

FOODFOR**THOUGHT**

FALL 2023



MEET LEEANNE

Leeanne moved to Kalamazoo in early 2023 to be closer to medical facilities. “I have been battling breast cancer for about a year, and some days I am just too weak to drive.” Leeanne continues to share that she is self-employed, so money has been tight since her cancer diagnosis. In her grocery order, KLF includes easy to prepare meals, lots of fresh produce, and protein shakes to help provide nutrition on days where Leeanne is struggling with fatigue and nausea. “I moved to Kalamazoo because of medical care, and I thought it would be a good area for my business. Finding Loaves & Fishes and your delivery program has been so helpful on the days when I don’t feel good.”



MEET ERNESTO

Ernesto, a single dad of one child, contacted KLF to see if he would be eligible for help. “I lost my job a few months ago. Totally unexpected. I’ve had several job interviews recently – I hope I will get offered one soon.” Ernesto continues to say that he doesn’t have extra money for bus fare or gas for his car and wonders if he can get a delivery. “I’m saving everything I have so I can pay my rent next month,” he shares. “Once I get a job, I should be okay for a while, but this has been a real rough patch in my life. I’ve had a lot of sleepless nights wondering how we will make it through this. “



MEET WHITNEY

Whitney and her husband are in their mid-30s and both work full-time. They are the parents of two children, ages 17 and 2. “Even though we both have jobs, we are really struggling financially,” shares Whitney when she first reaches out about KLF services. “Everything keeps getting more expensive, but our paychecks aren’t getting much bigger to keep up.” With 26% of KLF’s clients employed full-time, Whitney and her husband are not alone. Whitney originally schedules a grocery pick-up on a night when KLF has evening hours, however, calls to reschedule for the next day. “I don’t have enough gas to get there, but I have no money until I get paid tomorrow.” Whitney states. “I know you offer delivery, but I don’t mind picking up. I just can’t do it until I get paid and can afford to fill up my tank.”



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

A NOTE FROM JEN



Our Mobile Food Distributions offer a convenient way for anyone to receive extra grocery items. The program offers regularly scheduled monthly distributions at 10 locations throughout Kalamazoo County. These drive-thru style distributions do not require an appointment and supply each household with 5–7 supplemental food items. We spoke with Marcia Royer about her experience as the Distribution Site Coordinator at Sunnyside United Methodist Church on Gull Road.

— Jennifer E. Johnson, Executive Director

Q: When did you begin working with KLF, and what do you enjoy about your role as a Distribution Site Coordinator?

A: I have worked within the Sunnyside pantry for about 11 years. It is a great opportunity to be involved with the community. I work with a great team of volunteers who are experienced professionals, very warm and caring. This work offers us an opportunity to do good for others, and I appreciate seeing the differences between people in our community and the impact of our work.

Q: Your location at Sunnyside has shifted from a pantry into a Mobile Food Distribution site. What was that change like?

The pandemic drove the change from pantry to a mobile distribution site. We had to rework the model but did not get discouraged. It is always a team effort, so we review what works well, or what needs to be changed. Communication and sharing of ideas help us to serve up to 72 households during each distribution.

Q: What would you say to someone who is interested in visiting a mobile food distribution for the first time?

A: I would encourage them to find out the details of a distribution site, and feel free to ask questions. We operate based on self-declaration of need, so there are no barriers to receiving food. We work to keep up relationships with local families, and we serve everyone with dignity.

“Feeding people is really important, but building relationships can be just as nourishing.”

— Marcia Royer
Site Coordinator at Sunnyside
United Methodist Church



Marcia Royer, Site Coordinator

This summer we have welcomed a few new faces to our team!

Ashley Clark and Shymeria Stone help with daily operations as Program Assistants. They assist in the Melzer Pantry, support clients and donors at our Caseworker Door, and work closely with volunteers.

We've also hired Eddie Lewis as a Warehouse Assistant. Eddie contributes to the movement and functions within our warehouse and has been a great addition to the group!

More recently, Mike Cattell joined KLF as a Part-time Delivery & Services Assistant. We're so glad to welcome Mike, as he brings beneficial experience to his role in home deliveries and services.



Left to right: Ashley Clark, Eddie Lewis, Shymeria Stone and Mike Cattell



Community CELEBRATION

KLF's Annual Community Celebration is planned for September 21st at the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Kalamazoo Regional Center.

We are looking forward to hosting many volunteers, partners, board, staff, and committee members again this year. This event celebrates those who work hard to support our mission, and we are pleased to highlight our valuable partnerships with a fun evening and awards ceremony.

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes' Community Celebration

THURSDAY **SEPTEMBER 21st** 5-7 PM
2023

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan
Kalamazoo Regional Program & Training Center
601 W MAPLE ST, KALAMAZOO, MI 49008



Donor Advised Funds (DAF)

Looking for a simple and tax-advantageous way of managing your charitable giving? A donor-advised fund, or DAF, may be right for you! A DAF serves as a charitable investment account to support the non-profit organizations that are important to you.

How it works:

1. Establish a DAF with a sponsoring organization such as a community foundation or a financial service company like Fidelity, Schwab or Vanguard.
2. Make a donation to the DAF of cash, stocks, or non-publicly traded assets.
3. Receive a tax deduction at time of donation to the DAF.
4. Support any IRS-qualified public charity with grant recommendations from your DAF. The sponsoring organization of the DAF will send the gift directly to the charity of your selection. The charity will be notified that the gift is from you.
5. Give at your pace — you can determine how much and when gifts are distributed from your DAF — immediately or over time.

To learn more about giving to Loaves & Fishes through a DAF, contact **Greta Faworski, Associate Director** at greta@kzoolf.org or your financial advisor.

