

FOODFOR THOUGHT

SPRING 2024



MEET KAMERON

Kameron is in his early 30s and is a father to a preschooler. He is also a veteran and has significant nerve pain due to an injury he suffered while in active duty. Kameron shared that he has been searching for work for over six months, but it is difficult to find a job that can accommodate the issues he faces due to his injury. “My limited disability income is being eaten by a rising mortgage,” he stated. “My savings has run out.” Kameron expressed his concern about having enough food for his son and asked how he could receive assistance from KLF until he secures a job.

MEET SHEREE

Sheree shared that she has been off work since the birth of her daughter two months ago. Her employer does not offer any type of short-term disability or Family Medical Leave due to size, so money has been tight. “I’m a bit ashamed and embarrassed to ask; however, I’d like to learn more about participating in the pantry service,” Sheree said when she first reached out to KLF. “I’m in need of some food for my kiddos.” Sheree plans to return to work soon but needs to find an affordable childcare option for her daughter.



MEET CLYDE

Clyde is 84 and suffering from several serious health issues. He and his doctor have recently discussed the possibility of home hospice care. Clyde has lived with his 63-year-old daughter, Debra, since his wife passed away. “Clyde’s daughter is trying to take care of her father, but she was recently diagnosed with cancer and undergoing treatment,” shares Clyde’s caseworker. “They both could use some help with food but have limited diets due to illness and the side effects of medicines.” Clyde’s caseworker reached out on their behalf to schedule a home delivery. KLF put together items to that are easy to prepare and digest, including protein shakes that are always in stock for those who need them.



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

A NOTE FROM JEN

Alisha Lewis came to KLF in February of 2022 with a skilled background in transportation and community services. Since joining KLF, she has assisted our program delivery in a variety of ways. Alisha was promoted to Program Logistics Coordinator in January 2024 and currently manages all aspects of the Home Delivery Program. Born and raised in Kalamazoo's Edison neighborhood, Alisha is well-acquainted with the area and is passionate about KLF programs and their success. — Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

Q: What can you tell us about the Home Delivery team?

A: Our team consists of both staff and volunteers. All home deliveries are completed by two people, usually one staff member and one volunteer. We have a dependable staff, loyal volunteers, and it's a good group of people doing amazing work. Offering deliveries enables us to reach so many people. Most of our clients are so grateful for this service. We know it can be a real challenge for some to get out and get the necessities.

Q: What kind of challenges does your team face?

A: Depending on the time of year, or the time of day, challenges range from weather conditions to traffic to safety. It is a real challenge if we have a vehicle that needs maintenance or is getting repaired. I always advocate for safety, especially because we connect with people from all walks of life. Working as a team, maintaining our vehicles, and being mindful and respectful of our client's information helps everyone stay safe.

Q: Where do you see the Home Delivery Program going in coming years?

A: The demand for home deliveries is very high, and unfortunately our schedule fills up incredibly quickly even though we schedule nearly 70 deliveries a day. It is hard to keep up with the demand. We strive to end hunger in Kalamazoo, but we're fighting a tough battle. Growing the program could help us reach more families. We also deliver to families in motels, hotels, or homes with special needs. Easy prep foods come in handy, like pop-top cans, or microwave meals. Having those items on hand at KLF helps us reach food-insecure people living in unique situations.

Q: What are your suggestions for someone who is looking to help support KLF with this work?

A: Delivering groceries all over Kalamazoo County takes time and money. If someone is looking to support our work, we appreciate donations of any kind and any amount. Food donations are helpful and provide variety. Monetary donations make it possible for us to keep doing this work. Volunteering is another great way to give. Even if it is one day a week, that time and support make a difference in the lives of so many people. We appreciate it all.



Alisha Lewis, Program Logistics Coordinator



Tim Bachman, Warehouse Coordinator

Welcome to the Team!

There is a new face in the KLF warehouse! **Tim Bachman** has recently joined our team. As our Warehouse Coordinator, Tim assists with daily warehouse tasks, order delivery, and mobile food distributions. Tim brings a wealth of warehouse experience, and we are glad to have him on board!



For nearly 20 years, Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes has been distributing Weekend Food Packs to students in local elementary schools. KLF provides over 700 food packs per week to students in Kalamazoo, Comstock, and Climax-Scotts Public Schools as well as Paramount Charter Academy. School personnel and our partners at Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo help determine which students need this additional food assistance.

DURING 2023,
KLF provided 18,843 packs
to students in 14 schools.

Participating students receive their food pack on Friday, ahead of the weekend when school meals are not available. Each food pack contains a selection of kid-friendly items to help with breakfast and lunch, bridging the gap for young people who rely on free school breakfast and lunch. KLF distributes packs throughout the school year and during summer school.

MEETING THE NEED FOR EXPANDED HOURS



The needs of our clients vary greatly. To provide our community with an equitable and dignified experience, we do our best to accommodate those needs. That is no different when it comes to scheduling a pantry visit.

In a recent client survey, we found that 46% of our clients are working either full or part-time. The traditional model of having pantries open only during the day doesn't work for everyone. Considering work schedules, school or day care pickups, medical appointments, and transportation, we know our clients require options and flexibility for picking up groceries. In the past year, we have expanded our evening and weekend options for appointments. While this can be tough depending on staffing and volunteer availability, our food distribution partners are dedicated to meeting the needs of the community.

Currently, evening appointments are available three days per week at four different pantry locations. Saturday appointments are now available at one pantry location. Many thanks to the volunteers at First United Methodist Church, Church of Christ, Greenwood Reformed Church, and Richland Presbyterian Church for making these expanded hours possible!

