

FOODFOR THOUGHT

LATE WINTER/EARLY SPRING 2024



MEET TRACEY

Tracey is a 40-year-old mom of an active 13-year-old teenage boy. “I am trying to get back on my feet after a divorce,” Tracey shares. “I’ve never had to get help from a food bank before.” Tracey explains how the cost of setting up her own place and adjusting to one income has been difficult and stretched her budget very thin. She is trying to make this transition easy on her son and laughs about the big appetite of teenagers. “Thank you!” Tracey states after we scheduled an appointment. “This will be a big help this month!”

MEET ARCHIE

Archie reached out to KLF to see if he would qualify for food assistance even though he is employed. “We’re really struggling,” Archie shares. “My wife is on disability and can only work 12 hours a week. I work full-time, but it just isn’t enough.” We told Archie that he was eligible and scheduled an appointment for that afternoon. After picking up food, Archie called back later that day. “Thank you so much for the help! A lot of times, all we eat is hot dogs or peanut butter and jelly. Your help is a blessing.”



MEET RIADEL

Riadel moved to the United States last summer to pursue her PhD at Western Michigan University. It is a demanding schedule, and she is only able to work part-time as a teaching assistant. Riadel receives a small stipend for housing, but securing enough food has been a challenge. At first, Riadel scheduled a home delivery, but then learned about the option to shop in-person at KLF’s pantry at the Douglass Community Association. When reaching out to schedule her next appointment, Riadel said, “This food is a great help. I am so thankful for your aid.” She continued to say how much she loves shopping at the pantry, so she can pick the items that she knows how to prepare and enjoys.



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

A NOTE FROM JEN

For this newsletter, we chatted with KLF's new Board President, Dan Haines.

Dan is a co-founder and advisor at SummitView Advisors and also serves on the board of Alongside, Inc. He has been an active member of the KLF Board of Directors since 2018 and will bring tremendous leadership skills and vision to the organization. — Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

Q: Tell us why serving on the KLF Board of Directors is important to you.

A: I believe that it is a fundamental right for people to have access to food. Serving at KLF allows me to contribute to the mission of feeding hungry people and engaging the community in the fight to end hunger. We are fortunate to have an organization like KLF in our community, and I feel privileged to be able to serve on the board. I am still amazed by the scope of the services KLF provides and the effort the organization puts into finding new ways to meet the needs of the community. The board and the staff are full of great people who share a strong belief in our mission and are enjoyable to serve with.



Dan Haines, KLF's new Board President.

dramatically, we felt it was important to step back and revisit our strategic plan. The overarching focus of the strategic planning process is how do we best serve people in our community given our resources and the changing environment. This includes how our services look going forward, our organizational structure, how we procure food, and other opportunities to serve the community. A specific focus will be on developing our staff and how to set the organization up for success over the long-term. In evaluating how we would go about the strategic planning process, we are intentionally adopting an equity-centered approach. We believe this will allow us to continue to build upon our efforts to both

alleviate hunger and operate the organization in an equitable way.

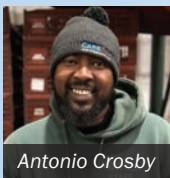
Q: KLF is embarking on a strategic planning process this year. What are some key focus areas that are important to address in this new plan?

A: At KLF, a lot has changed over the last five years. The pandemic forced us to adjust how we operate to best meet the needs of our community. I am extremely proud of the job our team did throughout this period.

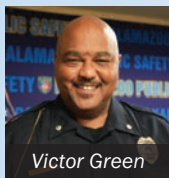
Recognizing that the demand for food is at the highest levels in our history and the cost to provide these services has gone up

Q: During the strategic planning process, we would like to get as much feedback as possible from community members. How would someone go about providing input or getting involved?

A: Over the next few months, the firm guiding our strategic planning process, Liggins Abrams Consulting, will be reaching out to key stakeholders to gather input. If you would like to provide feedback during that process, please email info@kzoof.org for more information.



