

FOODFOR THOUGHT

LATE FALL/EARLY WINTER 2024



MEET TARIQ

Tariq has three young children, one of whom is currently undergoing treatment for cancer. Prior to contacting KLF, Tariq was working a full-time job but had to step away to take care of his son. “I can’t work through this time because he needs me.” Tariq shared that cancer treatment has greatly impacted his son’s appetite, and there are only certain foods that he is able to tolerate. When possible, KLF makes sure to include these items in Tariq’s order as well as the halal meat the family requires because of their religious beliefs. “He is doing better,” Tariq replied when asked how his son is feeling. “Thank you for your help during this time.”

MEET RHONDA

Rhonda, a single mother to four children, is a medical assistant at a local healthcare facility. Despite working full-time, her income is not enough to cover recent increases to living expenses. She applied for SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps), but only receives \$84 dollars per month from this program. “Sometimes I can make everything stretch, but it’s getting harder and harder. My kids cry at night because their stomachs hurt from being empty,” shares Rhonda. Because she works from 7am – 5pm every day, it has been difficult to get assistance from any food pantries or distributions. When KLF staff told her that we have four evening pantries and several Saturday pantries and distributions, Rhonda was very relieved to have these options.



MEET VEDA

Over the past couple of years, Veda has been caring for her two young grandchildren frequently because of several challenges her daughter – their mother – has been experiencing. “I am retired and on a fixed income,” stated Veda when she first reached out. “I want my granddaughters to have a stable place to be, but two extra people makes a big difference in the food bill.” Veda’s daughter is unable to contribute financially, so this extra burden falls on Veda’s shoulders. “I know others probably need help more than me, so I will only reach out when I really need support.”



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

A NOTE FROM JEN

KLF provides Weekend Food Packs (WFP) to students in Kalamazoo, Comstock, Parchment, Portage, and Climax-Scotts Public Schools as well as Paramount Charter Academy. By providing food to Generous Hands, we also indirectly support Vicksburg Schools. WFPs are designed to bridge the weekend food gap for students who rely on school meal programs for much of their nutrition. Currently, KLF is distributing over 950 WFPs per week. We spoke with **Cyndie Moore from Comstock Public Schools** about the importance of accessible food and nutrition for students.

— Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

Q: Tell us about your role within Comstock Public Schools. In what ways does the school offer support for students that may be facing food insecurity?

A: Within the schools, there is a Family and Community Action Team. I am the Chair of that team, and my title is Intervention Specialist. Our team partners with Loaves & Fishes as well as a local church to provide extra food to families in need. In addition to these supports, all children at Comstock Elementary receive free breakfast and lunch.

Q: What impact does food insecurity have on young people and their families?

A: Experiencing food insecurity can leave lasting impacts on children and their families. Young students may have an increase in anxiety and an inability to focus in the classroom. Their families also experience anxiety and may struggle with other emotional or mental health challenges. For youth, hunger can cause an increase in behavioral concerns and may negatively affect the child's development. When families need to utilize much of their resources for food, other basic needs and provisions may suffer – like clothing, transportation, housing, and medical care.

Q: How do the Weekend Food Packs help make a difference?

A: Receiving the Weekend Food Packs brings peace of mind to families in need, as they help offset the expense of meals at home. Our students often look forward to the food packs and the items provided for them. The food packs contain granola bars, crackers, and kid-friendly meal items like peanut butter and jelly or easy-mac, along with some fruits or vegetables too.



Q: What would you suggest to someone interested in supporting local students and their school communities?

A: Our students are our future! What we provide for them in safety, security, value, love and empowerment helps create learners and leaders for tomorrow! I would encourage you to reach out to your local community school to support our next generation. Programs like the Weekend Food Packs and a monthly food distribution at Comstock Middle School are ways that our district partners with Loaves & Fishes to provide essentials to students and their families facing hard times.



DID YOU KNOW?

