

FOODFOR**THOUGHT**

SPRING 2022



MEET BASAM

Basam is enrolled in a training program in a local community college. His program is quite demanding, but he knows someday it will lead to a lucrative position in an up-and-coming industry. Right now, however, things have been tight because his studies prevent him from getting extra hours at work. “I won’t need this help forever,” assures Basam. “But I want to do well and focus on my studies. This is my ticket to the future.”



MEET HARRIET

Harriet is 92 years old and living alone in a senior housing complex. She is still quite mobile but gets tired easily. “I do alright,” shares Harriet. “Some days are better than others.” Harriet isn’t able to drive, so really appreciates the KLF Home Delivery Program. Harriet especially enjoys the fresh produce she gets in her order and the help she gets bringing her groceries into the apartment. “I enjoy talking to the nice people when they bring my groceries — it’s a bright spot in my day!”



MEET RYAN

Ryan and his family live in a small rural town in Kalamazoo County. When he and his wife got married, they each had children previously, resulting in a large family of five children. Ryan works in Kalamazoo at a utility company and stopped by KLF for the first-time last fall. “Between the price of gas and food these days, it’s gotten tough to make ends meet,” says Ryan. “Every little bit helps, and we are so grateful.” Since the initial visit, Ryan has stopped by three other times. “Some months we make it work; other months there isn’t enough money to last.”



While the client stories featured above are true, their names and images have been changed for anonymity.

FOOD EQUITY: Fresh Produce



One of the challenges in providing nutritious food is securing fresh produce year-round. Fruits and vegetables are especially desirable food items, not only because of their importance in a healthy diet, but also because they can be especially hard to find within low-income neighborhoods. Often when produce is available, it is expensive or limited in quantity. The variety that may or may not be found at a local convenience store is lacking compared to the more affordable options at a larger grocery store. This inequitable access to fresh produce creates areas referred to as food deserts.

According to *healthypeople.gov*, a website managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “places where people live and eat affect their diet. **More than 23 million people, including 6.5 million children, live in “food deserts”** – neighborhoods that lack access to stores where affordable, healthy food is readily available (such as full-service supermarkets and grocery stores).” Transportation costs or ability to travel to a larger grocery store can also create barriers in getting fresh food. “Overall, for those who do not have access to a car or public transportation, **the cost of travel time to find healthier options in addition to out-of-pocket expenses may be too high.**”

KLF works to combat the inequity of available fresh food through our Home Delivery Program and by securing and distributing produce as part of each food order our clients receive. We do this by working with various partners, including ValleyHub at KVCC’s Food Innovation Center. When available, we receive some produce from the USDA while other fresh foods are donated by local farmers or community gardens. These contributions help us ensure nutritious food is available to families and individuals across Kalamazoo County, regardless of their income or proximity to grocery stores. With help from the Kalamazoo Valley Plant Growers cooperative, we have also provided garden seedlings to our clients for their own home gardens.



If you are interested in supporting our mission by donating produce, the spring and summer season is a great time to get involved.

