everyone who makes KLF programs possible. “These efforts are truly appreciated by those who benefit from them.”



MEET AMANDA

“I heard about your program from a friend of mine,” shares Amanda when she first reaches out to KLF. “I am a single mom of 3 kids and could use some help, but I may not qualify because I have a job.” We tell Amanda that KLF programs are self-declaration of need and that she is eligible. “Oh, that’s great!” replies Amanda. “It can be so hard to get any help when you have an income — but I don’t make that much!” Amanda continues to say that summer is exceptionally hard because the kids are home from school. This causes their already stretched budget to grow even thinner. “This is going to make a huge difference this summer!”



While the client stories featured above are true, their names and images have been changed for anonymity.

A NOTE FROM JEN

We sat down with Nate Hunt who has been volunteering his time for over a year to support KLF's Home Delivery Program. This program provides free grocery delivery to an average of 70 households each day.

– Jennifer E. Johnson, Executive Director

Q: What sparked your interest in getting involved with Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes?

A: I was interested in giving back and had considered providing a holiday meal or something similar, but I realized this was a small piece of the bigger picture. I then connected with a staff member at KLF and began receiving updates about volunteer openings. After learning about the different ways to get involved, I knew I was interested in working face-to-face with the community and decided that home deliveries would be a great way to do that.

Q: What does an average day look like as a Home Delivery volunteer?

A: We get started first thing in the morning by reviewing our list of clients and their special dietary needs or food allergies. We gather extra food supplies and load up the delivery van. We hit the road around 8:30 a.m. going from house to house, knocking on doors and delivering grocery orders. We try to share a little happiness with everyone we see. People are very appreciative of what we do so giving my time in this way is very rewarding.

Q: Has your perspective on food insecurity and/or KLF changed since you've been volunteering?

A: I had not been familiar with the phrase "food insecurity". But being in this role, I now see a variety of different needs in the community—folks with unique circumstances or who may be in a tough spot. Homes without a refrigerator, possibly only a microwave, or families with many mouths to feed. I was surprised to see how much fresh produce is regularly provided by KLF.



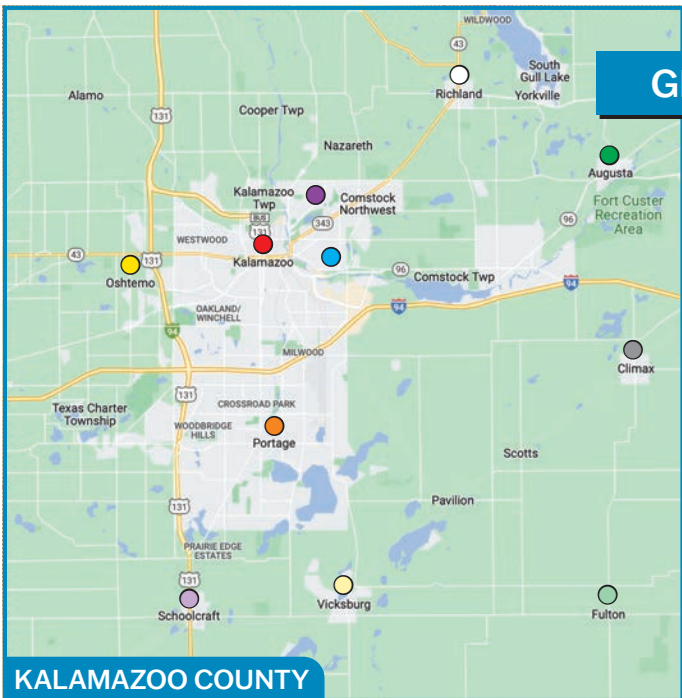
Nate Hunt, KLF Home Delivery Program volunteer.

Q: What is your favorite thing about working with the Home Delivery Program?

