

KALAMAZOO
GOSPEL
MINISTRIES

STORIES OF HOPE

FEBRUARY
2022

MEET BRANDON

"An addiction to Methamphetamines
had caused me so many twists and
turns, and I knew it was time
to make a change."





Pastor Michael L. Brown

President/CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael L. Brown".

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:11-13

With the beginning of a new year and the opening of our new Women and Children's building, we are so excited to re-launch our long-term discipleship programs. More often than not, when I ask someone from the community what they know about the Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries, they seem only to be familiar with the emergency shelters and food services programs. While the shelters and food service programs are the most basic of services we provide, they are only the tip of the iceberg. Since the mid-1980's KGM's Christ centered programs have focused on healing the whole person and repositioning them for success.

Our programs walk hand in hand with those guests who commit to finding freedom from the many addictions and other obstacles that have kept them from being successful in life. From counseling and coaching services to job training and more, the ministry team of KGM is dedicated to helping our guests find wholeness, healing, and restoration. This approach includes working with children and other family members when necessary. I can't express how difficult the process is but, for those who are willing to make the commitment, it's a chance to allow the power of God to transform their lives.

I invite you to join us as we pray for the success of those who are brave and bold enough to be guided through this process. Also, should you have a family member or friend who you believe could benefit from our long-term program, please have them give us a call.



MEET BRANDON

Growing up, Brandon's mom did the best she could as a single mother, trying to provide for her family. Brandon never knew his biological father but had a "stepfather" in his life that taught him to fish and hunt. Brandon began to hang out with kids in the neighborhood at a young age and their influence got him in trouble. This same group of boys introduced him to marijuana and more illicit drugs, and his addiction grew.

At fourteen, Brandon decided to leave home. He left high school and pretended to be older than he was to earn money. The cash in his pocket only fueled the addiction. He was introduced to Methamphetamines at the age of sixteen, and this event started a series of poor decisions.

"I was just looking to explore and continually got myself in trouble," says Brandon.

Brandon traveled to Louisiana to meet his biological father and decided to stay with him to avoid the trouble he had left in Michigan. Things quickly took a turn when Brandon realized that his father also had a drug addiction, and the environment in staying with his father only fueled the dependency. The law caught up with him in Louisiana, and Brandon found himself in jail for a year.

After being released, Brandon slipped back into his old ways and began producing and dealing Methamphetamines. This went on until Brandon felt he had gotten in too deep. "I finally found myself at a point where I just had enough," said Brandon. He spent the next couple of months paying off fines, turning himself in for warrants he had in different states, and correcting wrongs that he had made. But deep down, Brandon still had an addiction to Methamphetamines that continued to pull at him.

Brandon realized he would not be set free from his addiction on his own. Years ago, Brandon's brother went through Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries recovery program for alcohol addiction. Feeling that if his brother could make it through the program, so could he. Brandon jumped on a bus and found himself at the bus station across from Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries.

"The first night at the mission, I felt welcomed and safe. I knew that I was on the right track towards recovery."

Brandon is now enrolled in long-term programming at KGM, where he will work towards achieving his goals. Brandon is so grateful to be learning in a Christ-centered environment where he can grow in his faith as well. As part of long-term programming, Brandon has Christian Services Hours to fulfill. He was excited to work and learn with our maintenance team because of some past experience he has had working in construction.

Brandon is hopeful for the future and has talked about wanting to help people where they are on the streets with a street ministry. "There was a moment when I was standing outside the mission, not knowing if I wanted to go in. I want to make sure that everyone on the street thinking the same thing knows how great of a decision it was to go inside."

In 2021 **You** Provided



56,203
Nights of Stay



96,012
Meals Served



1,838
Guests Seen
At KDC

Regeneration and Recovery

Since 1933, Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries has served thousands in Kalamazoo experiencing homelessness, hunger, and addiction. With each meal served and every night of stay, we invite our guests to connect with a guest advocate to start the process of looking into long-term solutions. Guests, ready to commit for the long haul are encouraged to apply for our long-term program.

"Our programming at KGM is a residential, live-in program offering holistic approaches towards recovery," says John Simpson, COO. "One of the primary missions of the program is to provide a safe place, free from temptation, for a year in order for each participant to find hope and healing through education, counseling, case management, discipleship classes, and most importantly a deepening of their faith."

With any new program or initiative, there are always needs. One of our most significant needs is volunteers to teach and instruct some life skills classes, including personal finance, job training, and literacy. Mike Cook, Director of Emergency Services, says, "Volunteers working in the program provide a stable support group for many of the guests going through the program," If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please visit our website kzoogospel.org/volunteer.



The Foundations of Long-Term Programming

ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT

Through individualized support with a staff member, we begin to unpack what has led to homelessness. We support individuals through relationships, educational opportunities, life skills development, job readiness, health services, and children's ministry for parents.

PROGRAMMING COURSES

God desires for us to live an abundant life (John 10:10) and, scripture tells us that God desires that we be in good health (3 John 2). Through our one-year Regeneration and Recovery Program, we strive to give our guests the knowledge they need to live healthy lives absent from sickness, disease, and addiction.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A Godly productive life must be built on the foundation of Christ. The purpose of the Spiritual Growth Track is to equip participants with a solid foundation in Christ and the tools needed to grow in the Christian Faith. Through daily chapel, Bible studies, and peer groups, participants will learn Biblical principles that will ground them in their faith and teach them how to apply Biblical principles to their lives in a practical manner.

A SHELTER FROM THEIR STORM

KALAMAZOO GOSPEL MINISTRIES

In July 2020, we announced that we are starting construction on the new women's and children's shelters. We are so excited to tell you that we are in the home stretch of this incredible building project. We would not be able to open our doors without the hundreds of generous donors who have made it possible.

RECENTLY COMPLETED ITEMS

Flooring

Cleanup of the building

Finish Paint

Cabinetry and Counter Tops

Furniture arrival



CONSTRUCTION ENDS, BUT THE SUPPORT CAN'T

We want to take a moment to thank you for your continued support and determination to stick with us through the campaign process. While construction begins and ends, homelessness continues. We invite you to prayerfully consider continuing to give generously of your time, talent, and treasures after the new shelter has opened. If you feel a calling to support KGM in new ways, please contact Lynn Russcher at **269.345.2974 ext 213**.



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