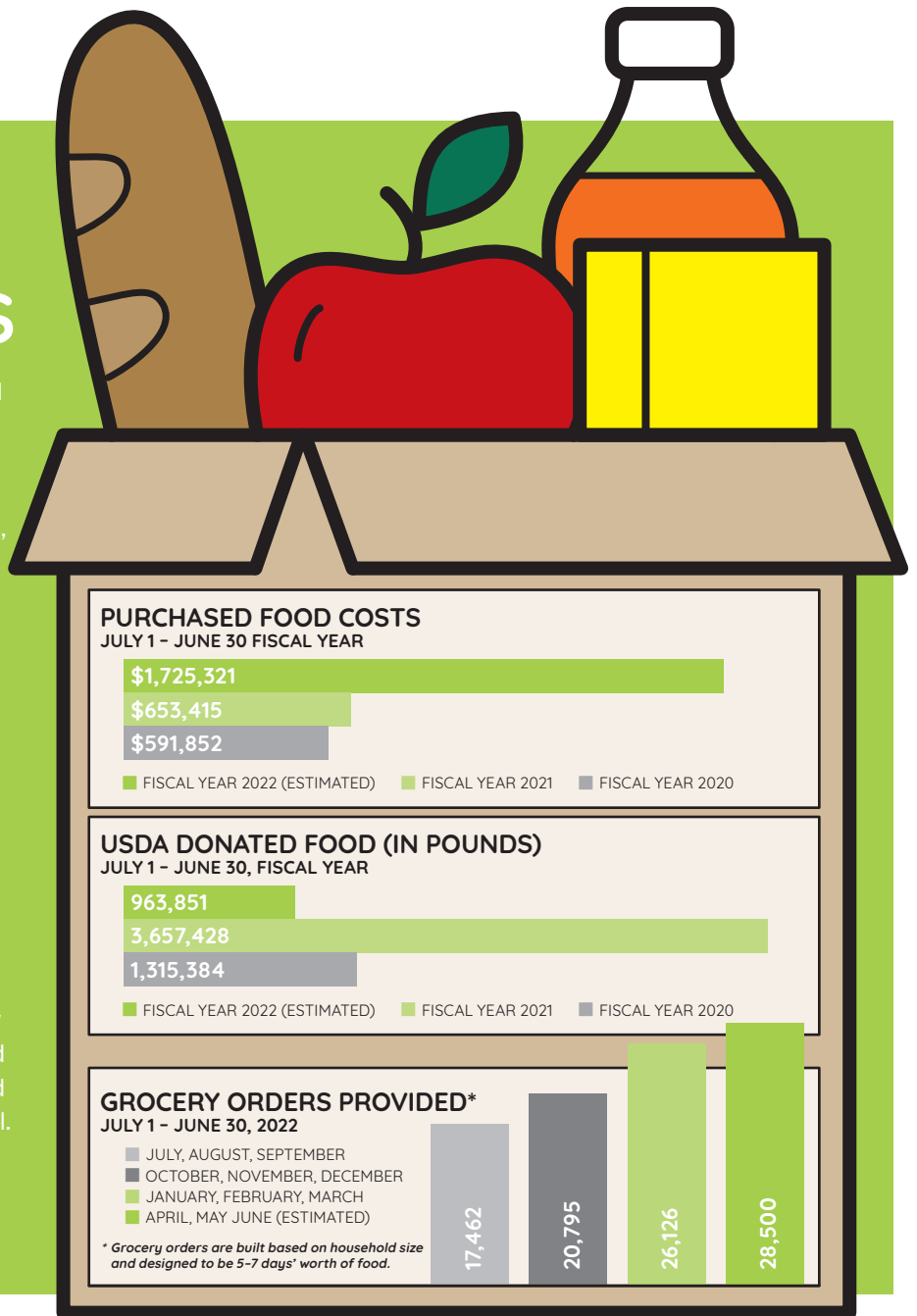
Plant an extra row of fruits or veggies in your garden and donate your surplus produce to KLF!

Learn more at kzoolf.org/plant-a-row

FOOD COST CHALLENGES

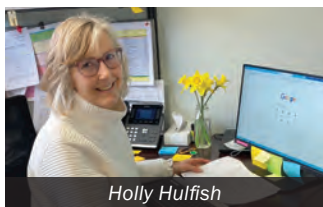
The past couple of years have been full of unexpected twists and turns for all of us. Some of these hurdles have been brief while others will have long-lasting impact. For charitable food organizations, securing enough food to meet the need is always a concern. However, the past six months have been exceptionally challenging – a trend that is expected for at least another year if not longer.