A: I really enjoy seeing different areas of the city and the gratitude we receive while making deliveries. I am blessed with the opportunity to give back. I have flexibility with my current job that allows me to have a regular volunteer shift. It's been great to get to know the other volunteers and staff too.

Q: What would you tell others looking to get involved as a volunteer?

A: The feedback from the community is great. It is good to be a little out of your comfort zone, and it is not as intimidating as you might think. I enjoy spending my time with the team at KLF, and it is a very rewarding experience to give back to the community.



GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF SERVICE

In May 2023, KLF served 3,392 households from all over Kalamazoo County and surrounding communities. Here is a snapshot of the communities served through our Grocery Pantry Program—just one of our six hunger-relief programs.

KALAMAZOO COUNTY

	HOUSEHOLDS	% of Total
● Kalamazoo	1883	55.5%
● Portage	296	8.7%
● Oshtemo	259	7.6%
● Galesburg-Augusta	65	1.9%
● Eastside/Comstock	480	14.2%
● Eastside/Parchment	170	5.0%
● Climax Scotts	22	0.6%
● Richland	21	0.6%
● Vicksburg	14	0.4%
● Fulton	3	0.1%
● Schoolcraft	7	0.2%
● No Address	118	3.5%

NEIGHBORING COUNTIES

	HOUSEHOLDS	% of Total
● Calhoun County	8	0.2%
● Van Buren County	17	0.5%
● Allegan County	7	0.2%
● Eaton County	2	0.1%
● Branch County	2	0.1%
● St. Joe County	14	0.4%
● Barry County	4	0.1%

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

	HOUSEHOLDS	% of Total
(May, 2023)	3392	100.0%

THE 31ST ANNUAL



COLLECTED
75,921
POUNDS OF FOOD!



Many thanks to hardworking local letter carriers and NALC Branch 246 as well as our partners at Salvation Army and the United Way of South Central Michigan.

We'd also like to thank our friends at Lindsey Dedicated Services and Advia Credit Union along with the many dedicated volunteers and community donors!



Be a KLF Fundraising Ambassador!

Are you a loyal supporter of KLF who wants to help raise additional funds? There are many easy ways to run a fundraising campaign with your peers. Here are some ideas that don't take a lot of time but can have a significant impact.

- Host a fundraiser on your social media page (e.g. Facebook fundraiser)
- Tell people about your recent donation and encourage them to match it
- Request that friends bring donations to your next Game Night, Dinner Party, or BBQ
- Collect donations from your social groups (e.g. golf league, book club)
- Ask friends and family to donate in your honor for special occasions (e.g. birthdays, anniversaries)

Your dedication to alleviating food insecurity can inspire others to give! Be creative and share your enthusiasm for our mission.

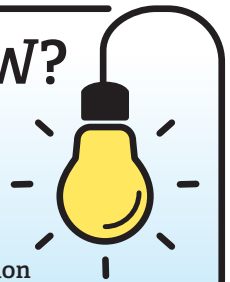
For more information, contact Greta Faworski at 269-488-2617 x208 or greta@kzoolf.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

KLF's food costs have increased by

150%

in the past two years due to inflation and high service demand.



July GIVING COUPON #230

Like the fireworks at night, every donation to KLF sparks new hope for families in need.

Donation Amount: \$ _____

FOOD WISH LIST: KIDS' SNACKS

August GIVING COUPON #231

A summertime gift to KLF helps sooth the burn of hunger for people right here in our community.

Donation Amount: \$ _____

FOOD WISH LIST: ALMOND OR OAT MILK

THE SCIENCE OF GIVING

Helping others can boost your spirits—and studies have shown scientific reasons why this happens. When you give or help others, your body releases oxytocin and endorphins, hormones that lower your stress levels and help you feel more connected to others. This can also be accompanied by a feeling of warmth as research has shown that positive social behavior can cause body temperatures to rise. Giving and volunteering has also been shown to have long-term impact on the symptoms of depression and anxiety. In a recent UnitedHealth Group survey of individuals who had volunteered in the past year, 76% reported feeling healthier and 94% said that volunteering helped boost their mood. Many scientists believe that frequent acts of generosity, giving, and random kindness can increase your lifespan and reduce the possibility of serious health issues. Fortunately, you don't have to be a millionaire or have unlimited free time—even small acts of kindness and generosity can produce these results.