Antonio Crosby



Victor Green



Sue Thayer



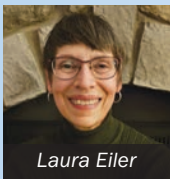
Don Solesbee

Welcome to the Team

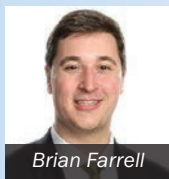
We are pleased to announce new additions to our staff and Board of Directors. **Antonio Crosby** is our newest Warehouse Assistant. In this role, Antonio helps deliver orders to pantry sites and mobile food distributions. He also assists with unloading food deliveries and pulling pantry orders. Five individuals have recently joined our Board of Directors. This dedicated, skilled group of individuals will provide fresh insight and valuable input as we look to the future. Our newest board members include **Assistant Chief Victor Green** (Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety), **Sue Thayer** (Innovative Analytics), **Don Solesbee** (PNC Bank), **Laura Eiler** (Retired, Pfizer), and **Brian Farrell** (Greenleaf Trust).

With Deep Gratitude

With each new hello, there is often a goodbye. We would like to express tremendous appreciation to several board members whose terms expired at the end of 2023. **Kim Labadie**, **J. Ryan Conboy**, and **Chris Burns** were actively involved at KLF during a transformational time in our organization's history, including our warehouse expansion, becoming a direct distributor of USDA product, the COVID-19 pandemic, and historic inflation. We deeply appreciate their time, valuable input, and dedication to this volunteer leadership role and to our community.



Laura Eiler



Brian Farrell



Thank You!

We appreciate the steadfast generosity and support from our volunteers, donors, and community partners!



K'zoo Folklife Organization raised over \$3,000 from their annual concert and pop-up events!



During their Giving Week, DeNooyer Chevrolet, DeNooyer Ford, and Metro Toyota matched gifts from their employees and donated over \$26,000 to KLF!



Kalamazoo Central HS was awarded the 2023 Youth in Philanthropy Award by the Association of Fundraising Professionals!



College Hunks helped us pick up nearly 1,200 lbs from 11 community food drives!



Kalamazoo Central HS raised 26,428 lbs and over \$16,000 through KC Feeds Kzoo!



The Holiday Parade raised over \$7,500 from event donations and the Maple Hill Auto Group match!





KLF is proud to expand its partnership with the Food Innovation Center at Kalamazoo Valley Community College through the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA), a USDA funded initiative locally administered by the Michigan Department of Education. The program’s goal is to reduce food

in growing their businesses. Over time, these purchases will help local food flourish in Southwest Michigan,” explained Rachel Bair, Director for Sustainable and Innovative Food Systems for KVCC. “And meanwhile, the food will feed our neighbors.”

“Over time, these purchases will help local food flourish in Southwest Michigan.

— Rachel Bair
Director for Sustainable and Innovative Food Systems for KVCC

Food secured through the LFPA grant will be distributed through KLF’s hunger-relief programs, providing clients greater access to fresh, locally sourced food. While fruits and vegetables will top the items available, KLF will also have access to local meat, eggs, and baked goods. At a time when KLF is purchasing over half of the food it distributes and demand is skyrocketing, these extra food items are greatly appreciated.

insecurity and to make local food systems stronger and more equitable. Through LFPA, KLF will have access to local food through ValleyHUB, building on their relationships with more than 30 regional farmers and food makers.

LFPA will also supplement KVCC’s existing Valley Food Share program that’s available to any enrolled student. The Valley Food Share Program is a long-time partnership between KLF and KVCC to alleviate food insecurity in students. Sprout BC, an organization serving Calhoun County and surrounding areas, is also a partner in the LFPA grant.

“Making purchases from local farmers and makers, especially those who have been historically disadvantaged, helps them invest

The LFPA grant started in July 2023 and will continue through 2025. For more information on the LFPA program, visit www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food-to-usda/lfpacap.

KLF is seeking individuals who are able to commit to regular volunteer hours in the following areas:

- Home Delivery Program
- Call Center
- Pantry/Walk-Up Door
- Front Desk Receptionist

We also have other volunteer options that don’t require a regular commitment. To learn more, contact **Volunteer Coordinator, Jillian Bryant**, at jillian@kzoolf.org.



WHERE ARE THE GIVING COUPONS?

