I know that our food costs are going to skyrocket once school is out and the boys are eating at home every day for every meal.

MEET CARLA

DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR, CARLA’S HOUSEHOLD IS A WELL-OILED MACHINE. Her two teenage boys are busy with school and extracurricular activities; Carla works hard every day at her full-time job. Days are long and busy. The household budget is tight, but they make ends meet with little to spare.

Summer is a different story. The boys are out of school for summer vacation, and Carla’s stretched-thin budget becomes even thinner. Because of her income level, her boys receive school lunch at a very reduced rate. A simple breakfast is provided free of charge at school, so the boys make sure they take advantage of that resource to get their day started. This extra help with daily meals is a tremendous relief for Carla and; consequently, she starts to worry when the summer draws near.

“I usually try to start filling the freezer in the spring to prepare for summer,” states Carla at a recent visit to Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes. “I know that our food costs are going to skyrocket once school is out and the boys are eating at home every day for every meal.”

Carla’s experience is not uncommon. A recent study conducted by APCO Insight and Share Our Strength revealed that, on average, a family spends an additional $300 per month on groceries when kids are home during the summer. Families cope with this increased expense in many ways including buying less healthy food to save money, cutting other household expenses, getting help from family and friends, and, in many cases, visiting food pantries.

“I usually don’t need to visit Loaves & Fishes during the school year,” shares Carla. “But this summer has been really tough. We had some unexpected expenses this year and couldn’t stock up as much as usual. I just can’t meet all our expenses on my income no matter how hard I try.”

While at Loaves & Fishes, Carla also learns about Meet Up & Eat Up — a federal summer meal program that is often administered through school districts. “I’m so glad to learn about this!” Carla gushes. “Teenagers eat A LOT! I can barely keep up!”

Carla is grateful to learn about her options and to know that there is help when she needs it. Between her visits to Loaves & Fishes and other resources she has learned about, Carla feels more confident that they will be able to make it through the summer without having to skip meals.

*Client’s name changed to protect anonymity.*
A NOTE FROM JEN

“Why are so many people struggling with food insecurity when the unemployment rate is so low?”

We are asked this question frequently. It’s a legitimate question as the unemployment rate is often viewed as the main indicator of the economic health of a community. In the Kalamazoo/Portage metropolitan area, the current unemployment rate is 3.5%, significantly lower than 10 years ago during the recession when it was 11.5%. So why have the food insecurity rates remained flat and, in some areas, increased?

Like many things, one number can’t tell the whole story. Yes, more people are employed than 10 years ago, but low wage jobs and widening income inequality continue to cause families to struggle and face daily barriers to self-sufficiency. Of all Michigan jobs, 61% pay less than $20 per hour. In the Kalamazoo/Portage metropolitan area, a quarter of the workers earn less than $12 per hour while the top quarter earn over $27 per hour. In many occupations, no matter how hard you work, the wage potential between the bottom 25% and the top 25% of wage earners is very modest. Certain segments of the population continue to face income inequality based on gender, education, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Women still, on average, earn 79 cents to the dollar that men earn.

At the same time, the average cost of living has increased by 27% between 2010 and 2017. Government assistance programs continue to face cuts that, while seemingly minimal to many, are devastating to families who rely on them. Families continue to tighten budgets and be resourceful in how they make ends meet. Housing costs, transportation, healthcare, childcare, food – the juggling act goes on day after day.

There is no one-size-fits-all way to address hunger in our community. We must be able to meet the needs of the working family with young children as well as the individual who is homeless and struggling with mental illness. The college student who spent their last dollar on books to the senior citizen who is on limited income and unable to drive anywhere. It is essential that our hunger-relief programs remain flexible and responsive to the many different paths that lead someone to food insecurity.

With gratitude,
Jennifer E. Johnson


A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

We wrapped up our 2018-2019 fiscal year on June 30th. Below is a snapshot of our service year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Pantry Program Four-Day Food Orders</td>
<td>146,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Based Four-Day Food Orders</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Seniors Served Monthly through the Commodities Program</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Food Initiative Recipients</td>
<td>16,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend Food Packs Distributed to 13 Schools</td>
<td>19,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pounds of Food Distributed Through All Programs</td>
<td>2,773,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Meal Equivalents Through All Programs</td>
<td>2,310,892</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the second summer, we are running our Just in Time delivery program. We are fortunate to receive a tremendous amount of produce during July and August from local farmers, stores, and the Food Bank of South Central Michigan. Some of our pantry locations normally receive deliveries just once a week. We decided to implement the Just in Time delivery program to make sure produce is available at all locations when it’s fresh. The Just in Time program uses the smallest truck in our fleet to make more frequent deliveries to our pantries throughout the weeks of July and August. The result is less food waste and more fresh food in the hands of our clients!

GIVING COUPON: AUGUST
COUPON #190
Allow kids to have a worry-free last month of summer by making a donation.
Donation Amount
$

Please send your contribution by August 16th.
Food Wish List: Whole Grain Pasta

GIVING COUPON: SEPTEMBER
COUPON #191
September is Hunger Action Month. Join the fight with a donation to KLF.
Donation Amount
$

Please send your contribution by September 20th.
Food Wish List: Canned Meat

2019 Volunteer SURVEY
KLF volunteers play an immeasurable role in the success of our food programs. While we always welcome their feedback and suggestions, we periodically conduct a more formal survey to collect valuable feedback on the volunteer experience.