Sources: National Library of Medicine, Journal of Clinical Psychology, UnitedHealth Group, International Journal of Behavioral Medicine



ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. Individuals are considered **ALICE** when they are employed and earn above the Federal Poverty Level; however, do not make enough to cover a bare-bones household budget for the area. **ALICE** households struggle to manage their most basic needs, such as housing, food, transportation, childcare, health care, and other necessities.

The United Way of South Central Michigan recently released **ALICE** data from 2021. The number of Kalamazoo County households considered **ALICE** has increased by 2% since 2019 for a total of 26% of the county population. Couple that with households living under the Federal Poverty Level (15%) and 105,642 (41%) of Kalamazoo County households do not earn enough to cover the basic cost of living for the area. Of that number, over 50% are senior citizens or families with children.

To learn more about current **ALICE** figures, visit changethestory.org/alice

The Kalamazoo
Hot Dog Walk
had the best year EVER with
149 participants
raising \$8,274 for KLF!



TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's **HONOR** or **MEMORY**. Donations made 4/1/2023 to 5/31/2023.

IN HONOR

Lee Accorso

Sam & Barb Accorso

Susan Beute

Harvey Beute
Carolyn Kozlownic

Chris Burns

Greenleaf Trust

Mary Dey

Carol Mullen

Pat Early

Devon Early

Philip L. Early

Mary & Phil Early

Roxanne & Jim Frey

Patricia & Robert Townsend

Kalamazoo Civil War

Round Table

Roxanne & James Frey

Chuck & Lana Ocvirek

Rachel Packer

Dan Rinzema

Greenleaf Trust

Patricia Schrum

Amy & Mike Schrum

Melinda Shull

Greenleaf Trust

Jack & Roy Ann Smith

Donna Emerson

J. Dale Westbrook

Cheryl A. Westbrook

IN MEMORY

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Graduations, Anniversaries, Weddings, and Birthdays

Give a gift to honor someone special! Donate at kzoolf.org today.



Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

901 PORTAGE STREET
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49001-3005

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

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
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KALAMAZOO MI
PERMIT NO. 1693

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.



EVERY CHILD DESERVES ENOUGH TO EAT

According to the USDA's recent report on household food security, **9 million children** in the USA were living in a home considered "food insecure."

- **1 in 8 children** do not have enough food to live an active and healthy life.
- Lack of nutrition can impair children's ability to concentrate or perform well in school and is linked to higher levels of behavioral and emotional problems from preschool into adolescence.
- Studies have shown that food insecurity in kindergarten students predicts poor achievement in math and reading skills over a 4-year period.

Summer is a difficult time of year for many children and teens who rely on school meals. **50% of students in Kalamazoo County** depend on school lunches for regular nutrition. When school is not in session, they may be wondering where to get their next meal.

YOU CAN HELP! A donation to Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes will help feed children and their families this summer. Donate today at www.kzoolf.org.

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Council on Community Pediatrics' Committee on Nutrition

SUMMER 2023

CONNECT WITH US



KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A



STAFF/BUSINESS OFFICE

269.488.2617

- Bill Brown, Delivery Program Coordinator
- Jillian Bryant, Volunteer Coordinator
- Ashley Clark, Program Assistant
- Greta Faworski, Associate Director
- Leonardo Fernandez, Program Navigation Coordinator
- Heather Hageman, Program Assistant
- Tiffanie Head, Warehouse Assistant
- Kristen Heggie, On-Call Administrative Coordinator
- Jeff Herman, Procurement & Inventory Manager
- Holly Hulfish, Office Manager
- Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

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