Meet Kenny

It’s a gray day outside, just barely reaching 30 degrees. Kenny rides up to the pantry on his bicycle because it’s the only transportation he has and, unlike the bus, it doesn’t cost anything. He comes into the pantry and chats with a staff member while he waits for his turn to shop.

Kenny shares an apartment with two of his friends. It’s cramped, but splitting rent is the only way they all have a roof over their heads. One of his roommates is expecting a child with his long-time girlfriend, and she will be moving in soon as well. They each try to contribute to the household in their unique way. After paying for rent and utilities, the income from their minimum wage jobs doesn’t last much longer. One of his friends recently hurt his back and isn’t able to work much due to the injury, so things have been extra tight.

“We don’t have much to cook with,” says Kenny. “Our fridge is in rough shape, and we only have a small frying pan. We mostly use the microwave.” This situation guides his selections when it’s time for him to shop. He gravitates towards foods like canned ravioli, hearty stews, and canned meat. “These kinds of foods work best for me and my buddies. They fill us up, and we can heat them in the microwave.”

When Kenny is nearing the end of his shopping trip, a volunteer asks if he will be able to carry everything on his bike. He chuckles and says, “I’ve gotten pretty good at balancing. And I just got to make due.” As he heads towards the door, Kenny pauses and turns back to the volunteer. “Thank you. I don’t know what we would do without this.”

*Client’s name changed to protect anonymity.*
The latter half of 2019 was busier than ever for KLF’s warehouse staff and volunteers. Now that the holidays have come to a close, we sat down with Bill Brown, KLF Warehouse Assistant, to get the inside scoop on how our newly-expanded warehouse has already allowed us to better serve our and clients and food donors.

— Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

Q: If the warehouse’s holiday season could be described in one word, what would it be and why?
A: Generosity. The community steps it up a notch during the holiday season. It’s amazing to see. During our busiest period, it was not uncommon to have as much as 1600 pounds come through our donation door on a given day. Community donations are very important because they provide variety for our clients.

Q: If someone wants to continue making a regular food donation in the new year, what are you in need of?
A: Jelly and jam. Peanut butter is in good supply, but we lack jelly. Low-sugar canned fruit and boxed meals, too.

Q: How has KLF’s recent freezer/cooler expansion helped in terms of food donation, storage, and pantry variety?
A: We’ve seen a demand for more variety in our pantries. The expansion has allowed us to provide more of what our clients and pantry coordinators expressed an interest in seeing on the shelves. For example, we went from offering six types of fresh, frozen meat in pantries to 26. We also plan to use one section of our expanded space as a “root cellar”. This capability makes us better equipped to store larger donations of fresh produce.

Q: What’s the most common reaction you get when people step foot inside the newly-expanded space?
A: People are always amazed at the scale of our operations, and I’m excited to see how this new expansion will allow us to better collaborate with farmers, food suppliers, and the community. We welcome everyone to stop in and take a tour so they can see what we’re working on with their own eyes.

NEW YEAR. NEW PERSPECTIVE.
See hunger and poverty from a new perspective with these critically acclaimed books, documentaries, and podcasts hand-selected by our staff. Check your local library and streaming services for titles.
GIVING COUPON:
FEBRUARY
COUPON #196
Spread the love!
Fight hunger this Valentine’s Day.
Donation Amount

Food Wish List: Rice (Bag or Box)

GIVING COUPON:
MARCH
COUPON #197
Start the spring season in the spirit of giving. Your help makes all the difference.
Donation Amount

Food Wish List: Canned Fruit

NEED FOOD? CAN’T GET TO A PANTRY?
For many people, there can be obstacles to visiting one of our pantries. Lack of transportation, work schedules, illness, and childcare to name a few.

Our Caseworker Pantry helps get food into the hands of individuals who may not be able to access our pantries in the traditional sense.

- Local human service professionals can call 269.488.8918 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to schedule a pick-up time for a client’s four-day food order.
- Food is pre-packaged but includes both perishable and non-perishable items for each member of the household.
- Food is picked up at KLF’s warehouse located at 901 Portage Street in Kalamazoo.

Just like the traditional Grocery Pantry Program, clients can obtain food from the Caseworker Pantry twice per month. Not sure if you qualify as a human service professional, but know a client, student, or another individual who needs help securing food? Reach out to our Services team for more information.

