

FOODFOR THOUGHT

LATE FALL / EARLY WINTER 2023



MEET MARTIN

Martin is 78 years old, living primarily on social security. When he first contacts the KLF Call Center, he shares that he's worried about having enough to eat. "I've been retired for awhile and was doing okay with my savings and social security." Martin continues, "But then I had fraud on my account and pretty much lost all my savings. It's just gone." Martin applied for SNAP food benefits but was denied because his social security income was just above the maximum allowable amount for SNAP. "I've always been one of those guys who buys extra when things are on sale, so I had a stockpile of canned goods. But now those are almost gone, and my cupboards are looking bare."



MEET CHRISTINE

When Christine contacted KLF, she was feeling quite defeated. "I do work full time but have been furloughed for the past two weeks. My company can't get the parts it needs to continue production, so the plant closed until those arrive. And now our car won't start!" Christine shares that she needs groceries for her family of five, which includes three elementary school children. Her kids can get meals at school, so that helps a little. "Thank goodness for school right now. We have nothing left for food. We've never been broke like this before."



MEET VERONICA

Veronica and her husband are both employed full-time. She works at a local factory, and he works at a popular restaurant in the area. They have a seven-year-old son. Recently, they have struggled to cover their expenses, especially their rent which had increased significantly. After losing their apartment, they were living in a hotel, but found they couldn't cover that cost and still have enough gas to get to work. "We had to leave the hotel and now live in our car. We stop at rest areas to use the showers and clean up for work," Veronica shares. "We hope we can save up enough to get back on our feet soon but could really use some help." KLF puts together some items that don't require cold storage or cooking and arranges to meet Veronica for delivery.



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

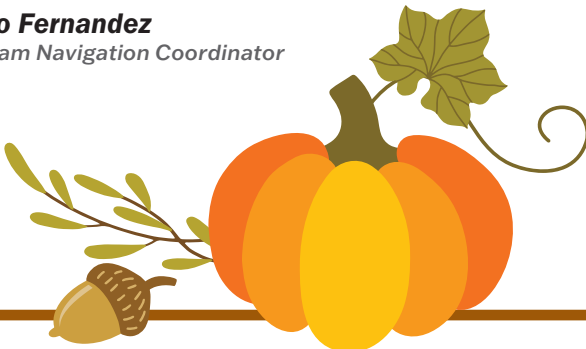
A NOTE FROM JEN



Leo Fernandez, Program Navigation Coordinator

“... We love to see some great food donations. If you can donate dollars, that is great too! ... Or if someone is looking to volunteer their time, we usually have opportunities to get involved.”

— Leo Fernandez
Program Navigation Coordinator



Leo Fernandez began working at KLF in December 2021. Since then, he has worked in multiple roles within the agency. Most recently, he has taken on the role of Program Navigation Coordinator where he supervises our Call Center and utilizes his bilingual skills. In this role, Leo hears from our clients first-hand about their unique circumstances and what brings them to KLF.

— Jennifer E. Johnson, Executive Director

Q: Can you tell us about the current demand for service?

A: Our Grocery Pantry Program served nearly 3,700 households last month, with over 200 of those reaching out for the first time. Our staff is busy and working hard to keep up. We have staff and volunteers in the Call Center scheduling appointments all day. We try to communicate as much as possible and keep our interactions positive. We hope to offer online scheduling someday, but right now it is still a work in progress.

Q: Are there any commonalities you see when families reach out to KLF for the first time?

A: A lot of people are reaching out for the first time. Some may already have food assistance through SNAP but are having trouble making ends meet. Others are so relieved when they learn our programs don't have income requirements, and that everyone is eligible based on need for emergency food assistance. We've also had many people mention that their rent has gone up, and that they are stretched thin because of housing costs. Plus, it seems that inflation is impacting nearly everyone right now. So, it is all very relatable, and yet, everyone's situation is unique.

Q: In what ways are you able to offer personalized service to clients?

A: When clients reach out to our Call Center, they are scheduled at a pantry that is most convenient for them. Many have a preferred location, and some pantries are now offering evening hours, which are very popular. Clients also have the option to use curbside pick-up or shop for their own grocery items. Home delivery is available too. We always ask about any food allergies or dietary restrictions, and we do our best to customize a grocery order for those with special food needs.

Q: What would you say to someone looking to help KLF during the upcoming holiday season?

A: Food drives are awesome! We love to see some great food donations. If you can donate dollars, that is great too! Funds allow us to purchase pantry necessities in bulk and really help to keep our shelves stocked. Or if someone is looking to volunteer their time, we usually have opportunities to get involved.

