

# FOOD FORTHOUGHT

JUNE/JULY 2019

Everything is so different in this country. The first two years were especially difficult, emotionally and physically.

## MEET SAMARAH



**ANY PARENT OF THREE YOUNG CHILDREN** knows how busy and tiring life can be. But amidst the chaos, Samarah is also very grateful that her children are safe. In 2015, Samarah, her husband, and children came to the United States as refugees. In their home country, they were surrounded by continued conflict and violence. Knowing they couldn't raise their children in those conditions, they left everything familiar behind to settle in Kalamazoo.

"Everything is so different in this country," says Samarah. "The first two years were especially difficult, emotionally and physically." She and her husband both had advanced degrees in Chemistry and spoke English; however, they found that their degrees could not be credentialled in the United States. Samarah found a job as a teacher's aide, but soon discovered that everything she earned was being used to cover the cost of childcare. She decided to stay home with the children while her husband went to his job in a local factory. Making ends meet is a struggle every month. "Housing is very expensive here," Samarah states. "The five of us live in a small, two-bedroom apartment that costs \$855 per month."

Samarah realized that her family needed help securing enough food. She discovered Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes by searching online. "It took a lot of courage to call and ask for help. I didn't know what to expect and how I would be treated." But Samarah was pleasantly surprised. "Everyone was very welcoming and kind. They were always smiling, and it made me more comfortable to return when I needed to do so. I am glad to see the variety of food — even that I had a choice of halal meat at some of the pantries." In addition to visiting the pantries, Samarah's family occasionally visits one of KLF's Mobile Food Initiatives for supplemental groceries.

Despite the challenges they've faced, Samarah's family is determined to improve their situation. Her husband has just been accepted into a Master's degree program at WMU, and her boys continue to improve their English and settle into their school life. Right now, Samarah and her husband don't have any family nearby, but they hope their parents will soon be able to join them in America. And someday when her children are older and some current medical conditions are resolved, Samarah hopes to return to work — something she misses very much.

"We are grateful for Loaves & Fishes. They have helped us a great deal during this time," says Samarah. "Whenever they are collecting food at the boys' schools, I try to give something. It's important to give back and remember that there are some people who have less than we do."



SAVE THE DATE



THE ONSTAFF GROUP  
DOLLAR DRIVE-THRU

Making a difference is as simple as driving through one of our event locations on July 11<sup>th</sup> and donating spare dollars and change.

Listen to 107.7 WRKR all day for locations and details.



\*Client's name changed to protect anonymity.

## - A NOTE FROM JEN - MEET PASTOR JIM DYKE, MFI COORDINATOR

Last fiscal year, KLF's five *Mobile Food Initiative* (MFI) sites distributed thousands of pounds of food to those struggling with food insecurity. For this newsletter, we sat down with Jim Dyke, pastor of Saint Andrew Community Church and MFI Coordinator, to learn more about this important food program. — *Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director*

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**Q: How many people does Saint Andrew's MFI serve each month?**

**A:** We have approximately 50 volunteers that help distribute between 6,000 and 16,000 pounds of food to our neighbors on a once-per-month basis. We estimate that we serve 220 families during our distributions. Our volunteers have learned the names and listened to the stories of those who utilize our MFI site. We feel honored that the community has entrusted us to provide this food with compassion and gratitude.

**Q: In what ways have you seen this program evolve over the years?**

**A:** We've been doing this for eight years and, over that time, have seen a sense of community develop around the MFI. The SPCA took a heartfelt interest in our project and now donates thousands of pounds of pet food. St. Tom's Parish provides thousands of rolls of toilet paper and personal hygiene products each month. Our own parish provides infant diapers — all on top of the fresh groceries KLF provides.

**Q: Why is it important for you and Saint Andrew Community Church to continue this work?**

**A:** We are very passionate about meeting people's basic food needs. It's also good for us to be reminded that we need to take care of the next generation. They are our replacements. It is a privilege to participate.



