

FOODFORThought

SUMMER 2025



MEET SHIRLEY

Shirley tentatively approached KLF and rang the doorbell at our walk-up door. When a KLF staff member answered, Shirley shared that this was her first time visiting. She continued to say that she couldn't take many items because she had recently lost her home and didn't have access to any cold storage or cooking facilities. "I wish people knew what it was like for us living on the streets," Shirley said thoughtfully, "It's easy to pretend its not happening here, but it is. I never thought it would be me at 59 years old." After putting together some items that would work, KLF staff asked Shirley if there was anything else she needed. Shirley paused, and then inquired, "This may be too much to ask, but do you have a notebook and a pen? I love to draw, and it helps keep me calm while I am dealing with my life being so bad right now."

MEET DYLAN

Dylan emailed KLF for the first time to ask if he could set up an account and get some food. "I know I should have called, but my phone will be out of minutes soon, and I'm very embarrassed about my situation." Dylan continued to share that the previous four months have been very difficult with one bad event after another, including losing his job and eventually having his car repossessed because he couldn't make the payments. "I've been starving for days, but I am more worried about getting food for my kids who will be with me this weekend. I never beg, but I'm begging now. Please help me have food for my kiddos this weekend." KLF staff scheduled a home delivery for the next day, ensuring that Dylan would have food in the house prior to the weekend. Dylan expressed his gratitude and said, "Please don't judge me for my recent trouble — I have never needed help so much in my life."



MEET SHANTEL

Shantel is in her late 60s and lives on a very limited income. She recently had to relocate from her long-time apartment because her rent increased, and she couldn't afford to continue living there. Shantel is struggling with some medical conditions, so the move was difficult and drained some of her savings. When Shantel scheduled her most recent delivery with KLF, she said that she would love some coffee if possible because she hadn't been able to purchase any for a long time, and it is such a treat. While KLF doesn't purchase items like coffee or tea, many of these items were recently donated through the National Association of Letter Carriers' food drive. "That was incredibly thoughtful and made my day," shared Shantel when she received the coffee. "Without you all helping me, I'm not sure what I would do. I need the food, of course, but I also love talking to the friendly drivers when they drop off my food. They are so kind."



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

A NOTE FROM JEN

When visitors first enter KLF's warehouse, they are often surprised by its size, capacity, and fast-moving pace. Not only does the warehouse store millions of pounds of food, but the department is also responsible for purchasing, receiving, and delivering to food distribution sites and agency partners. Safety, efficiency, and teamwork are essential to keeping our mission in motion. For this issue, we spoke with **Josiah "JT" Taylor, KLF Warehouse Assistant**, about what it's like to be part of the action.

— Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director



Josiah "JT" Taylor, KLF Warehouse Assistant

Q: Tell us about your position within the Warehouse Department. What tasks keep you busy, and how do the team members work together?

A: My role as a Warehouse Assistant is very hands-on. My main responsibility is assembling food orders for the Melzer Pantry and outside pantry locations too. I am usually on the forklift and working in the freezer or cooler. I also support the Mobile Food Distributions, working weekends as needed. It's important for things to run smoothly, so we're triple-checking orders to make sure we have everything needed for our partners.

As a team, we try to be efficient and make everyone's day as easy as possible. We all work together to keep the warehouse environment feeling positive. That means offering a smile and helping volunteers, making sure everyone feels welcome.

Q: Are there specific skills you're able to apply to your role at KLF? And what experience have you gained while working at the organization?

A: Previously working for a moving company, I've brought skills in efficiency, organization, logistics, and safe transportation. Our team complements one another in a unique way, and now working at KLF, I've become even more hospitable. I've learned a lot about maintaining our image as a community organization. When meeting new people and agency partners, it's important that I can still be myself, represent KLF professionally, and know that the energy we put out to the community really matters.

Q: Are there any personal reflections you'd like to share? What might surprise someone who isn't familiar with the work of Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes?

A: Personally, I can live in my values and maintain my creativity outside of my work at KLF. Remaining grateful, living in peace, and promoting a humble lifestyle is important to me. I incorporate all of that into my personal endeavors like promoting my own clothing brand and creating my own music. It means a lot to have the support of my coworkers too.

