Lou is a quiet guy who works hard and doesn’t ask for much. Perhaps that’s why it came as a shock to his coworkers when they found out he was utilizing the services of Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes to make ends meet.

Before moving to Kalamazoo to pursue a barbering degree, Lou worked for a retail warehouse store in Holland, Michigan. He was employed through a temp agency so when things at the store slowed down, he was one of the first to lose his job. He knew starting over in Kalamazoo where he didn’t have a support system wouldn’t be easy, but he was determined to make a go of it.

When finishing his barbering degree didn’t pan out, Lou got a job at a local supply company. While he was grateful to have a new job, he found he was still having trouble paying his bills and having enough left over for food; that’s when he turned to Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes.

“I used to volunteer at a food pantry in Holland,” Lou explained. “I sort of knew what to expect.” Lou knew he would be on a tight budget while getting back on his feet, but he never expected to utilize KLF’s services as part of his acclimation to a new city.

“Some of my coworkers found out I was going to Loaves & Fishes for food,” Lou said. “When management found out, I was given a raise so I could afford to purchase my own food. We’re one big team, where I work. They take care of their people.”

Lou is thankful for the opportunities he’s been given by his new employer and is also thankful for the resources KLF provided while he was reestablishing himself. When asked what advice he would give to others who may be in his situation, he replied, “If there’s a service like KLF in your community and you’re going hungry, utilize it. That’s what it’s there for.”
It’s not unusual to see the look of surprise on a person’s face when I reveal to them that Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes relies on the help of approximately 1000 volunteers to make our food programs possible. This astonishing fact is usually met with inquiries about our services and how we’re able to retain so many dedicated individuals. Dedication, I often explain, is the very heart and soul of our volunteer force.

Many of KLF’s volunteers have played an active role in allowing us to feed hungry people since the 1980s. With these longtime volunteers comes a wealth of knowledge and a deep passion for helping those in Kalamazoo County who need a hand. These devoted individuals are also instrumental in our ability to recruit and retain a quality volunteer base – eagerly taking new philanthropists under their wings and welcoming them to the KLF family.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life. They’re all ages. They’re all races and religions. They’re business professionals, college students, service club members, and retirees. With them they bring unique skills that allow us to operate, most days, like a well-oiled machine. At KLF, this diversity melds together to blur the lines of what makes us different and, instead, emphasizes what becomes possible when a group of people come together for a common purpose: to feed hungry people.

With 36 years in real estate in the Kalamazoo area, Melody Stirk is no stranger to the many things that make our community a great place to live. But she also knows there are people struggling to make ends meet. She is dedicated to giving back, and feeding hungry people remains close to her heart.

“I can’t stand having people hungry. One out of every 5 kids is hungry. So 4 out of 5 can help – why are people still hungry?” Melody continues, “I’m just shocked that there is anyone hungry in this city of so many resources.” She also regularly encourages local farmers to consider donating excess produce to Loaves & Fishes to help get more fresh product into the hands of those who need it.

Melody contributes monthly because she knows that hunger is a year-round issue and there are times when KLF experiences fewer donations, but need remains high. Over the past ten years, Melody has donated nearly $40,000 of her income from real estate sales to support Loaves & Fishes. “I give monthly because there is always someone hungry. There are so many people in our community who can donate just $5 or $10 dollars a month to help wipe out hunger.” Reflecting on her own life, Melody remembers when she was just starting out and barely had enough to live on. “I will never forget that and give back now that I am able.”

In addition to helping KLF, Melody is active in supporting the Gospel Mission, Girl Scouts, Animal Rescue Project, and Toys for Tots. The local art community is also a passion because it’s part of what makes our community a great place to live.

Thank you, Melody Stirk, for your unwavering dedication to feeding hungry people!
THE UNDENIABLE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERS

How much would you guess the estimated hourly value of a volunteer’s time is worth? Would it shock you to know that it’s estimated at over $23 per hour? The economic value of the 60+ million volunteers in the United States is over $160 billion per year. Volunteers supply critical services like fire fighting, counseling, caring for the homeless, and stocking shelves at local food pantries. At Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, we know firsthand the dramatic impact a dependable volunteer base can have on the ability to achieve a mission.