If you or anyone you know needs grocery assistance, contact KLF at 269-343-3663 or info@kzoolf.org.



HOST A CONNECT WITH KLF EVENT!

Are you passionate about the mission of Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes? Do you frequently volunteer at or donate to KLF? Help us spread the word by hosting a **Connect with KLF** event!

The purpose of a **Connect with KLF** event is to teach your friends, family, or colleagues about a cause that is important to you – alleviating food insecurity in Kalamazoo County. These events can be simple to plan but have a tremendous impact. Examples include:

Host a Breakfast – Invite your friends to have coffee and donuts at KLF. Chat for ½ hour and then have a KLF staff give a tour of the facility.

Bring your Friends for Lunch – Grab some takeout and catch up over lunch in the KLF conference room. Before you leave, take a brief tour, and show your friends what you do when you volunteer.

Hold a Client Event – Let your clients know that you are connected to the community and share your passion for giving back. There are many ways we can plan an event of this type in our facility. We can talk through ideas and give examples of past successful events.

Host a Party with a Cause – Don't want to leave home? Host a dinner party or summer BBQ at your home but take a moment in the festivities to talk about KLF and why this mission is important to you.

KLF staff members will help you every step of the way!

Reach out to **Greta Faworski, Associate Director**, at 269-488-2617 x208 or greta@kzoolf.org to discuss your ideas.



THE IMPACT OF **FOOD INSECURITY** ON CHILDREN

When someone is food insecure, they lack regular access to nutritious food that fosters normal development and a healthy lifestyle. While food insecurity has negative implications for people of all ages, it can be particularly devastating for children. Even a short period of food insecurity can have significant impact on a child's physical and mental health, academic achievement, and future economic security.

“ **Nearly 60% of children from low-income communities reported going to school hungry at some point.** ”
— *No Kid Hungry*

According to No Kid Hungry, nearly 60% of children from low-income communities reported going to school hungry at some point. Teachers also observed the effects of hunger in their students citing decreased academic performance, increased behavioral issues, and reduced concentration. Before a child even starts school, food insecurity can hinder their future ability to learn. A longitudinal study of over 2,800 children compared early childhood food insecurity with kindergarten reading, math, and social-emotional


outcomes. Results clearly indicated an unfavorable association with social-emotional skills and cognitive outcomes, solidifying disparities before a child's school career even begins. These early effects of food insecurity can have a significant lasting impact on cognitive function and behavior throughout the teen years and adulthood.

Studies have also shown a significant link to increased medical complications. Children in food-insecure households had rates of lifetime asthma diagnosis and depressive symptoms that were 19.1% and 27.9% higher than children who were food secure. Rates of emergency department use was also 25.9% higher in children facing food insecurity.

However, the lasting impacts of food insecurity can be lessened by certain factors including quality caregiver-child relationships, parental mental health, and exposure to broader social supports, such as utilizing food safety nets like school meal programs, food pantries, and SNAP (food stamps). Food safety nets can be fragile, however. When school meal programs are not accessible during the summer and school breaks, children and their families face increased food insecurity. Cuts in SNAP benefits or not qualifying for benefits can also impact access to nutrition.

Fortunately, we can all help strengthen the food safety net. Visit kzoolf.org today and donate to our **Food is Fuel Summer Campaign!**

Sources: Food Insecurity and Child Development: A State-of-the-Art Review, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 2021
Associations Between Household Food Insecurity in Early Childhood and Children's Kindergarten Skills, Child Development, 2018
Food Insecurity and Child Health, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2019



DID YOU KNOW?

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes operates 12 school-based pantries in Kalamazoo Public Schools.

These pantries serve over 1,000 unduplicated students every month.

Our partners at Communities in Schools help us connect with students most in need.

TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's **HONOR** or **MEMORY**. Donations made 2/1/2024 to 3/31/2024.

IN HONOR

Sue Beadling
Corinne Herschleb

Sue Beute
Carolyn Kozlowicz

Sidney Brush
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Corinne Herschleb

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Corinne Herschleb

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Chetan & Sheela Vyas

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*Mother's Day, Father's Day,
Graduations, Weddings, and Birthdays...*

Give a gift to honor someone special! Donate at kzoolf.org today.



Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

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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.

Kid-Friendly Food WISH LIST

We love donations of the following items for our school-based pantries and families with children!

- | | | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Granola Bars | Crackers and Snack Bags | Cereal | Beef Jerky |
| Pop-Tarts | Microwavable Meals (Mac and Cheese; Ravioli) | Sandwich Crackers | Peanut Butter and Jelly |
| Juice Boxes | | Shelf-Stable Dairy Products | |

Can't make it to our warehouse?

You can order online and have donations shipped to
Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, 901 Portage St, Kalamazoo, MI 49001

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

SPRING 2024

CONNECT WITH US



KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES IS A



STAFF/BUSINESS OFFICE

269.488.2617

- Tim Bachman, Warehouse Coordinator
- Jillian Bryant, Volunteer Coordinator
- Mike Cattell, Program & Delivery Assistant
- Greta Faworski, Associate Director
- Leonardo Fernandez, Lead Pantry Coordinator
- Heather Hageman, Program Assistant
- Tiffanie Head, Program & Delivery Assistant
- Kristen Heggie, On-Call Administrative Coordinator
- TBD, Procurement & Inventory Manager
- Holly Hulfish, Office Manager
- Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director
- Larry Kelly, Program & Delivery Assistant

- | | | |
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