I think people would be surprised by how much we accomplish in an 8-hour day, and people are amazed to learn that our programs serve over 4,000 households per month. There are a lot of different pieces to the puzzle. Receiving donations, making deliveries, meeting new clients – the staff roles at KLF vary widely. Everyone carries a lot of responsibility and understands that we have an important job to do – feeding people in our community.



Donate the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA!

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) allow individuals aged 70½ or older to donate up to \$108,000 (individual) or \$216,000 (married filing jointly) annually from their traditional IRA to qualified charities without paying income tax on the distribution.

QCDs are a way to fulfill your RMD from an IRA without the distribution being included in your taxable income.

By using a QCD, you avoid paying income tax on the distribution, even if you don't itemize deductions.

This can be particularly helpful if you don't need the extra income from your RMDs or if you want to minimize your overall tax burden.

KLF is a qualified charity and accepts QCD gifts!

For more information contact your financial advisor and/or Greta Faworski at 269-488-2617 x208 or greta@kzoolf.org

KLF's Partner Agency Program

KLF serves anyone in Kalamazoo County and surrounding communities who is facing food insecurity.

Regardless, we realize that some individuals may be more comfortable receiving food assistance from other agencies with whom they may already have a relationship or who may offer other services that they need. KLF's *Partner Agency Program* is designed to support agencies who either operate their own pantry and/or serve hot meals to their clients. These partnerships have been developed with intention and the goal to eliminate gaps in service.

The following agencies receive an annual allocation of food and order directly from KLF's food inventory. **KLF does not charge our partner agencies for the food they receive. In partnership, KLF and the following agencies provided food assistance to over 40,000 individuals during 2024:**



We deeply appreciate our partnership!

8th District Court
African Fellowship Church
Comstock Community Center
Eagle's Nest
Generous Hands
Kalamazoo Covenant Academy
Kalamazoo Drop-In Child Care Center

KRESA West Campus
KVCC Valley Food Share
Latter Rain Outreach
Mattawan Area Pantry
Ministry with Community
Oakwood Center
Pride of Scotts Community Center

SDA Iglesia Hispana de Kalamazoo
South County Community Services
WMU Montgomery Essential Needs Program
Youth Advancement Academy
YWCA Domestic Assault Program
YWCA Human Trafficking Shelter

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS
Stamp Out Hunger
FOOD DRIVE

THANK YOU
for another great year!

TOTAL COLLECTED
68,000
POUNDS OF FOOD!

This year's *Stamp Out Hunger* food drive collected a total of 68,000 pounds of food! This tremendous event is made possible through the support of the National Association of Letter Carriers Local Branch 246, United Way of South Central Michigan, The Salvation Army, Clark Logic, Crown Equipment Corporation, South Central Michigan AFL-CIO, and Advia Credit Union. Thank you to the 125 volunteers who dedicated their time, making things run smoothly, and all the community members who donated food items. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the dedicated letter carriers of Branch 246 who pick up thousands of pounds of food in addition to completing their normal mail delivery route, often rolling in with the last of the food donations at 7 or 8 pm. It's a long, busy day for all, and we are truly grateful!

KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

SAVE THE DATE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025
WMU FETZER CENTER

SPONSORED BY

FIRST NATIONAL
BANK of Michigan



LOOKING AHEAD: FEDERAL BUDGET BILL



If you have been watching the news lately, you are well aware that Congress recently passed a budget reconciliation bill with a final vote from the Senate on July 3, 2025. The bill is vast, and it can be confusing to wrap your mind about what will change and how it will impact daily life in our country. **KLF is a non-partisan organization; however, our work is deeply impacted by decisions made on a local, state, and federal level. Because of that, we pay close attention to legislative decisions and how they may impact our operations and the people we serve.** Below are 10 points about the recently passed budget reconciliation bill, many of which have a potentially negative impact on families, farmers, retailers, communities, and the overall economy.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

1 The budget bill includes a \$300 billion cut to SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps, over the next decade. This is the largest cut to SNAP in U.S. history. Seven (7) million, including over 2 million children, will see assistance terminated or cut during this period.

2 In year 2028, individual states will be required to cover a portion of SNAP benefits for the first time ever, in addition to taking on increased administrative costs (up to 75%). This will cause states like Michigan, who already have over-stretched budgets, to make tough decisions. Individual states will be forced to increase taxes to cover this change, cut other critical programs, or may choose to opt out of SNAP altogether.

