

KALAMAZOO  
GOSPEL  
MINISTRIES

# STORIES OF HOPE

2020

JUNE ISSUE

MEET  
BARB

FEATURED  
**STORIES**

The Art of Giving  
KGM Update  
Meet Joe



## Encouragement From Pastor Michael L. Brown President/CEO

The past month and a half have been an amazing opportunity for us at Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries. Often times, we learn things in crisis that would never reveal themselves in normal times. As we navigate our way through the COVID-19 crisis, we've been working closely with Kalamazoo County Health, Housing Resources, Kalamazoo's own Mayor, David Anderson and many other community partners, to make sure our homeless neighbors are taken care of. Our goal is to ensure that our guests, staff and volunteers remain as safe and healthy as possible.

In conjunction with Housing Resources, Inc., we have moved some of our guests to a local hotel to help us achieve social distancing, to curtail the spread of this virus. Even with all the precautions, we, like many other organizations, have had staff and guests impacted. The team of ministry professionals that God has assembled at KGM is determined to show the love of Christ through it all. Even though some of our staff have had to step away from serving, they have eagerly returned and serve our guests, as soon as they are cleared.

Currently our Food Service Department is closed, and meals are being provided in partnership with EMA Enterprises, from Michelle's on Gull Rd. Demonstrating the support that many of our local businesses have offered to ensure the folks we serve, have everything they need. Other businesses have poured out support, supplying lunches and other special treats for staff who have worked long hours and multiple shifts to cover for their teammates who have fallen ill. It's also been encouraging to see guests who are currently on campus, step up and volunteer to help carry the ball where they can. Even in this time of crisis, God continues to show Himself faithful.

I never imagined that this is how we would be celebrating our 87th Anniversary. To my memory, this is the most trying time we have endured, and I know that God will see us through this time as well. Whenever I go through a time of trials, I have a few questions that I ask myself, that help me to make the most of trying times;

1. What would God have me to learn during this trial about myself?
2. As I press into the Word of God, what would He have me to learn specifically, during this trial about Him?
3. What opportunities are there for me to serve others and reflect the love of Christ right now?

I invite you to reflect on these questions for yourself, so that we all come out of this time stronger, and closer to God.

May God Bless you and keep you as you trust and lean into Him during this time.

Psalms 23: 1-6 (NKJV) 1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness, For His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.





# MEET BARB

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Many hardworking people in our modern-day society never feel they might become homeless, but Barb became homeless at 60 years old.

Barb grew up in a safe, close knit family. Growing up with her siblings in SW Michigan, her childhood experience was typical of any middle-class family. When Barb was near the end of high school, she tried to find a job, but no one would hire her without experience. She had the opportunity to join the military and signed up for training. Barb loved to cook for her family and eventually found a calling as an Army chef.

She served for 3 years in the armed forces before leaving to continue her work outside of the military. Finding a job after her military experience was much easier. Barb worked for 32 years as a hospital food service provider in Battle Creek, MI. As the hospital restructured, Barb found herself, once again, in need of a job.

Barb faced a low point in her life and she started to contemplate ending it all. But a friend reached out and invited her to church. "I was skeptical at first and really was going because my friend invited me". All it took was one service for Barb to have a new outlook on life. Barb formed a strong relationship with God that she has carried with her to this day.

She was offered a position as a live-in caretaker for a foster care center. It was a good paying job, but she felt that it just wasn't the right fit. But Barb was not a quitter. She stuck with it for two years until another job opportunity came along that she felt better suited her. All looked well until it came time for her previous employer to hire a new live-in caretaker. At the time, Barb had been living at the foster care center, so she now needed to find a place to live. Because of some credit issues, Barb was denied left and right as she applied for apartments and didn't know what to do. The only place she could think of was to turn to the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission.

"I remember walking into the Mission being scared and thinking, what am I doing here?" Barb said. Barb's course at the Mission might have been very different if it weren't for a fellow guest noticing and reaching out with, "You look like you could use a friend". Because of that friendship with Deb, Barb gained the motivation necessary to move forward and begin to work on the barriers she was facing.



Barb connected with Beth, a Case Manager at the Mission. She listened intently to Barb's story, encouraged her, and helped her develop a plan of action. First, Beth connected Barb to a financial counselor who could help her get her credit problems resolved. This was the first step towards stability. "I loved meeting with my Beth. She prayed with me and encouraged me when I needed it most," Barb said, "she helped me see that I had everything I needed to get back on my feet."

Finding an apartment, Barb has been moved out of KGM for several months. "It's wonderful to have my own place again, but I have to admit, it's been kind of lonely the last few weeks with the Stay at Home Order," says Barb. "thank goodness for social media so I can keep in touch with my family and friends at KGM. I am truly grateful for the help that KGM has provided and I want to give back anyway I can."