>200
The number of volunteers that completed the survey.

“Enjoy paying it forward. Growing up poor, I was a recipient of food donations.”

95%
The number of people who said they volunteer to help those struggling with food insecurity. Other reasons include to meet new people (24%), had free time (37%), and to stay physically active (33%).

99%
The number of volunteers that reported feeling that they were making an impact through their volunteer service.

“The clients are very appreciative and thank us, too.”

NEW TEAM MEMBERS!
We are pleased to welcome Alysse Breckenridge to KLF as our new Program Manager. Alysse relocated from Flint, MI where she was a Community Health Analyst with the Genesee County Health Department. At KLF, she will be responsible for overseeing our food distribution programs and maintaining relationships with community partners. Maria Rivera joins KLF as a part-time Program Coordinator. Maria, who is bilingual, can be found in both our Call Center and out in the community raising awareness of KLF programs.

For the summer, we are lucky enough to have Mihail Naskobski on board as our Intern. Mihail currently attends Kalamazoo College. He is playing an integral role in the administration of a client needs assessment throughout our pantry network. We will miss him when the summer comes to a close.
WHY CHOICE IS IMPORTANT

When someone visits one of our pantries, they are given a certain number of points to “spend” in each nutritional category. While this system guides them towards a balanced food selection, they have the choice as to which items they pick in each category. This choice system helps overall food security in several ways:

• Clients can select items that complement any food they already have at home, allowing them to pre-plan meals and stretch their food resources.
• Clients can avoid food allergens and shop for items that support dietary needs in the home.
• Cultural or religious food guidelines and preferences can be factored into food selections.
• There is ultimately less food waste if clients are able to choose food they know their family will enjoy.
• It is a more dignified experience to select your own food.

Nationally, 9.5% of households with seniors face food insecurity. In Michigan, 9.2% of households with seniors face food insecurity.

Due to income constraints, food-insecure households with older adults do not have consistent access to enough food for healthy, active living. The impact of senior hunger extends well beyond an empty stomach and wallet.


Seniors Struggling With Food Insecurity may Experience a Number of Challenges:

Food running out  Skipping meals  Choosing between food and medicine  Postponing medical care  Poor health outcomes  Higher health care use and costs

SOURCE: FRAC’s Hunger and Health series

Donor Advised Funds (DAF) are investment accounts opened for the sole purpose of charitable giving.

Cash, securities, or other assets are deposited into the DAF and provide an immediate tax deduction for the donor. Assets grow in value tax-free over time while also allowing the account holder to donate to any IRS-qualified public charity of their choice by making grants from the account. A DAF is an easy way to consolidate your charitable giving and, by naming a successor to assume privileges over your DAF, you can leave a lasting legacy of giving to the charitable organizations you hold dear.

If you have questions about supporting Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes through a donor-advised fund, contact Greta Faworski at 269-488-2617 x208 or greta@kzoolf.org.

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TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone’s honor or memory. Donations made 5/1/19 - 6/30/19.

IN HONOR OF
Lee Accorso
Joan Atwell’s 75th Birthday
Our Family’s May Birthdays
Robert & Loree Bagley
Kae Bennett
Rita Stevens
Dr. Phillip Doyle
Jan & Melvin White
David & Annette Duchamp
Joyce K. McNally
Harold Fitzgerald
William Fitzgerald
Kalamazoo CWRT
James & Roxanne Frey
Ingrid Gardner’s Birthday
Joy & James Gardner
Frank & Toni Gross
Angela & Joe Gross
Pam Miller & Tom Hagadone
Ronald & Jane Kramer
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Rachel Packer
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Alton & Beverly Pollard
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Howard & Robyn Robinson
The Marriage of Rabbi Simone Schicker
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Raya Zirling
Jennie-Rose Schultz
Greg & Colleen Schultz
Pat J. Shiley
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Maggie Sperry’s Birthday
Barbara Albanese
Our 45th Wedding Anniversary
Ronald & Margaret Szulecki
Kalamazoo’s Hungry Children
J. Dale & Cheryl Westbrook
Stanley Witak
Rebecca Klose
Mr. & Mrs. Zick’s 50th
Wedding Anniversary
Noel Mohrberg

IN MEMORY OF
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Jan Anderton
Robert & Judith Shrimplin
MSB
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Michael Zann
Corinne Zann

For corrections, mailing database updates, or to change how your newsletter is delivered (via USPS, email, or both), please contact Mandakini Quiñones at 269.488.2617 ext. 206 or Mandakini@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

MAKING A GROCERY RUN?
Consider grabbing a few extra items to donate to KLF.
Below you’ll find 10 rarely donated items that are in high demand at our pantries.

- Jelly/Jam
- Infant Formula
- Butter
- Ensure®
- Cooking Oil
- Canned/Bagged Nuts
- Dried Spices/Herbs
- Granola Bars
- Shelf-Stable/Powdered Milk
- Meals In A Box

Donations from the community play a key role in the variety of food we’re able to offer our clients. For more information about how to help provide food for those facing hunger, visit kzoolf.org/give-food

One in eight people in the United States face hunger each day — that’s equal to the entire population of Canada.

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Bill Brown, Warehouse Assistant
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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2019