People select fresh produce to take home at a Saint Andrew Community Church MFI food distribution.

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: ADVIA CREDIT UNION

In May 2017, Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes opened a high-capacity food pantry within the Douglass Community Association. Opening a new pantry comes with expected challenges — familiarizing the community with the new location, additional weekly food deliveries for the warehouse to coordinate, and recruiting volunteers to help stock shelves and assist clients while they shop. Volunteers are essential to our capacity at any pantry location.

When Advia Credit Union learned about the need for pantry volunteers at the newly opened Douglass Pantry, they eagerly expressed interest. Advia employees had been assisting in the KLF warehouse for several years but committed to provide employees to staff a pantry shift each month. Today, they're a key part of the collaboration that has allowed the Douglass Pantry to grow from limited capacity in the beginning to now serving nearly 300 households per month.

"Advia has been on board since the early days of this pantry location," states Gina Nowling, Douglass Pantry Coordinator. "We appreciate their dedication, positive energy, and hard work."



Advia employees prepping for a pantry shift with Jackie Smith, former KLF Douglass Pantry Coordinator.

Advia Credit Union encourages employee volunteerism through their Advia ACTION Employee Program. The program allows employees time away from work to lend a hand to charities that are meaningful to them. KLF is so grateful to the Advia team for giving their time to the continued success and development of the Douglass Pantry.

If your team is interesting in volunteering for a pantry shift, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Ray, at 269-488-2617 x209 or [ray@kzoolf.org](mailto:ray@kzoolf.org).

## FIGHT WASTE. FIGHT HUNGER.

In the U.S., 40% of edible food never meets mouths. Instead, unused food ends up in landfills or is left behind in fields, comprising the single largest type of waste we produce each year. With nearly 50 million Americans struggling with hunger, it seems reasonable to assume that remedying our food waste problem could have an overwhelmingly positive effect on hunger. While the obvious place to start tackling this issue is within our own kitchens, it's also important to be aware of other food-waste channels that contribute to the problem.

**At The Farm:** The biggest culprit of farm food waste is cosmetically challenged food – food that's fresh and edible but doesn't look perfect.

**At The Store:** Grocery stores toss billions of pounds of food from shelves each year due to sell-by dates and imperfections. Sadly, a lot of the food being pitched is edible.

**At School:** Recent statistics show that grade schools waste an estimated 1–2 percent of the total food produced. Universities produce around 22 million pounds of waste each year or 142 pounds per student.

**At Work:** According to StopWaste.org, corporate kitchens typically throw away 4–10 percent of the food they purchase before it reaches a customer's plate due to overproduction, expiration, spoilage, and trimmings.

**At Home:** Households generate approximately 150,000 tons of food waste each day amounting to half of the total food waste in the U.S.

The good news is that there are glimmers of hope on the food-waste horizon. Consumers are starting to better educate themselves about food labels and what those dates actually mean. Imperfect produce has been seen on grocery store shelves at reduced prices, and more grocers have started donating outdated food to organizations like KLF. School cafeterias and corporate kitchens are teaming up with non-profits to repackage unused food to fight hunger. Large cities like Boston are even piloting curbside composting programs!

The Internet is a wealth of knowledge when looking for opportunities to reduce food waste. Start by visiting [kzoolf.org](http://kzoolf.org) to see how to better decipher food labels to make the most of what's in your kitchen.

### MONTHLY GIVING COUPONS

GIVING COUPON:  
**JUNE**  
COUPON #188

Your donation helps feed kids who lose access to school food programs this month.

Donation Amount  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your contribution by June 21st.

Food Wish List: Healthy Snacks

GIVING COUPON:  
**JULY**  
COUPON #189

Happy Birthday America! Celebrate with a donation to combat local hunger.

Donation Amount  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your contribution by July 19th.

Food Wish List: Canned Fruit

# 84,116 POUNDS



This year's National Association of Letter Carriers' Food Drive generated **84,116 total pounds of food.** That total is up over 8% from last year!