## The Art of Giving

One of the earliest Charitable Gift Annuities happened in 1831 between Yale University and a painter named John Trumbull. At the time, Trumbull was living widowed and poor, surrounded by nearly 100 paintings. He decided to donate them to Yale in exchange for a "competent annuity for the remainder" of his life. And the CGA earned its stripes in American history.

A CGA is a contract between a nonprofit and an individual who transfers their assets in return for an immediate tax deduction and an income stream for life. CGA's also:

- Provide the possibility of donating many types of assets
- Reduce capital gains tax liability
- Allow you to support Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries

One of the most remarkable things about John Trumbull isn't that he earned the title of "The Painter of the Revolution," it's that he did it with the use of only one eye.

Art critics believe this lifelong effect from a childhood injury is ultimately what influenced his detailed painting style. Today, millions of people continue to walk in Trumbull's shoes, creatively impacting lives through smart charitable giving.

For the full version of this article, request a FREE copy of "Start A Revolution in Giving" by contacting Tammy Snyder-Clubb at (269) 345-2974 ext. 211 or [tclubb@kzoogospel.org](mailto:tclubb@kzoogospel.org) - or bless your family today with a God-honoring Will at [christianwill.org/kgm](http://christianwill.org/kgm)



You provided **7,106**  
nights of shelter in  
April



You served  
**12,588** meals in  
April



## KGM UPDATE

**John Simpson, MA, LPC**  
**Chief Operations Officer**

"Trust in the Lord with ALL your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
in ALL your ways submit to Him, and He  
will direct your path."

**Proverbs 3:5-6**

If you are like me, it is in times of crisis that Scripture comes alive in a very specific and helpful way. I have been meditating on Proverbs 3:5,6 throughout this COVID-19 crisis, especially the word ALL. When we trust God with ALL our heart and submit to Him in ALL ways, we see the crisis we are experiencing in a new light. We trusted God when our staff was getting sick from the COVID virus and we were unsure how we would be able to move forward. We trust God when medical professionals were saying to social distance and we are a congregate shelter of 250+ people. We trusted God when we were beginning to have guests test positive and we had no idea where we are going to isolate guests in order to protect them and the rest of our guests. As we trusted, we began to see God direct our path. God began to touch the hearts of community partners to provide much needed resources: a quarantine hotel, an offsite emergency hotel shelter, additional food support, and more.

God began to respond to your prayers, our faithful partners, to bring the finances and resources necessary for this ministry to move forward. We owe a huge debt to God for making a way when there seemed to be no way through His people. We are once again reminded of God's goodness and faithfulness amid the chaos. Thank you for your continued prayers and support. You are being used by God to direct our path, allowing us the fully meet the needs of those God is bringing to us each day. We are excited to see how God will direct all of us in the days ahead as we keep our eyes fixed on Him. All glory, honor, and praise to Him alone!

## MEET JOE

Joe regularly serves in Credo Café. He has volunteered his time over the years, linking arms with this ministry to serve those in our community who need someone to walk alongside them with compassion and friendship. Joe has a long history in ministry, currently serving as a Deacon within a local parish. He has a heart for people, always considering them with respect and care.

"I learned long ago to always treat the people I meet, like I am meeting with Jesus," remarks Joe. It is healthy relationships with staff and guests that has kept Joe committed to serving in this community, along with fellow parish members who have a heart to help others.

Joe donates bagels to KGM and now has an unofficial title of "Bagel Man". Guests of KGM know and love him for his kindness. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Matt Furrow, Volunteer Coordinator at **(269)345-2974 ext 203** or **[mfurrow@kzoogospel.org](mailto:mfurrow@kzoogospel.org)**.



# CURRENT NEEDS

Many have asked **"I want to help, what do you need?"** Below are some recommendations of items most needed. If you have any questions, please contact Tammy Clubb, Director of Development at **(269)345-2974 ext 211** or email her at **tclubb@kzoogospel.org**.

## Cleaning Supplies

- Small bottles of Sanitizer
- Lg refill bottles of Sanitizer
- Bleach
- Sanitizer Wipes
- Baby Wipes
- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels

## Maintenance

- Chop saw
- Portable Leak Detector
- Menards/Lowes gift cards
- Tig Welder
- Work Boots size 9-12

## Food Service

- "To Go" Boxes
- Non-Perishable Canned Goods (Extra Large Sizes)
- Frozen Foods

## Children's Ministry

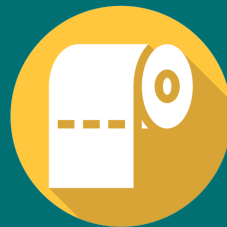
- Juice Boxes
- Kid Friendly Snacks (goldfish, fruit snacks, pretzels, crackers, popcorn)
- Baby Diapers (size 4,5,6)
- Baby Wipes
- Baby Formula

## KDC

- Bus Tokens
- Gas cards in any amount

## Personal Care Items

- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Deodorant
- Body Wash
- Bar Soap
- Underwear (New only)
- Diapers (size 4,5,6)



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