I never knew this program existed. I feel like I can breathe again.

MEET JAKE + TAYA

Jake and Taya timidly move through the door of a local nonprofit agency. The entryway is a flurry of activity due to the resource fair being held that afternoon. People are milling about in search of service information or items that may help them better meet their basic needs.

Taya is holding a quiet, wide-eyed little boy who appears to be about a year old. She quietly asks a volunteer at a greeter’s table if they know where she might find information on how to obtain help with food. The volunteer guides she and Jake to a table hosted by Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes in the rear of the large gymnasium.

“We have very little where we’re staying,” Jake discloses. “and we’re almost out of food.”

The couple has fallen on hard times and currently calls a room at a friend’s house home. They’re both looking for work, but progress has been slow and funds are in very short supply.

Although relieved to learn about KLF’s services, Taya feels pangs of panic once more when she learns that food pantries are full for the day. It’s Friday and she knows her family needs help with food before pantries reopen Monday morning. That’s when she’s told about receiving grocery items through the Mobile Food Initiative (MFI).

“We can just stop by in the morning to grab food without an appointment?” she asks the KLF staff member to clarify as she looks over the MFI locations listed on the schedule. “I never knew this program existed. I feel like I can breathe again.”

Jake tucks away a few extra copies of the MFI schedule for others they know may need help with food in a pinch. While they plan to make an appointment to visit a pantry Monday morning, a sense of relief floods over them knowing they can visit a MFI distribution site to bridge the gap over the weekend.

*Client’s name changed to protect anonymity.*
COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT | MALL CITY CONTAINER

When people think about the work Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes does, they often envision carts of food, or individuals reaching for a can of soup or a few handfuls of fresh produce. While these musings are correct, they often leave out one very important factor: boxes. It takes a lot of boxes to move the over three million pounds of food KLF distributed last fiscal year, and that’s why we’re so grateful for the support we receive from longtime local business Mall City Containers.

Mall City Containers has called Kalamazoo home since 1974, and has been helping KLF fight hunger since the late 1980’s. They provide boxes at nearly the cost of material by donating the required labor and delivery. They also generously donate extra boxes, overruns, and canceled orders to KLF and other non-profits when they’re able. Some may also be surprised to learn that, in the past, Mall City Containers opened its doors to house a KLF pantry when there were few food distribution sites in Kalamazoo County. They also ran the Solar Gardens program at their property on North Pitcher Street in partnership with the City of Kalamazoo to teach people how to grow their own food. Not only have they offered their location as a hub to combat hunger, they also offer employees an additional paid week off if it’s used to volunteer with a local charity.

“Mall City recognized a need for assistance in Kalamazoo and supports agencies that serve a broad spectrum of people that may be faced with different challenges. The needs were great in the 80’s and certainly appear to be just as great today,” said Gary Koster, Mall City Containers President, when asked why the company goes out of their way to give back to the community.

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes is proud to work with this 100% employee owned business. The staff works hard each day to ensure they’re fostering success that will support their families, and the community as a whole, for generations to come.

2018 COMMUNITY CELEBRATION
AWARD WINNERS

Willie Webster
Outstanding Volunteer Award
Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Weekly Volunteer Group

Individual Golden Loaf Award
Jill Etter

Group Golden Loaf Award
Rex Hafer & Kalamazoo Central Students

Marcia Jackson Hunger Advocacy Award
Kalamazoo College

Food Industry Supply Hero Award
Walther Farms

Community Pillar Award
OnStaff USA

Anne Wend Lipsey Food Justice Award
Park Street Market
PFC Grocery & Deli
Town & Country Supermarket

UTILIZE OUR SPACE!
We built our space at 901 Portage Street with our community partners in mind. That’s why we welcome you to use our large conference room for your next meeting or small-scale event. The space comes equipped with movable tables and chairs, food serving area, WiFi, AV equipment, white board, bathroom facilities, and on-site parking. And best of all - it’s free to use! For more information on space availability and amenities, please contact Greta Faworski by phone at 269.488.2617 or via email at Greta@kzoolf.org.
BUILD A STRONGER TEAM THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Being able to work well as a team is a key component to growing a thriving business, civic group, and even a family. Volunteering at Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes as a team outside of your typical setting provides a powerful reminder of what can be accomplished when your group works toward a common goal.

