



**IMPORTANT DATES**

**Board of Education Meeting**  
Thursday, May 10 & 24, 2018  
7 p.m.  
Administration Building  
1220 Howard St.  
For more information, call  
(269) 337-1572

May 2  
High School Conferences  
4-7 p.m.

May 3  
High School Conferences  
5-8 p.m.

Middle School Conferences  
TBA

May 25: No PEEP

May 28: Memorial Day  
No School

**Graduations**

May 21  
Adult Education  
7 p.m. @ Chenery Auditorium

May 29  
KAMSC Senior Recognition  
7:30 p.m. @ Chenery Auditorium

June 5  
Phoenix  
7 p.m. @ Chenery Auditorium

June 6  
Loy Norrix  
7 p.m. @ Wings Event Center

June 7  
Kalamazoo Central  
7 p.m. @ Wings Event Center

**Remember to Vote May 8** (see page 10)

## Pantries: Creating Hunger-Free Kid Zones

For Jennifer Johnson, director of Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, putting food pantries in Kalamazoo Public Schools buildings makes perfect sense.

“We have this thing called the Kalamazoo Promise, but we have kids who are struggling,” Johnson said. “They know the end goal. They want to get there, but there are things that hold them back. Food is often one of them. Food is so essential to everything. If you don’t have key basic needs fulfilled, you’re going to have the toughest time fulfilling your potential.”

For more than 11 years, the Loaves & Fishes food bank has offered

a backpack program throughout Kalamazoo County. The program is available at some elementary schools and several summer sites. It provides children with a backpack of food to sustain them over the weekends. Usually, they include enough food for about two and a half meals.

It’s an expensive way to provide food, costing about \$3.70 for those meals. And, sometimes the food makes it home, sometimes it doesn’t. Some kids eat it in the hallway at school or on the bus. When they get it home, that food may be shared with an entire household.

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Deb Yarborough, CIS of Kalamazoo senior site coordinator at Kalamazoo Central High School, shows off the refrigerated items in the school’s new full pantry.

## Sandra Shaw Named MI Orchestra Teacher of the Year

Sandra Shaw didn’t plan on being an orchestra teacher, but somewhere along the way she became one.

A very good one.

Shaw, who teaches at Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts and Loy Norrix and Kalamazoo Central high schools, has been named the 2018 Teacher of the Year by the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association.

Shaw grew up in the Saginaw area and came to Kalamazoo to attend Western Michigan University. After

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Sandra Shaw, second from the left, poses with the Loy Norrix High School 2017-2018 orchestra.

**Kalamazoo Public Schools is Hiring.**  
Find information at <http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com/Departments/HumanResources/EmploymentOpportunities>

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## School Food Pantries: Aiming to Create Hunger-Free Kid Zones *(continued from page 1)*

Loaves & Fishes was aware that the backpacks were not as effective as desired in terms of helping fill the food gaps for children.

Beginning in 2010, the food bank, which serves all of Kalamazoo County, was looking for a way to provide children with more food in a more cost-effective way. That's when it opened its first school-based food pantry at El Sol Elementary school. Since then, it has opened full pantries in four other schools: Kalamazoo Central High School, Maple Street Middle School, and Northeastern and Woodward elementaries. There are partial pantries at Loy Norrix High School and Linden Grove, Hillside and Milwood Magnet middle schools. The pantries are operated by Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo and school staff.

"We're trying to provide more kinds of food and to feed kids longer," Johnson said. "You could be getting this on a Tuesday night versus the backpacks, which are just for the weekend."

The ultimate plan, she said, is to get the whole family to join

in picking up the food to ensure the entire household is fed.

"Loaves & Fishes has been a terrific KPS and community partner for many years," said KPS Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice. "Our students and families benefit significantly from the pantries recently placed in our schools."

### Hunger in Kalamazoo County

An estimated 40,000 residents are food insecure in Kalamazoo County, Johnson said. Loaves & Fishes expects to fill about 165,000 four-day food orders this year. That number is up from the previous year, which was up from the year before that, and the year before that. Johnson doesn't expect the number to decline any time soon.

Hunger in Kalamazoo County has changed from situational to chronic, she said.

"Families that were hit hardest by the recession, they're still struggling," she said. "They had the least to lose and they lost the most."

Despite improving unemployment numbers, the food bank sees families where the



**Jen DeWaele, CIS site coordinator, said their full food pantry provides better access to food for families and allows the school to build better relationships with families.**

household members are dependent on multiple part-time jobs with no benefits, Johnson said.

"One little thing can completely ruin their world," she said. "If someone's car breaks

down, all of their resources go to fixing the car, because they need it for work. There's nothing left for food. There's a lot of shifting done. It can become a desperate situation for some."

wanted to find a way to deepen the connection between the school and families and to better meet the needs of the families so their children can succeed, DeWaele said. The pantry is a great way to motivate parents to visit the school so staff can talk about academic performance, tutoring, mentoring, and other community services available through the school.

Deb Yarborough, the senior site coordinator for CIS at Kalamazoo Central, has only been running the program since December, but said it has already had an impact on students.

Before the full pantry was implemented, CIS staff fed children from one cabinet. Now, there are two refrigerators and half a dozen cabinets, which staff have used to serve 157 individual students with fresh fruits and vegetables and a range of meats and snacks. It provides students with reliable, easy access to food.

"We had one young lady who was acting out," Yarborough said. "They brought her in here and she was angry. She had no place to live. She was couch-surfing and not eating well. I said, 'Let me take you to our pantry.' It's just consistent and the kids know that it's here."

Feeding children is important, said Johnson. Everyone from the American Psychological Association to the American Pediatric Society agrees on that. "Good food, the right food, grows strong brains," she said.

"The sooner we know that a child is food insecure, the sooner we can make sure there are not food gaps in their lives," she said. "The access point for us is Headstart, preschool and kindergarten. We can be there alongside other school nutritional programs, leveraging everything that is out there in terms of federal programs to create a hunger-free kid zone."

"Imagine what our community could be if hunger wasn't an issue? And, if we start with kids, it's like we're writing a different story."

### Food pantries in schools

Putting food pantries in the schools helps target children in need, but also makes a lot of sense in terms of being able to reach entire families. It's an additional access point for those who will be at the schools anyway, Johnson said.

"That's a win-win for everyone," she said.

Woodward School for Technology and Research has seen definite benefits from having the pantry at the school, said Jen DeWaele, the Woodward site coordinator for Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo. It was a huge project to undertake, but the benefits have been worth the effort.

The pantry serves about 15 families a week. "They love it. They kind of can't believe they can come into the school to get their food," she said.

Principal Frank Rocco

**KIRK  
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AT THE KALAMAZOO  
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### SUMMER ART CLASSES

Adult classes start June 5  
Youth classes start June 16

### 5-DAY SUMMER CAMPS

June 18-August 3 for ages 4-17  
Half day, full-day & specialty camps

Register online at [kiarts.org](http://kiarts.org)  
or by phone at 269/349-7775  
Scholarship applications  
welcome by May 8

### ARTS FAIR JUNE 1-2

FRIDAY

Art sales 3-8 pm, Bronson Park  
Beer Garden 4-10 pm, at the KIA

SATURDAY

Art sales 9-5 pm / Family activities 12-4 pm

FOOD TRUCKS & ENTERTAINMENT BOTH DAYS



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435 W. South Street 269/349-7775 [kiarts.org](http://kiarts.org)