September GIVING COUPON #232

Your gift helps to give our community kids a better, more healthy start to the new school year.

Donation Amount: \$ _____

FOOD WISH LIST: KIDS' SNACKS

October GIVING COUPON #233

Help KLF bag wholesome treats and meals for local families this fall.

Donation Amount: \$ _____

FOOD WISH LIST: ALMOND OR OAT MILK





The Challenge of Affordable Housing

Personal financial experts recommend spending no more than 30% of one's total income on housing. While this may be possible for some, **it is difficult for many families to find safe, affordable housing** that also allows for other necessities such as food, medical care, transportation, or childcare.

According to census.gov, **the median gross rent in the city of Kalamazoo from 2017-2021 was \$869**. For this to be 30% of an individual's monthly income, they would need to bring in around \$2,900 per month or nearly \$35,000 per year. While these figures are recent, those who have searched for rental housing in Kalamazoo would tell you it is very difficult to find available units in this price range. **With recent inflation, Zillow now estimates the median rent to be \$1,200 per month**. And for many families, it is just not feasible.

For those looking to buy a home rather than rent, the past few years have made it increasingly difficult due to rising costs. Data from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis shows that from the

first quarter of 2020 to the fourth quarter of 2022, **the median home sales price rose 46% from \$329,000 to \$479,500, among the fastest rate of median home sales price increases in U.S. history**. With inflation and effects of the pandemic still taking shape, it is predicted that housing will likely remain unaffordable for some, particularly those in lower-income households.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office found that a \$100 increase in median rent was associated with a 9% increase in the estimated homelessness rate, and this is after accounting for other relevant factors, such as wages, unemployment rate, and poverty. Thankfully, there are some assistance programs available for renters and homeowners in Michigan, although many have specific requirements and strict deadlines. Organizations in Kalamazoo County continue to advocate for more affordable housing options as well. Meanwhile, KLF will continue to provide grocery assistance to anyone in need, which for many, means having the ability to pay their housing costs and keep a roof over their head.



**TOP
15**

FOOD DRIVES

ORGANIZATION	TOTAL POUNDS
Alpha Chi Omega	5671
Lake Effect	2257
Rollerworld	1547
First Presbyterian Church	1192
Menards	918
Third Christian Reformed Church	638
Winchell Elementary School	607
Woodland Elementary School	592
Zion Lutheran Church	508
Schupan & Sons Aluminum and Plastic Sales	503
St. Monica School & Parish	486
Lawson Ice Arena	479
Friendship Village	457
Kalamazoo Islamic Center	432
North Park Reformed Church	408

Special thanks to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan who donated 905 POUNDS OF COOKIES!



We are so pleased to announce that the **13th Annual OnStaff Dollar Drive** Thru raised a total of **\$16,450** towards ending hunger in Kalamazoo!

Presented by the Allkins Family Foundation, this year's event was a huge success thanks to the OnStaff Group, Edwards Garment, Townsquare Media, and Traveler's Café and Pub. Funds were collected throughout the day at nearby Old National Bank and Panera Bread locations. This fundraiser wouldn't be possible without the generosity of many volunteers and donors who contributed their time and dollars to support our work.

Thank you!

TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's **HONOR** or **MEMORY**. Donations made 6/1/2023 to 7/31/2023.

IN HONOR

Lee Accorso
Sam & Barb Accorso

Sue Beadling
Corinne Herschleb

Pauline Bogus
Kay Bach

Julene Burlington
Carol & Rex Grant

Pat Catellier
Corinne Herschleb

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Corinne Herschleb

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Corinne Herschleb

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& Roger Zinser
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& Arthur Roberts

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National Roofing Week
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Rachel Packer

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Corinne Herschleb

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IN MEMORY

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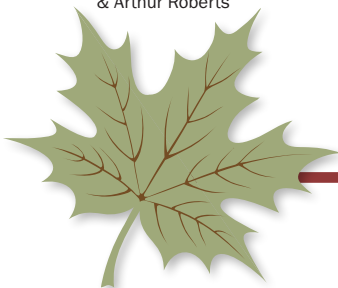
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Our Mission

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.

Want to Help During the Holidays? Here are some great options:

HOST A FOOD DRIVE

Visit kzoolf.org to find our Food Drive Kit full of downloadable signs and food wish lists. Need a collection barrel? Contact our Warehouse Manager, **Suzi Secondi**, at suzi@kzoolf.org to reserve one today!

VOLUNTEER

We have one-time and recurring volunteer opportunities available. Looking for a unique holiday event for your staff to enjoy? Group volunteering is great for team building. Holiday volunteer spots fill up quickly. Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, **Jillian Bryant** at jillian@kzoolf.org to discuss options and schedule your spot!

DONATE FUNDS

KLF purchases approximately 70% of the food we distribute. With record service numbers and high food costs, cash donations make a huge difference in our ability to support the community. Give a personal gift or collect donations from family, friends, and colleagues. Donate today at kzoolf.org.

ENCOURAGE TRIBUTE GIFTS

Everyone has that hard to shop for person in their lives. Or we are missing a loved one during the holiday season. Giving a gift in honor or in memory of a loved one is a great way to help the community and

honor someone special. KLF has tribute cards that can be given to acknowledge the gift.

Save the Date!

The 61st Annual Maple Hill Holiday Parade will be held Saturday, November 18th.

Donations during the parade will benefit KLF and will be matched by Maple Hill Auto Group.

FALL 2023

CONNECT WITH US



KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A



STAFF/BUSINESS OFFICE

269.488.2617

Bill Brown, Delivery Program Coordinator
 Jillian Bryant, Volunteer Coordinator
 Mike Cattell, Program & Delivery Assistant
 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

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