The benefits of volunteering are vast, but there are a few perks that stand out when thinking about how the experience can strengthen your team:

1. **A Sense of Achievement**: You’re probably used to working toward goals or project deadlines with teammates, coworkers or friends, but standing at a table to prep food for those in need is a powerful experience that imparts a huge sense of team accomplishment.

2. **Foster Social Responsibility**: Engagement surrounding social responsibility is on the rise, and getting involved can inspire others to follow in your footsteps.

3. **Change of Scenery**: Sometimes everyone needs a change of pace and scenery to recharge the soul. Volunteering as a team in a new environment will allow you to network with other organizations and create a memorable experience as a group.

4. **Real-Time Awareness**: Sometimes team goals and deadlines are months in the making, but when you volunteer at Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes you’ll go home knowing just how you’ve helped local individuals and children after only a few hours of work.

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**GIVING COUPON: APRIL COUPON #174**

Happy Spring!
Celebrate a new season by helping a neighbor in need.

Donation Amount $

Please send your contribution by April 20th.
Food Wish List: Canned Tuna

**GIVING COUPON: MAY COUPON #175**

Give a gift in honor of the Letter Carriers’ Food Drive happening this month!

Donation Amount $

Please send your contribution by May 18th.
Food Wish List: Canned Veggies

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**PLANT A ROW FOR KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES**

See how your green thumb can help feed people in Kalamazoo County at bit.ly/PlantARowKzoo.
A NOTE FROM JEN | MEET LIZ FUENTES

Lizbeth Fuentes stepped into the role of KLF Program Coordinator in February after serving as Call Center Assistant for 10 months. For this newsletter, we sat down with Liz to get her insight on what it’s like working in KLF’s Call Center.

- Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

Q: The Call Center is the first point of contact for clients accessing Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes’ Grocery Pantry Program and, sometimes, their first interaction with KLF. How important is it for you and volunteers to be emotionally flexible to meet clients unique needs?
A: It’s very important. We know our clients use our services while they’re going through difficult times. We don’t ask too many questions. We don’t need explanations. They simply tell us they’re in need and we provide groceries.

Q: If there’s one thing you could convey to people about the clients Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes serves it’s:
A: Our clients are very grateful for the services they receive. I can hear a sense of relief in their voices after they have scheduled their appointments, after they know they will meet a basic life need without being questioned of judged.

Q: How do you see KLF evolving to serve future needs?
A: I would love to see a decrease in the number of clients we serve, but factors outside of our control continually cause the demand for our services to increase. We will continue to find ways to serve as many clients as possible as long as our services are needed.

Q: What has working in the Call Center taught you about hunger?
A: I have learned that hunger does not discriminate. People from all backgrounds and demographics utilize our services each week.

WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE

In January 2018, Kalamazoo County saw federal work requirements for able-bodied adults ages 18 to 49 without dependents go into effect. These able-bodied individuals can only receive food assistance benefits (like SNAP) for up to three months within a 36-month period without meeting certain work and/or volunteer requirements. These requirements aren’t new. In fact, they have been in place for years, but until recently the state received a federal waiver due to Michigan’s struggling economy and high unemployment rate.

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes provides backbone support and serves as the fiscal intermediary for the Kalamazoo County Hunger-Free Community Coalition. This group of over thirty local organizations works collectively on anti-hunger projects and has partnered with other agencies in town to help educate the community on what these changes mean for food security in our county. A number of pop-up workshops have taken place in key neighborhoods and information has been made available on multiple partner websites to help the estimated 5,000 affected individuals navigate the requirement change.

The new requirements mandate that able-bodied adults without dependants do one or more of more of the following to retain food assistance:
1. Work an average of 20 hours per week each month in unsubsidized, self or in-kind employment.
2. Participate 20 hours per week in an approved employment training program.
3. Participate in community service by volunteering at a nonprofit organization.