In Kalamazoo County, over 8,000 children and teens face food insecurity.





2024 Community Celebration



Marcia Jackson Hunger Advocacy Award:
Valley Food Share



Golden Loaf Individual Award: Deb Imbrock



Willie Webster Outstanding Volunteer Award: Beth McIntyre



Anne Wend Lipsey Food Justice Award: Street Medicine Kalamazoo



Golden Loaf Group Award: Greenleaf Hospitality Group



Food Industry Supply Hero Award: First Presbyterian Church



Community Pillar Award: DeNooyer Automotive Family





At this year's annual Community Celebration, our organization proudly presented awards to some of our most dedicated volunteers and notable community partners.

Following a friendly social hour, the event began with a warm welcome from event sponsor, First National Bank of Michigan. A brief tribute was made from the Governor's office in honor of the incredible support KLF receives from our community. This was followed by words from Executive Director, Jennifer Johnson, and an awards presentation facilitated by Greta Faworski, Associate Director. The presentation featured fun videos of our staff sharing their own words about this year's award-winning volunteers and the valuable impact made by our community partners.

Thank you to all who attended and made this year's Celebration a lovely event. Please join us in congratulating this year's award recipients. We are truly grateful for their hard work, generosity, and their unwavering support of our mission.



Creative Ways to Inspire Holiday Giving!

-  Create a fundraiser for KLF through your social media page or event invite.
-  Include KLF's QR code on your holiday cards or party invitations.
-  Encourage friends and family to bring a food or fund donation to your gathering.
-  Give a charitable donation as a Secret Santa gift.
-  Take a five-minute "mission moment" to tell your guests why KLF is important to you.

Start a New Holiday Tradition With

A MONTH OF GIVING



Add an item to a collection box each day in November or December. At the end of each month, donate the box to KLF to help families in need.

- Day 1:** Oatmeal
- Day 2:** Whole Grain Cereal
- Day 3:** Peanut Butter/Almond Butter
- Day 4:** Jelly/Jam
- Day 5:** Salt & Pepper/Dried Spices
- Day 6:** Applesauce
- Day 7:** Granola Bars/Protein Bars
- Day 8:** Box of Crackers
- Day 9:** Package of Rice
- Day 10:** Whole Grain Pasta
- Day 11:** Pasta Sauce
- Day 12:** Meal in a Box (Hamburger Helper, etc.)
- Day 13:** Cooking Oil
- Day 14:** Canned Sweet Potatoes/Yams
- Day 15:** Canned Green Beans
- Day 16:** Canned Corn
- Day 17:** Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Day 18:** Canned Pineapple
- Day 19:** Canned Cranberry Sauce
- Day 20:** Canned Tuna or Chicken
- Day 21:** Canned Soup or Stew
- Day 22:** Macaroni & Cheese
- Day 23:** Mixed Nuts/Trail Mix
- Day 24:** Raisens
- Day 25:** Can of Infant Formula
- Day 26:** Baby Food
- Day 27:** Vanilla Extract/Sugar
- Day 28:** Desert Mix (Cake, etc.)
- Day 29:** Protein Drinks/Meal Replacement Drinks
- Day 30:** Butter
- Day 31:** An Item of Your Choice!



5 FACTS ABOUT KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES *that might surprise you*



1

We Serve ALL OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY

We may have Kalamazoo in our name, but we serve individuals throughout Kalamazoo County and several communities in nearby counties.

2

We Distribute Food at OVER 90 LOCATIONS

Our main location on Portage Street holds our warehouse, Call Center, administrative offices, and our largest pantry. However, that is just the tip of the iceberg. KLF distributes food at over 90 pantries, schools, community centers, non-profit organizations, and residential sites throughout the county.

3

We are the LARGEST INDEPENDENT FOOD BANK in Michigan

KLF is an independent food bank and pantry network, homegrown by caring individuals in Kalamazoo County. All other food banks in Michigan are part of the Feeding America network, a national organization that is dedicated to alleviating hunger. KLF is currently the 288th largest food bank in the United States, among both independent food banks and Feeding America affiliates.