Summer is KLF's most in-demand season, and we appreciate your support! Your donations help keep pantry shelves full for thousands in our community.

Special thanks to NALC Branch 246 and everyone who helped make this event successful!

## EXPANDING OUR REACH

We have become very aware of the need to supplement our efforts in the *Grocery Pantry Program* with non-traditional outreach. In addition to the recent service change to open capacity throughout the pantry network, we have started to implement more non-traditional outreach activities. These activities are designed to reach individuals who simply cannot be served by the current model for a variety of reasons. These efforts include:

- Monthly food distribution at Lutheran Church of the Savior and African Christian Fellowship to approximately 90 Congolese refugee families
- Partnership with Kalamazoo Covenant Academy and Kalamazoo Valley Community College to provide emergency food to non-traditional students
- Weekly grocery distribution to homebound seniors receiving Meals on Wheels delivery from Senior Services
- Food distribution at Phoenix High School to cover the gap of spring break
- Monthly food distributions to homeless encampments
- One-time mobile food distributions during critical times (school breaks, irregular SNAP benefit distribution during the first quarter of 2019)
- Identification of food insecure families at the time of a routine or sick child visit through the Food is Medicine project (a workgroup of the Hunger-Free Coalition)

These outreach efforts have been very successful but are just the beginning. Our goal is to continue outreach to underserved populations. Other target populations outlined in our outreach plans include those recently released from the prison system, LGBTQ+ youth, veterans, and those with limited transportation options.



**Bequests are gifts given to a charity after an individual's death as specified in their last will and testament.**

Bequests are most often financial gifts, but may also be gifts of personal property or stock. What an amazing way to leave a legacy and continue helping others after your passing! Since a gift can be made in a specific dollar amount or as a percentage of your estate, there are ways to support multiple charities and to ensure your loved ones are cared for as well.

For more information about supporting KLF through a bequest, contact KLF Development Director Greta Faworski at [greta@kzoolf.org](mailto:greta@kzoolf.org) or 269-488-2617 x208.

## KNOW THE STATS

BE AN ADVOCATE

**Meet ALICE — Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.** ALICE represents our friends and neighbors in the community that are employed yet are still struggling to make ends meet. In Kalamazoo County, 26% of households must make difficult decisions every day. Healthy food or car insurance? Healthcare or safe childcare? To simply survive, a family of four (2 adults, 1 infant, 1 preschooler) would need to make \$66,528 per year or \$33.26 an hour. Survival budgeting does not allow saving for unexpected expenses, making even the smallest repair or health expense a catastrophe. While unemployment rates have decreased, wages vary by location. Sixty-one percent of all jobs in Michigan pay less than \$20 per hour.

Michigan Association of United Ways 2019, ALICE In Michigan: The Hardship Study

HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL BUDGET, KALAMAZOO COUNTY		
	SINGLE ADULT	2 ADULTS, 1 INFANT, 1 PRESCHOOLER
<b>Monthly Costs</b>		
Housing	\$513	\$782
Child Care	\$—	\$1,381
Food	\$199	\$604
Transportation	\$340	\$679
Health Care	\$236	\$888
Technology	\$55	\$75
Miscellaneous	\$159	\$504
Taxes	\$246	\$631
Monthly Total	\$1,748	\$5,544
<b>ANNUAL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,976</b>	<b>\$66,528</b>
<b>Hourly Wage</b>	<b>\$10.49</b>	<b>\$33.26</b>

# TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's honor or memory. Donations made 3/1/19 - 4/30/19.

## IN HONOR OF

### Lee Accorso

Sam & Barb Accorso

### Susan Beute's 75th Birthday

Harvey Beute  
Carolyn Kozlowicz  
Kathy Spilman

### Herb Boyer

Christine Flagler & Jim Ishida

### Art Cole

Jon Riccio

### Thom Davenport

Jeanne & Harry Church

### Karim Essani

Angela Thomas

### Harold Fitzgerald

William Fitzgerald

### Carol Forney

Anonymous

### Marlin Gerber

Andy & Randy Thorburn  
Bernie & Helen Rodee

### Sue Gilbertson-Beadling

Corinne Herschleb

### Richard Hutson

David & Beth Cook

### Jennifer Johnson

Jon Riccio

### Dr. Mark and Pat Lucas

Carol & Leon Coverly

### Kalamazoo Civil War Round Table

Mark Longstroth

### Kristine Mauro

Joseph Mauro

### Chuck & Lana Ocvirek

Rachel Packer

### Francisco Ormaza

Beverly Schmitt

### Our 21st Anniversary

J. Dale & Cheryl Westbrook

### Michael Rice

Millie Lambert

### Brian Stephenson

Chris & Mary DeYoung

### Josh Weiner

Cheryl & Bruce Briney  
Anna & Wayne Nicolen

### Rose Williams

Kevin Springer

## IN MEMORY OF

### Jill Adamski

Jane & Jeff Puvogel

### Roy Betzler

Ronald & Donna Holmes

### Rita Bober

Lawrence & Karen Bober  
Leo-Paul Campeau  
Charles & Stacie Dineen  
Edward & Susan Frederick  
Barbara Gerber  
Brigid Golembiewski  
Colleen Greene  
Barbara Joles  
Jean & Rob Kropf  
Nancy & Richard Schermerhorn

### Margaret Brigman

Karen Perrine

### Marilyn Carey

Ronald & Donna Holmes

### Karen B. Cernik

Joseph & Julie Cernik

### Dr. & Mrs. Moises Cillan

Lauretta Cillan-Chung, M.D.

### Bonnie Clark

Martha Vandelinde

### Julie Cleveland

Suzzette Deaux

### Patricia Coleman

Ms. Elizabeth G. Roelofs

### Bill Compton

Mary & S. Richard Goss

### Ted Curtis

Bob & Marcia Cowell

### Eileen & Dave Cook

Ronald & Donna Holmes

### Gloria Copeland

Brian & Carol Copeland

### Tom Crooks

Martha Vandelinde

### Jo DeShon

Elizabeth & Frederick Clem  
Margaret & Tim Franklin  
Barbara Spigelmyer

### James & Lucille Dillon

Ms. Colleen M. Berger

### Joseph Dillon

Ms. Colleen M. Berger

### Former Members of the Kalamazoo

### Round Table

Kalamazoo Round Table

### Hazel Goorhouse

Geana Goorhouse

### Joe & Betty Haas

Ronald & Donna Holmes

### Lori Hernandez

Lydia Garcia

### Janet Horton

Robert & Patricia Hasper

### Elmer & Naleta Huberty

Patricia Huberty

### Mary Hunt

Greg & Colleen Schultz

### Marguerite Kolb

Grant Kolb

### Joanne & John Kraska

Peggy & Michael Warlick

### Lance Lambert

Martha Vandelinde

### Jane Leversee

Kathleen Fleece

### Maxine Loudon

Lori Klutts

### Linda Renauld Lutz

Robert & Norberta Renauld

### Pat MacPherson

Kathleen Fleece

### Beth McLaren

Dennis & Janice Burke  
Anthony & Theresa McDonnell  
Earl & Tamara Norman  
Susan Pyer  
Eunice Ridley  
Maryanne Sydlik  
Debra & James Thompson