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes is responsible for overseeing 23 pantries in our community, all of which are manned by volunteers. In addition to our Grocery Pantry Program, we operate four additional programs that rely on volunteer time to provide food at 71 sites countywide, including schools and low-income senior housing complexes. Without our volunteer base, hunger in Kalamazoo County could look dramatically different. The 700+ people we serve each day would look elsewhere for food or more likely - go hungry. The 10,500 local children who struggle with hunger each day would be more worried about overcoming hunger pangs to get to sleep at night than getting adequate rest so they can do well in school.

Each and every day our world is touched by the generosity of volunteers. Our rivers, parks, and highways are clear of trash due to their efforts. Our children learn valuable skills from coaches, mentors, and tutors. Kind faces greet us at community events. We can’t imagine what life would be like without their selflessness; can you?

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes is extremely grateful for its volunteers. Whether they are able to give one day per year or one day per week, their donated time makes all the difference to so many in our community. Those efforts have a ripple effect that span beyond Kalamazoo. If you’re thinking about donating your time, we encourage you to do so regardless of the amount of time you have to give. Sometimes all it takes is a moment to make a lifelong difference for someone else.

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THE MOTHER’S DAY & FATHER’S DAY
GIVE THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Celebrate the parents in your life with a gift in their honor or memory!
We’ll send, or you can pick up, a special KLF donation notification card to celebrate the gift made in their name.

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

Knowing you will have food on the table [for your children]—I don’t know how to describe that relief.”

- Susan, Mother & KLF Client
**JOIN THE MOVEMENT**

**KLF**

Are you interested in helping make Kalamazoo a hunger-free community? We’ve got a place for you! Attend a brief volunteer orientation to get started.

Sign up with Volunteer Coordinator Cherise Buchanan at 269.488.2617 ext. 209 or Cherise@kzoolf.org.

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**ORIENTATION DATES**

**SATURDAY**

**APRIL 9**

**WEDNESDAY**

**APRIL 27**

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

This year’s CROP WALK is

**SUNDAY, APRIL 24TH**

Grab friends and family and join us in Bronson Park at 1 p.m. to walk to help end local and global hunger.

This year’s NALC Food Drive is

**SATURDAY, MAY 14TH**

Help this year by leaving non-perishable food for your mail carrier. Look for specially marked paper bags in the mail soon!

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**GIVING COUPON:**

**APRIL
COUPON #151**

We stretch every donated dollar to help those in need. Thank you for your support.

Donation Amount

$__________

Please send your contribution by April 15th.

Food Wish List: Canned Tuna

---

**GIVING COUPON:**

**MAY
COUPON #152**

Consider making a Mother’s Day donation in someone’s name.

Donation Amount

$__________

Please send your contribution by May 20th.

Food Wish List: Canned Veggies

---

**KLF VOLUNTEER GROUPS**

Are you itching to make a difference in your community? Do you know a group of like-minded people who want to get involved too? Now is a great time to start your own volunteer group with KLF!

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes welcomes volunteer groups that do everything from sorting food and manning pantry shifts to helping prepare our newsletters for mailing. Our volunteer coordinator works hard to schedule group rotations during the work week to fit their schedules while helping KLF run smoothly.

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes is seeing more corporate volunteer groups come through our doors. Businesses like Old National Bank, Kalsee Credit Union, Greenleaf Hospitality Group, and Stryker encourage employees to volunteer on a regular basis to give back to the community during work hours. Check with your employer to see if they have a community volunteer program in place or if they’d be interested in starting one.

If you’re interested in being a part of the KLF family as a volunteer, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Cherise Buchanan at 269.488.2617 ext. 209 or Cherise@kzoolf.org.

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TRIBUTES 1/1/16 - 3/5/16 Special thanks to those who honor friends and family through contributions to KLF!