There are waivers for adults whose physical or mental condition prevent them from working or volunteering.

For more information on work requirements for food assistance, please visit kzoolf.org.
TRIBUTES

Moderators: Generous donations made to KLF in someone’s HONOR. Donations made 1/1/18 - 2/28/18.

HONOR

Albert Hoekstra Sr.
Gertude Hoekstra
Gloria Terpstra’s Birthday
Sidney & Robert Brush
Barb & Rick Baker’s 60th Anniversary
Natalie Chiles
Gloria & Jack Shearer
Fr. Bob Cole
Art Cole & Sally Reames
Christine Siwik & Andrea Patka’s Wedding
Kelle Frymire
Darlene McNabb
Jill Reynolds
Jim & Deb Dyke
Beverly Schmitt
Doug Hoopingarner
Doug & Sue Hoopingarner
Eleanor Pinkham
Paul Smithson
Eric & Charlotte Kemmer
Cindy Hook
Bill Koars’s Birthday
Sidney & Robert Brush
Guy and Maryheleen Shawkey
Art Cole & Sally Reames
Herb Boyer
Christine & Jim Flagler
Irene Booth
David & Karen Booth
Jan & Tom Tiderington
Ronald & Jane Kramer
Jeanine Candido
Robert & Elizabeth Candido
Jochanan Stenesh’s 90th Birthday
Elisabeth & Donald Thall
Our Anniversary
J. Dale & Cheryl Westbrook
Joyce Zwart’s 80th Birthday
Robert & Mary Jo Deters
Karol Diet
Mr. Jeffrey Rostami
Laurelle Pierce
Jill Reynolds
Layla Jaboori
Elizabeth Dyhouse
Lee Accorso
Sam & Barb Accorso
Linda Fox
David & Neil Kien
Paul & Linda Wiert
Stuart & Tamara Ostrowsky
Margaret Rockwell
Paul Smithson
Ron & Nancy Crowell
Rita Stevens
Phyllis Hepp
Jon Ricco
Our 6 Children & (Soon to Be) 14 Grandchildren
Robert & Loree Bagley
Sandra Fortier
Betty Lujan-Roberts & Arthur Roberts
Susan Kavanagh’s Birthday
Sidney & Robert Brush
Tom & Jean Fughino
Liza Amos
Gina & Scott Puhalski
Harold Fitzgerald
William Fitzgerald

MEMORIAL

Jean Bright’s Sister Loretta
Shirey & Allan Heavey
Florence Westra
Karl W. Westra
John Westra
Karl W. Westra
Barney Westra
Karl W. Westra
Bonnie Clark
Martha Vandeline
C. James & Winona Swope
Paul & Diana Swope
Christopher Thompson
Perry Thompson
Clara Van Til
Thelma J. Van Til
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Mr. James A. Magnan
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Sue Bos
Kent & Deborah Fisher
Tom Crooks
Martha Vandeline
Vernon & Eileen Moerdyk
Daniel & Carie Gross
Linda Black
Her Family
William & Gladys Kozar
William & Ellen Kozar
Lewis Shaafsma

Development Assistant,
For corrections, mailing database updates or to receive our newsletter via email, please contact KLF’s Development Assistant, Katie Munson-Pauwue, at 269.488.2617 ext. 206 or Katie@kzoolf.org.
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

CELEBRATING ONE YEAR OF PANTRY SERVICE AT THE
DOUGLASS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

PANTRY HIGHLIGHTS
SINCE OPENING ITS DOORS IN APRIL OF 2017

● OPERATING TWO SHIFTS PER WEEK SERVING 30 HOUSEHOLDS PER SHIFT.
● PANTRY SHIFTS NOW REACH CAPACITY PROVIDING FOOD FOR AN UPWARDS OF 100 PEOPLE EACH WEEK.
● VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP RUN THE PANTRY MAKE UP OUR MOST DIVERSE PANTRY VOLUNTEER GROUP TO DATE.
● SURVEY BLURB

CONNECT WITH US

KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A

WEB PAGE 1 OF 1