Partner Agency Program

Through the Partner Agency Program, KLF aims to fill gaps by partnering with organizations who support specific vulnerable populations. Each of the agencies in KLF's Partner Agency Program receive an annual allocation of food that they can secure from our warehouse. While this allocation does not account for all the food distributed by these agencies, it provides greater support for each pantry and/or congregate meal site. Anyone receiving food from these agencies are still eligible to visit KLF; however, it may be easier to visit the partners below due to language barriers, schedules, or geographical considerations. Partner Agency Program members include:

African Fellowship Church
Comstock Community Center
Eagles Nest
El Concilio
Generous Hands
Kalamazoo Covenant Academy
Kalamazoo Drop-In Childcare Center
KRESA
KVCC Valley Share Program

Mattawan Area Food Pantry
Ministry with Community
Oakwood Center
Pride of Scotts Community Center
WMU Invisible Need Project
SDA Iglesia Hispana de Kalamazoo
8th District Court



Looking for the perfect gift to give this holiday season?

Honor the special people in your life with a gift to Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes! No need to wrap anything - we can send a special tribute card to you or directly to your loved one.

For more information, contact Greta at greta@kzoolf.org or Erin at erin@kzoolf.org.

CLIENT SURVEY RESULTS

KLF conducts an annual client survey to gather feedback and help guide future programming. Surveys were administered at each Grocery Pantry Program site. In total, **742 surveys** were completed. While the survey provided many valuable insights, below are a few findings that we wanted to share.

- 46%** of respondents are employed either full-time or part-time
- 19%** of respondents earn too much to receive government food benefits
- 37%** of respondents reported more fresh food in their diet due to help from KLF
- 36%** of respondents reported skipping less meals due to help from KLF

In addition to experiencing food insecurity other issues respondents reported struggling with were inflation, housing, transportation, chronic medical conditions, and childcare costs.

DID YOU KNOW?

In August, KLF provided

16,729
FOOD ORDERS

- the most in one month in organizational history.



November GIVING COUPON #234

We're thankful for your kind gift to local families in need.

Donation Amount: \$ _____

FOOD WISH LIST: KIDS' SNACKS

December GIVING COUPON #235

A contribution to KLF brings a lot more than just figgy pudding to families in need this holiday season.

Donation Amount: \$ _____

FOOD WISH LIST: ALMOND OR OAT MILK



Our annual Community Celebration took place on September 21st at the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Training Center. The Community Celebration, which is sponsored by First National Bank of Michigan, allows us to pause and celebrate the amazing support we receive that makes our work possible.

Awards were presented to our community partners and volunteers for their dedication throughout 2023, a year in which we saw an unprecedented increase in demand for service. Please join us in congratulating this year's award winners, as they have been incredibly supportive of KLF's mission and anti-hunger work throughout Kalamazoo County.

Marcia Jackson Hunger Advocacy Award
Kalamazoo Public Library

Willie Webster Outstanding Volunteer Award
Presented in memory of Jim Kordupel, Jr.

Golden Loaf Individual Awards
Bruce Caple, Jan Runnels

Golden Loaf Group Award
Advia Credit Union

Food Industry Supply Hero (FISH) Award
The Victorian Bakery

Community Pillar Award
Harding's Market

Anne Wend Lipsey Social Justice Award
Church of Christ Food Pantry

Thank you to everyone who made our 2023 Community Celebration so special, and thank you ALL for helping us fight hunger in our community every day.



TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's **HONOR** or **MEMORY**. Donations made 8/1/2023 to 9/30/2023.

IN HONOR

Lee Accorso
Sam & Barb Accorso

Dick & Donna Adams
Rhonda Jenks

Jim & Jean Bylsma
Sarah Greene

Diane Dietrich
Kim S. & Michael A. Foster

Lisa Fisher
Elisabeth Fisher
Richard & Gertrude Johnson
Barbara Starring

Marty & Sandy Glista's Anniversary
Harold & Sherry Bate
Rosanne Boyan
Ed Glista
Leo & Martine Goddeyne
William Goodrich
Judy & David Kingsley
Donna Oas
Mary Peterson
Maija Petersons
Robin & Steve Pollens
Nancy Worth

Kalamazoo Civil War Round Table
Roxanne & James Frey

Carol McPherson
Diana Haskins

Dave Mitchell
Anne Fackler

Chuck & Lana Ocvirek
Rachel Packer

Our Clients & Our 35th Anniversary
LVM Capital Management, Ltd.

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Belinda Haas

Melanie Perry
Robert C. Keller

Rotary Club of Oshtemo
Deb Everett

Marti Smith
Kim S. & Michael A. Foster

KLF Staff
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Temple B'nai Israel
Iris Camer

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Amy Glass & Ross Chapman

Pushpalatha Vanimisetti
Hima Vanimisetti

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Charles & Marva Dickson
Cindy McQuat

Cheryl A. Westbrook
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IN MEMORY

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Cal Baxter
Katie Smith

Marshall Beachler
Ms. Charlotte Hubbard

Raymond Becker
Priscilla Becker

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Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

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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.

*Your Support
Has Immediate Impact!*

Mail your gift or visit kzoolf.org
to donate today!



ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

LATE FALL / EARLY WINTER 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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