IN HONOR OF
Aunt Judy
M. Robert & Linda Black
Anna Banner
Margaret & Tim Franklin
Bob Black
Linda Black
Joe Black
M. Robert & Linda Black
Sammi Black
M. Robert & Linda Black
Lily Black
M. Robert & Linda Black
Justin Black
M. Robert & Linda Black
Jessie Black
M. Robert & Linda Black
Jeane Candido
Robert & Elizabeth Candido
Catholic Deacons
Joe & Becky Schmitt
Marlene DePierre
Robert Lihosit & Pamela DePierre
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Claron Group
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Ervin Armstrong
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Gertrude Hoekstra
Albert Hoekstra
Gertrude Hoekstra
Jamie Jeremy
Linda Poquette
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Jon Riccio
Jack Oudsema
Clyde & Mary Stevens
Collin Palmer
Michael & Barbara Palmer
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Drake Road Orthodontics
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Mark Paul
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Dan & Barb Barber
Joan Rentschler
Adam Rentschler
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Robert & Loree Bagley
Isaac Rubin
Eli Rubin
Joyce Vandermay
Donna Johnson
Julius VanDerSlik
Edward & Marilyn Davis
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Carl & Gale DeKleine
Robert & Marion Barr
Thomas Barr
Patricia Breen
Kay Baetsen
Marilyn Burlington
Carol Grant
Karen Cernik
Joseph J. Cernik
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Grant Kolb
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Hunter’s Place Condo Association
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Dian & Koworin
Donna & Tim Lamer
Barbara & Edward Owens
Karen & Mark Peper
Cynthia Vieta
Katherine Walz
Those Who Died on February 20, 2016
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Richard G. Tomlinson
Kate Barnes
Tucky & Chuck Elliott
Clara Van Til
Thelma J. Van Til
Kathleen Vander Broek
Deborah & Randall Schultz
Marilyn J. Smith
H. Raymond & Sharon Vinstra
Chuck Webster
Roon Visser
Ineke F. Way
Shirley Walter
Kent & Anne Southworth
Mrs. R. Weltevreden
John Weltevreden
Florence, Barney and John Westra
Karl W. Westra
Michael Woodhams
John & Peggy Costello
Thelma Wuerfel
Rev. Dale & Ruth Krueger
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

KLF’S CASEWORKER PANTRY
Our caseworker pantry helps get food into the hands of vulnerable and homebound clients through local human service professionals.

- The Caseworker Pantry is open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Caseworkers can call 488.8918 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to make a referral and request pre-packaged pick-ups based on a family’s size.
- Food is picked up at KLF located at 901 Portage Street, Kalamazoo.
- Pick-ups include a four-day supply of food, both perishable and non-perishable, for each member of the household.

*At least one hour lead-time is appreciated for warehouse staff to assemble pick-ups.

Connect with Us

Staff / Business Office
269.488.2617
Joan Atwell, Call Center Coordinator
Cherise Buchanan, Volunteer Coordinator
Mary-Elizabeth Bell, Finance/Office Coordinator
Paul Bushek, Warehouse Assistant
Art Cole, Services Director
Joe Cook, Warehouse Assistant
Bob Dekker, Warehouse Assistant
Greta Favorski, Resource Development Director
Linda Fox, Call Center Coordinator
Joe Galaviz, Warehouse Assistant

EXT.
201
203
209
211
222
223
224
307
221
222
206
Kathy Gernaat, Operations Director
Meg Gernaat, Marketing Coordinator
Dave Hafer, Warehouse Coordinator
Phyllis Hepp, Organizational Development Director
Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director
Deb Josephson, Services Coordinator
Marvin King, Food Procurement Specialist
Kim Hinds-Lepsy, Call Center Assistant
Jackie Smith, Pantry Coordinator
Mary Foley-Wilson, Accounting Coordinator
Laura Winther, Donor Database Coordinator

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www.twitter.com/KzoLoavesFishes

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KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49001-3005
FOOD REQUEST LINE: 269/343-3663
P 269/488-2617 - F 269/343-3669
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