THE TOP 20 FOOD DRIVES
SEPTEMBER- DECEMBER 2019

KC FEEDS KZOO
KALAMAZOO CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL WITH
HILLSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL & LINDEN GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL
13365 POUNDS

DENOOWER CHEVROLET
1606 POUNDS

RADISSON PLAZA HOTEL
1053 POUNDS

RICHLAND FIRE-ROSS FIRE DEPARTMENT
1040 POUNDS

BORGESS HUMAN RESOURCES
976 POUNDS

AEROTEK
970 POUNDS

ZOETIS
960 POUNDS

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
950 POUNDS

ROLLERWORLD
932 POUNDS

PARCHMENT HIGH SCHOOL
870 POUNDS

EDISON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
847 POUNDS

NEWELL DESIGN
712 POUNDS

BELL’S BREWERY, INC.
686 POUNDS

ARCADIA ELEMENTARY
670 POUNDS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
669 POUNDS

BOSCH AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE SOLUTIONS
668 POUNDS

COLLEGE PANHELLENIC COUNCIL/IFC WMU
645 POUNDS

PARAGON OPHTHALMOLOGY PC
634 POUNDS

THE CLEANING AUTHORITY
626 POUNDS

MAPLE STREET MAGNET SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS
609 POUNDS

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USDA: A NEW CHAPTER
As of October 1, 2019, Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes has been approved by the State of Michigan to receive United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food directly. While we have distributed USDA food for many years, we received it via the South Michigan Food Bank. We were grateful for this connection through the Food Bank; however, as we grew and after we expanded our cold storage, it made logistical sense for the product to come straight to our docks.

What this means:
- We will be receiving a greater variety of USDA products and in larger quantities.
- Perishable products, such as produce and dairy, will arrive fresher and last longer as they will not have spent extra time at a third-party warehouse.
- Larger quantities of produce and dairy, when available, will be offered.
- More USDA food will be coming into Kalamazoo County than ever before.
- While we will still need to purchase approximately 50% of our inventory, this extra product will help round out our selections and quantities.

The USDA food supply can be volatile at times. It is directly affected by what is happening on a national and global level, including factors such as weather and trade policy. Regardless, at any given time, there will be great products from which we can choose. We are excited about this new chapter of our food procurement and for the partnership we have with USDA and the State of Michigan.

WELCOME TO THE BOARD!
We are excited to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors! D’Angelo Bailey is an Assistant Director of Development at Kalamazoo College. He brings a wealth of knowledge to the organization from his background in the non-profit sector and fund development. D’Angelo was a member of the Resource Development Committee for a year before joining the Board. Jeff Pohler is an Assurance Manager at Plante Moran. Jeff’s experience as a CPA and his knowledge of non-profit accounting will be valuable in his role as Treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee. He joined the committee this summer before joining the Board. Welcome, D’Angelo (left) and Jeff (right)!

SUSTAINERS CIRCLE MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM
The Sustainers Circle Program provides KLF with a stable, continual source of revenue. Monthly gifts make a difference year round, especially when donations are low, but need remains high. Giving is simple and can be done via credit card, direct debit, or check from your financial institution. It’s a convenient, yet very effective way to support the community. And it makes it easy to budget and plan your charitable giving.

To get started, please contact Greta Faworski by phone at 269.488.2617 ext. 208, by email at greta@kzoolf.org, or visit kzoolf.org.
Thank You
FOR YOUR SUPPORT DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Served
November 26
Households 352
Adults 759
Children 465
Total 1224
TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes in someone’s HONOR. Donations made 11/1-19 - 12/31/19.

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Sam & Barb Accorso
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Kathleen & James Chenoweth
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For corrections, mailing updates, or to change how your newsletter is delivered (via USPS, email, or both), please contact Mandakini Brophy at 269.488.2617 ext. 206 or Mandakini@kzoof.org.
TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes in someone’s MEMORY. Donations made 11/1/19 - 12/31/19.
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

Community Celebration

Thursday, March 19, 2020
John E. Fetzer Center | 251 Business Court, Kalamazoo, MI
Hors D'oeuvres’ | 6 p.m. | Presentation | 7 p.m.
RSVP: MANDAKINI AT 269.488.2617 EXT. 206 OR MANDAKINI@KZOOLF.ORG