

FOOD**FOR**THOUGHT

JUNE/JULY 2018

“Despite our challenges, we’re pretty resilient — us vets.”

MEET CHARLES



CHARLES ISN'T BASHFUL as he waits to take his turn to shop in KLF's Melzer Pantry. He strikes up conversations with people sitting nearby, complimenting others amidst his chatter about the weather and the high cost of rental units. When his number is called, Charles waves off the grocery cart the KLF volunteer grabs and gestures to his backpack.

“I only need what I can fit in my bag,” he says with a smile.

Charles is a veteran who is also currently homeless. He doesn't have access to a refrigerator, and he knows he should only take what he can carry on his back.

Charles quickly passes over fresh dairy and meat options and moves on to non-perishable stews, canned tuna, beans and grains. He strategically tucks granola bars between his canned goods and tops off his bag with a few sturdy produce items like bananas, oranges, carrots and snap peas.

“This should get me through for a bit,” he says to the volunteer helping him as he zips his pack.

While some might feel sad or hopeless in his situation, Charles feels confident that this season will pass with a little grit and hard work. He credits his military experience for his optimistic spirit and, as he puts it, his put-your-head-down-and-push-through-it attitude.

“Despite our challenges, we’re pretty resilient — us vets,” he says with pride. “We were trained to be.”

As he slips out the door, Charles bids farewell to new acquaintances and settles a military insignia ball cap onto his head. With a pack full of food, he feels more ready than he did the day before to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.



THE ONSTAFF GROUP
DOLLAR DRIVE-THRU

Making a difference is as simple as driving through one of our event locations on **July 12th** and donating spare dollars and change.

Listen to 107.7 WRKR all day for locations and details.



DON'T FORGET

*Client's name changed to protect anonymity.

A NOTE FROM JEN | MEET JESSICA SUAREZ

Jessica Suarez is a familiar face in KLF's warehouse and Melzer Pantry. She volunteers multiple days each week preparing pantry shelves for client shoppers and organizing food inventory for packaging and delivery. For this newsletter we sat down with Suarez to learn what motivates her to donate her time to KLF. - Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

Q: Tell me a little bit about yourself.

A: I was born and raised in Kalamazoo and live just around the corner from KLF in the Edison neighborhood. I'm a caretaker for my mother who has battled cancer twice. I'm a wife, a mother to five step-children, and I'm 29 years old.

Why did you begin volunteering at Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes?

A: I began volunteering to fulfill the State of Michigan's reinstated requirements for food assistance that went into affect this year. I have to volunteer a minimum of 20 hours each month to maintain my SNAP benefits, but I'm here way more than 20 hours per month.

Q: What's the atmosphere like in the warehouse and pantry?

A: It's a wonderful atmosphere. I love to organize things, and a lot of the tasks they have me doing require this. The staff are great — they make me feel so welcome. I really love it here.

Q: You said that you continue to volunteer each month even after you've fulfilled your requirements for food assistance. Why is that?

A: I like feeling useful, and the guys in the warehouse count on me. I keep my schedule flexible so if there's a day they need to call me in, I can help. I want to be my best self — to show them that I'm dependable.

Q: You obviously contribute a lot to KLF. Why go above and beyond what's required?

A: I love helping the clients. I know what it's like to be in their situation because I've used KLF's services before. When I see others go home happy because they have food to eat, I get to see the results of my hard work.

Q: As someone who has been on both sides of our organization - a client as well as a volunteer — what would you tell a client about our organization that they may not know simply by visiting a pantry?

A: I would let them know that KLF really cares about what they're doing for the community. The organization is always trying to evolve to better serve clients' needs. For instance, they realized that clients lining up at the pantry doors, sometimes hours prior to a pantry shift, was unfair to those who were only able to arrive right when a pantry opened. They now have clients draw numbers out of a hat when the doors open to determine the order of when people shop. I've seen firsthand how this cuts down on arguments at the door and encourages people to use their time prior to a pantry shift for other errands.

Q: Describe KLF in one word.

A: Excellent.



CAMPAIGN FOR KIDS

CHILDHOOD HUNGER DOESN'T TAKE A SUMMER VACATION

NEARLY HALF OF ALL STUDENTS IN KALAMAZOO
COUNTY RELY ON SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS.

DONATE ONLINE AT [KZOOLF.ORG](https://kzoOLF.org)

MEET UP & EAT UP

FREE SUMMER MEALS FOR KIDS AND TEENS

Meet Up & Eat Up is a federally funded program that ensures children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session.

FOR SUMMER MEAL LOCATIONS, VISIT:
bit.ly/KzooMeetUpEatUp

MONTHLY GIVING COUPONS

GIVING COUPON:

JUNE

COUPON #176

School is out!
Give a gift to help feed
kids this summer.

Donation Amount
\$ _____

Please send your contribution by
June 15th.

Food Wish List: Healthy Snacks

GIVING COUPON:

JULY

COUPON #177

Summer is our most
in-demand season. Your
help is appreciated.

Donation Amount
\$ _____

Please send your contribution
by July 20th.

Food Wish List: Canned Fruit

72,026 POUNDS

This year's National Association of Letter Carriers' Food Drive generated 72,026 pounds of food for hungry people in our community. Thank you for your support!

Special thanks goes to NALC Branch 246.