Since it was first produced, each edition of *Food for Thought* has contained giving coupons which many of you have cut out and returned with your generous donation. However, we would like to use that space to provide more information in our newsletter. The coupons will be gone, but we encourage you to still donate! Just return your gift in the enclosed envelope, visit at our website at kzoolf.org, or give through Venmo @[@kzoolf](https://www.venmo.com/kzoolf). Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns by calling **269-488-2617 x208** or greta@kzoolf.org.



Scan this QR code with your smartphone camera to visit our website!

2023 AT A GLANCE

Food Distributed at
99 Different Locations



Grocery Pantry Program

172,401 food orders provided (39% increase)
10,185 unduplicated households (24% increase)
35,648 unduplicated individuals (24% increase)
2,653 new households registered (28% increase)
14,624 home deliveries



Mobile Food Distributions

146 food distributions held at 10 locations
10,436 recipients



School-Based Program

18,843 weekend food packs distributed
at 14 schools in 4 districts

1,800 students served monthly
at 12 school-based pantries



Partner Agency Program

29,131 individuals served through pantries or
congregate meals at 19 community agencies



Targeted Outreach

5,556 outreach packs distributed,
primarily to the unhoused

410 commodities boxes delivered monthly,
on average, to low-income seniors

TOP 25 Year-End Drives



Between October 1 through December 31, 2023, we had over 65,000 pounds donated through food drives and individual food donations. Here are the top 25 food drives by total pounds:

Kalamazoo Central High School's KC Feeds Kzoo*	26,428
Pactiv Evergreen	5,740
Abonmarche Byce	1,673
Pine Rest – Kalamazoo and Portage	1,282
St. Michael Lutheran Church	1,168
Kalamazoo Christian West Elementary School	1,162
Oakland Hills Condominiums	1,108
Milwood Elementary School	1,017
Kalamazoo Christian High School	970
CORT Furniture	823
Westwood Christian Reformed Church	809
Kalamazoo Country Day School	785
Rollerworld	716
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	708
True Leaf Cannabis Shop	654
Greenleaf Hospitality Group	603
Affordable Moving Kalamazoo	584
Stryker Instruments	583
The Refinery	547
TruVista Wealth Advisors, Ameriprise Financial Services LLC	542
Gull Run & Gull Prairie Apartments	488
Kalamazoo Humane Society – Animal Care & Resource Center	488
Trinity Lutheran Church	469
Shiloh Industries	467
Heritage Christian Academy	437

*Includes Linden Grove MS, Hillside MS, and KAMSC



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

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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.



PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE EVERY MONTH

Food insecurity impacts our community 365 days a year. Establishing a monthly gift is an easy way to make a tremendous impact on an on-going basis.

- Set up a gift via credit card or direct debit from your bank account at . You can also establish a recurring payment via check from your financial institution.
- Support the community in a convenient, yet very effective way.
- Budget your charitable giving throughout the year.
- Provide KLF with a stable, continual source of revenue.
- Help people year-round, especially when donations are low, but need is high.

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

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE. DONATING TAKES SECONDS AT KZOOOLF.ORG

LATE WINTER/EARLY SPRING 2024

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KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A



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269.488.2617

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 Mike Cattell, Program & Delivery Assistant
 Ashley Clark, Program Assistant
 Antonio Crosby, Warehouse Assistant
 Greta Faworski, Associate Director
 Leonardo Fernandez, Lead Pantry Coordinator
 Heather Hageman, Program Assistant
 Tiffanie Head, Warehouse Assistant
 Kristen Heggie, On-Call Administrative Coordinator
 Jeff Herman, Procurement & Inventory Manager
 Holly Hulfish, Office Manager

EXT.	Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director	213
209	Larry Kelly, Program & Delivery Assistant	219
219	Alisha Lewis, Program Logistics Coordinator	219
221	Erin Lowe, Dev. & Communications Coordinator	206
217	Nate Mattson, Financial Controller	207
208	Humza Rahman, Program Operations Manager	210
222	Eddie Rood, Warehouse Assistant	217
221	Suzi Secondi, Warehouse Manager	211
217	Shymeria Stone, Program Assistant	221
221	Myah Van Til, Program Assistant	221
214	Allison Triplett, Program Assistant	221
224	Nadina Williams-Barrett, Senior Program Manager	218

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Generous donations made to KLF in someone's **HONOR**. Donations made 10/1/23 through 1/31/24.

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

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