### Fred Meagher

Nancy & Shawn Hagen

### Katie Higgins Metheny

Bob & Marguerite Higgins

### Charles Miller III

Janice DeBliik  
Joan Robertson  
Greg Sullivan

### Kathy Mizeur

Vincent H. Mizeur

### Ron Moore

Mark & Cynthia Cotter

### Jaimie Oorbeck

Martha Vandelinde

### David Osmum

George & Judy Bruzza

### Frank Ossiff Jr.

Diane Ossiff & Gerald Hansen

### Gerald Pochyla

Inez Pochyla

### Rhonda Prince Smith

Kristi Koetje

### Tom Pyke

Susan Pyke

### Jessica Renauld

Robert & Norberta Renauld

### Alvina & Oswald Renauld

Robert & Norberta Renauld

### Doug & Marie Renauld Stone

Robert & Norberta Renauld

### Brian Rife

Christina M. Nelson

### Norreen Cloney Roberts

Irish-American Club of Kalamazoo

### George W. "Bill" Rohr

Kathryn VanDis

### Antonia H. Rostami

Mr. Jeffrey Rostami

### Darrell M. Rostami

Mr. Jeffrey Rostami

### Lewis Schaaafsma

Esther Schaaafsma

### Marilyn Scheel

Mr. John F. Scheel

### Martin & Emma Schmitt

Robert & Norberta Renauld

### Peter J. Schmitt

Beverly Schmitt

### Foster L. Sherwood, Jr

Marjorie Sherwood

### Joani Siwik

Christine & Andrea Siwik

### Fay Smith

Donna & John Bargo

### Sandi Snow

Amy Snow-Buckner &  
Michael Buckner

### Sarita Sparks' Mother

Jochanan & Mabel Stenesh

### Doug & Marie Renauld Stone

Robert & Norberta Renauld

### Aarend & Verl Stoppelberg

Kathleen Fleece

### C. James & Winona Swope

Paul & Diana Swope

### Shirely Tyndell

Gale & Kathleen Newell

### Clara Van Til

Thelma J. Van Til

### Norman VanHeulen

Allen Perkins &  
Dianne Thorn-Perkins

### Joan Van Zoeren

Charles Van Zoeren

### Roon & Olga Visser

Ineke F. Way

### Elmo Wallace

Laurel Ewaschuk

### Shirley Walter

Stan & Chris McGrew

### Barney & Florence Westra

Karl Westra

### John Westra

Karl Westra

### Flora Hoekstra Zienstra

Gertrude Hoekstra

## NEW TO THE KLF TEAM!



**Mandakini Quiñones** is our new Development and Communications Coordinator. She plays an instrumental role in keeping our database organized, planning events, and connecting KLF with the community. We're thrilled to have her on our team!

Mandakini can assist you with any corrections, mailing database updates, or how your newsletter is delivered (via USPS, email, or both). Please contact her at 269.488.2617 ext. 206 or [Mandakini@kzoolf.org](mailto:Mandakini@kzoolf.org).



Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

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FOOD REQUEST LINE: 269/343-3663  
P 269/488-2617 · F 269/343-3669  
WWW.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



## OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME CHALLENGES FOR FAMILIES

Summertime brings with it additional challenges for families already struggling with poverty and hunger. Some of those challenges include:

- Loss of access to school meal programs
- Loss of access to school-administered weekend food programs
- Need for childcare and high childcare costs
- Increased household expenses including food and utilities
- Increased transportation costs and barriers
- Children and teens with increased unmonitored time and responsibility to care for themselves and siblings

Many of the above challenges are felt by families during all school break sessions, but the duration of summer vacation makes June–August particularly difficult. To see how you can help families this summer and into the next school year, visit [kzoolf.org](http://kzoolf.org)

JUNE/JULY 2019

### CONNECT WITH US



KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A



### STAFF / BUSINESS OFFICE

269.488.2617  
Joan Atwell, Call Center Coordinator  
Bill Brown, Warehouse Assistant  
Paul Bushek, On-Call Warehouse Staff  
Carol Cormack, Office Coordinator  
Rebecca De Los Santos, Human Services Coordinator  
Seth De Los Santos, Warehouse Assistant  
Greta Faworski, Resource Development Director  
Linda Fuhlbrugge Fox, Program Manager  
Lizbeth Fuentes Rosas, Program Coordinator

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