THE TOP TEN FOOD DRIVES

JAN-APRIL 2018

DISTRICT 2 LITTLE LEAGUE

2971 POUNDS

KAMSC

1938 POUNDS

RALPH MOYLE, INC

1216 POUNDS

ROLLERWORLD

1032 POUNDS

MENARDS, WEST MAIN STREET

1010 POUNDS

KIWANIS CLUB OF WESTSIDE KALAMAZOO

917 POUNDS

LAWSON ICE ARENA

907 POUNDS

BERNATCHE SCHOOL OF DANCE

864 POUNDS

PEPSI BOTTLING GROUP OF KALAMAZOO

855 POUNDS

GIRL SCOUTS HEART OF MICHIGAN

832 POUNDS

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT | EARTH FARE

At Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, one of our core beliefs is that food is a human right. So, in 2015, when a grocer with a similar philosophy offered to partner with us, it was a match made in hunger-fighting heaven. Earth Fare, a grocery store committed to clean and healthy foods, believes that quality food should be available to everyone everywhere, and their Portage location has donated over 100,000 pounds of food to KLF to date.

There is an underlying current of community giving and earth stewardship at the core of Earth Fare's corporate culture. For example, each store grand opening celebration features a check presentation to a local organization committed to helping citizens lead a healthier lives (KLF received the store's celebration check at the 2015 opening). The store also operates a Give Thanks Program that encourages customers to donate funds for frozen turkeys that are donated to KLF for clients and their families at Thanksgiving. Company leaders find that most employees share a commitment to sustainability and philanthropy, and it plays a key role in employee recruitment and retention.



Earth Fare understands that eating clean, healthy foods, like those available at their stores, can help people lead longer, healthier, happier lives. Their donations allow KLF clients to secure grocery items they often don't have access to or cannot justify purchasing with limited food budgets. These donations are also extremely helpful for those with special dietary needs.

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes is proud to partner with Earth Fare. We're grateful for their support and for their efforts to reduce food waste, provide food for those experiencing hunger, and take better care of the planet.

LET'S TALK!

Is your group interested in learning more about how to fight hunger in our community? We'd love the opportunity to chat with you!

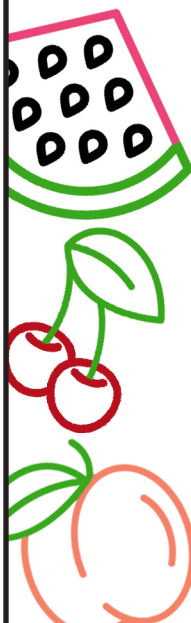
We're available to attend your next meeting, welcome you to our site for an informational tour, or present at your next business function.

Let's set something up!
Contact Greta Faworski at
269.488.2617 ext. 208 or
Greta@kzoolf.org



SUMMER READS

CHOOSE ONE OF THESE TITLES TO BROADEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY AND HUNGER IN AMERICA.



\$2 A Day

Living on Almost Nothing in America

Kathryn J. Edin and H. Luke Shaefer

Evicted

Poverty and Profit in the American City

Matthew Desmond

Nickel and Dimed

On (Not) Getting By in America

Barbara Ehrenreich

Hand to Mouth

Living in Bootstrap America

Linda Tirado

FOR KIDS!

Crenshaw

Katherine Applegate

Check your local library for the above titles.

TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's **HONOR** or **MEMORY**. Donations made 3/1/18 - 4/30/18.

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Our 68th Wedding Anniversary

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John "Dale" Westbrook's 80th Birthday

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Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

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KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49001-3005

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P 269/488-2617 · F 269/343-3669
WWW.KZOOOLF.ORG

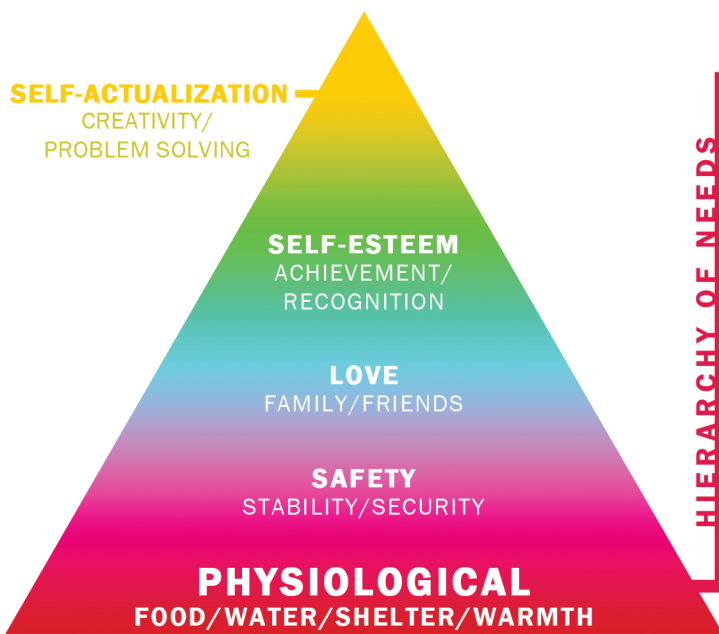
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Our Mission

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



KIDS' BASIC NEEDS

CHILDREN CANNOT THRIVE UNLESS THEIR BASIC NEEDS ARE MET.

For thousands of children in Kalamazoo County, lack of food is a daily reality. The effects of hunger can be lifelong and can play a significant role in a child's development and wellbeing.

Join us to ensure their basic needs are met.

Donate to this summer's

Food is Fuel Campaign for Kids

KZOOOLF.ORG/DONATE

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