3 SNAP currently has very strict income requirements that are reviewed and adjusted annually. At the present time, a family of four cannot earn more than \$2,600 (net) per month to qualify for SNAP benefits. There are also existing work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents in their homes. However, the new bill expands these work requirements to parents of children over the age of six and to older adults aged 55-64 with little consideration for childcare costs, parents of children with special needs, or waivers in areas with challenging job markets.

4 Eligibility for SNAP provides automatic access to other programs including the Free and Reduced School Lunch Program and Summer EBT. If young people are no longer eligible for SNAP due to cuts and cost-shifts to states, millions of children will suffer at both home and school. SNAP, Free and Reduced

Lunch, Summer EBT, and food banks currently provide a strong safety net to ensure that young people have adequate nutrition to fuel their health and academic success despite the circumstances they may be experiencing. Increased food insecurity among youth will have devastating impacts on both the short-term and long-term health and development, which ultimately impacts everyone.

5 Reduction in SNAP benefits could have a negative impact on farmers, grocers, and food producers. SNAP currently generates \$1.50 - \$1.80 for local economies for every \$1 spent on the program. Sweeping nationwide cuts to SNAP will trickle down and impact local food providers.

6 **Food banks cannot fully take the place of SNAP. SNAP can provide nine (9) meals for every one (1) that food banks can offer. Experts predict a 10% cut to SNAP would be the equivalent of wiping out every food bank in the country or would double the total number of individuals requesting food assistance.**



MEDICAID

7 The budget bill also impacts access to health care, especially the 72 million Americans who are covered by Medicaid. Like SNAP, there are existing work requirements to receive Medicaid coverage. Most working-age Medicaid enrollees who don't receive disability benefits are employed, are actively seeking employment, or are unable to work due to caring for a family member or attending school. The budget bill outlines that these work requirements continue; however, the reporting requirements will substantially increase, adding more burden to individual states. For example, Georgia implemented similar reporting requirements two years ago and has already spent over \$90 million just to manage the administrative side of the program. Delays in paperwork processing result in delays or loss of health care protection for those relying on Medicaid and are seeking medical care.

8 Rural healthcare providers and hospitals will be particularly vulnerable to changes in Medicaid because they often serve more low-income patients than urban areas. Many have sustained their finances through a state practice called the provider tax, which increases Medicaid payments to low-income areas. However, the new bill will curtail the provider tax, thus reducing the amount of funding that rural healthcare providers receive, resulting in cuts to services or possible closure.

9 Individuals covered by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace will face increased enrollment requirements, including the need to reapply annually instead of automatic enrollment and a shorter enrollment period. These added requirements and barriers once again create significant administrative costs and delays in receiving healthcare.

CHARITABLE GIVING

10 One big win from the budget bill is the enactment of a new universal charitable deduction that will encourage charitable giving among those who currently do not itemize their deductions. Individuals will receive a tax incentive up to \$1,000 and married couples up to \$2,000. While experts fear that other tax changes in the bill will reduce charitable giving from wealthier individuals and corporations, the universal charitable deduction has the potential to diversify the number of donors supporting charities throughout the country.

TRIBUTES

Generous donations made to KLF in someone's **HONOR** or **MEMORY**. Donations made 4/1/2025 to 5/31/2025.

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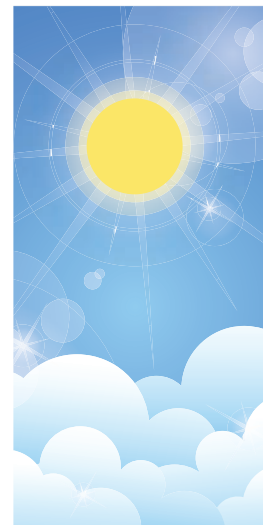
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Our Mission

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.

HELP DRIVE OUT CHILDHOOD HUNGER!

Did you know that over 50% of students in Kalamazoo County rely on school meal programs to meet their nutritional needs? When schools close for summer vacation, these children may go without the fuel they need to grow and thrive.

Our *Food is Fuel Summer Campaign* aims to support families with school-aged children during the summer months. July and August are the busiest months at Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes. We appreciate your help in making sure our shelves are stocked, and our freezer is full for this annual spike in demand.

Every donation to KLF's *Food is Fuel Summer Campaign* helps provide nourishment and peace of mind for local children, teens, and their families.



Donate today at
www.kzoolf.org
to make an impact!

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

SUMMER 2025

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