The increased food costs you see at local grocery stores are being felt on a much larger scale at KLF, especially when you factor in high freight costs. The graphs here show purchased food costs for the past three fiscal years. Comparatively, you will see the food received from the USDA over the same time period. The final graph shows how our service commitments have climbed dramatically in the past six months and are expected to remain at this higher level.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

We are pleased to announce the addition of three new staff members. **Holly Hulfish** joins KLF as our new Office Manager. In this role, Holly is responsible for human resource functions and vendor relationships. Holly brings a wealth of experience



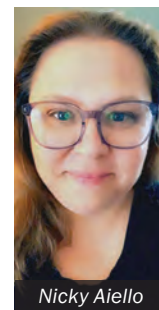
from the non-profit world, including facilities management. **Alisha Lewis** is our newest Program and Delivery Assistant. With a long driving career including public and school transportation, Alisha's hire has allowed us to expand the



number of home deliveries we schedule each day. **Glenn Shumate** joins the team as a Warehouse Assistant. Glenn brings a wide range of skills to KLF along with a long background of volunteering in social service. He joins the rest of the warehouse crew pulling food orders, delivering to



program partners, and setting up mobile food distributions. **Nicky Aiello** is the newest member of the KLF Board of Directors. As the Volunteer Services Coordinator for Communities in Schools, Nicky



has a strong understanding of the many challenges facing the families in our community.





PARTNERSHIP PROFILE: WMU'S INVISIBLE NEED PROJECT

College-aged adults are often balancing limited work hours with hefty coursework, making it difficult to make ends meet. International students may be expected to pay high costs for room and board with only a small stipend. No matter the situation, it is important for students to be able to access resources in a way that fits their lifestyle.

Western Michigan University's Invisible Need Project provides WMU students with help for medical costs, menstrual items, textbooks, food, and other needs. Their mission is to "position students to thrive while at Western, persist to graduation, and reach their full potential, by reducing basic needs insecurities, through passionate individuals, donor



generosity, and innovative partnerships." KLF is proud to partner with this campus resource by regularly supplying food that is distributed through their student pantry.

By ordering specific food items through KLF's pantry portal, the Invisible Need Project can provide a wide variety of grocery items to students seeking food assistance. Local grocery stores, food drives, and donations also keep their shelves well-stocked. Being a partner pantry, students can receive food from KLF and WMU's Invisible Need Food Pantry if needed. Located within Faunce Student Services building on WMU's campus, the pantry is in a convenient, but discreet location for students.

For more information, visit wmich.edu/invisibleneed/food.



SHARE THE NEWS

Help others learn about KLF's mission and services by passing this newsletter along to a friend or family member. Forward KLF's online edition to your email contacts.

You'll play an instrumental role in helping KLF:

- Welcome New Volunteers
- Educate the Community About Vital Food Services
- Bolster Local Food and Fund Drives
- Keep People Informed About Important Food-Related Legislation
- And Much More!**

MONTHLY GIVING COUPONS

GIVING COUPON:
MAY
COUPON #218

Make a contribution
in honor of Mother's Day.

Donation Amount

\$ _____

Food Wish List: Cereal

GIVING COUPON:
JUNE
COUPON #219

A gift to KLF is like a
warm ray of sunshine.

Donation Amount

\$ _____

Food Wish List: Baking Items
(flour, sugar, cooking oil)

TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's **HONOR** or **MEMORY**. Donations made 2/01/2022 through 3/31/2022.

IN HONOR

Chuck & Cindy Bieherle
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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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

SUPPORTING LOCAL STUDENTS

KLF partners closely with local school districts, higher education, and Communities in Schools to provide additional food access points for students in our community.

- 11 pantries in Kalamazoo Public Schools offering full food orders, snacks, and emergency packs
- 600 weekend food packs distributed each week to 11 elementary school buildings in Kalamazoo, Comstock, and Parchment
- Monthly mobile food distribution at Comstock Middle School
- Mobile food distributions at various schools during winter, spring, and summer breaks
- WMU Invisible Need Project, KVCC Valley Food Share Program, Kalamazoo Covenant Academy, and KRESA all access our food inventory to help support their pantries



YOUR SUPPORT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE. DONATING TAKES SECONDS AT KZOOOLF.ORG

SPRING 2022

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KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A



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Bill Brown, Delivery Coordinator & Program Float	219	Alisha Lewis, Program & Delivery Assistant	221
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