4

We are Dedicated to FOOD EQUITY

People are unique and diverse. So is food assistance. It doesn't make sense to provide people food that they can not use. That only results in food waste and increased food insecurity. We procure specific food items to address a variety of allergies, cooking and cold storage capabilities, cultural norms, health conditions, and dietary restrictions.

5

WE RELY ON THE COMMUNITY to Make this Possible

Every volunteer, donor, and community partner plays an important role in ensuring our community has enough to eat. Nearly 90% of our funding is secured from local individuals, businesses, foundations, and places of worship. Our staff of 26 people relies heavily on volunteers and distribution partners to make connections and move food. Quite simply, we couldn't do this without you. *Thank You!*

TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's **HONOR** or **MEMORY**. Donations made 8/1/2024 to 9/30/2024.

IN HONOR

Sue Beadling
Corinne Herschleb

Jim & Jean Bylsma
Sarah Greene

Pat Catellier
Corinne Herschleb

Pat Hetrick
Corinne Herschleb

Susan Jackson Hills
Anne & Alexander Lipsey

Kalamazoo Civil War Round Table
Roxanne & James Frey

Kalamazoo Wings
Alan Forrester

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Anna & Wayne Nicolen

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Tom & Jan Tiderington

William Mann
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Donna Emerson

Eilene Summe
Johnell Cuddeback-Weintraub

Pushpalatha Vanimisetti
Bindu Vanimisetti

Cheryl A. Westbrook
Diana Haskins

IN MEMORY

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Paul & Joanie Rahn

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Katie Smith

Marshall Beachler
Ms. Charlotte Hubbard
Mary Norris

Raymond Becker
Priscilla Becker

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Beverly & John Folz
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Jane Johnston
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Sara Pitt-Van Buren
& Jim Van Buren

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Ineke F. Way

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John Dale Westbrook
Cheryl A. Westbrook

Florence & Barney Westra and Sons
Karl W. Westra

Mary Woodhams
Theresa & Rod Hojara



Tribute gifts are a great way to honor loved ones during the holiday season.

Contact Erin Lowe,
Development & Communications Coordinator
for more information.

erin@kzoolf.org | 269-488-2617 ext. 206



Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

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FOOD REQUEST LINE: 269/343-3663
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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN



Give on our website via credit card or PayPal



Give via Venmo

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

LATE FALL/EARLY WINTER 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
- Matt Galletti, Program Assistant
- Heather Hageman, Program Assistant
- Tiffanie Head, Program & Delivery Assistant
- Kristen Heggie, On-Call Administrative Coordinator
- Ben Hietala, Warehouse Assistant
- Holly Hulfish, Office Manager
- Ibrahim Yahya Ibrahim Ismail, Bilingual Program Assistant
- Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director

- | | | |
|-------------|--|-----|
| EXT. | Larry Kelly, Program & Delivery Assistant | 219 |
| | Katie Kozlowski, Bilingual Program Assistant | 221 |
| | Brian Koenigsknecht, Senior Warehouse Manager | 214 |
| | Alisha Lewis, Program Logistics Coordinator | 219 |
| | Erin Lowe, Dev. & Communications Coordinator | 206 |
| | Nate Mattson, Financial Controller | 207 |
| | Mickey McMahon, Program Assistant | 221 |
| | Seth Miller, Program & Delivery Assistant, Float | 219 |
| | Humza Rahman, Program Operations Manager | 210 |
| | Suzi Secondi, Inventory Manager | 211 |
| | Shymeria Stone, Program Assistant | 221 |
| | Josiah Taylor, Warehouse Assistant | 217 |
| | Myah Van Til, Program Navigation Coordinator | 201 |
| | Nadina Williams-Barrett, Senior Program Manager | 218 |