

MEET RYAN

September 2023

STORIES OF HOPE



KALAMAZOO
GOSPEL
MINISTRIES

90 YEARS
EST 1933

SERVING KALAMAZOO



Pastor Michael L. Brown
President/CEO

This year marks **90 years that Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries** has served Kalamazoo and the surrounding communities. What began all those years ago as a tent ministry, where guests received a bowl of soup following a Gospel message, **has evolved into a continual challenge to meet the changing needs of the homeless.** We first, added overnight shelter for men, then later, added overnight shelter for women and children. Subsequently, long-term discipleship programs were added. Now, **KGM** has also incorporated an educational component to assist our guests in securing their **GED and job training.** **New Life | New Hope and Education & Life Skills programs currently have graduations four times a year.**

The stories of lives changed here are many and are as varied as the people who tell them. While serving at a local **"Stop The Violence"** event this past week, I met a man who said his family had stayed at the mission years ago. He was so grateful for the support he and his family received during that time. **He also wanted me to know just how his life has been impacted by his relationship with Christ and how KGM was such a massive part of that journey.** Later that day, as I was crossing the parking lot at Target, a young lady called out to me. She had stayed at KGM with her two young girls. She wanted me to know that they were still doing great! When I asked about the girls, she told me they were now 11 years old, and I thought, **"man, how time flies."** That following Sunday, as I was seated at my church, a gentleman came up to me and shook my hand. That man had gone through the **Discipleship Program at KGM some years ago.** Seeing him still doing well and in a place of worship gave me joy. I could go on with story after story about the wonderful people who have been impacted by **KGM, but the beauty of it is that lives are still being changed through the power of Christ right here.**

To support the ministry financially, we added retail operations in the form of two thrift stores and, for some time, an auto donation ministry. While retail operations help, the support we get from the community at large is vital. While so much

has changed at **KGM** to meet the needs of the homeless in our community, something else that has also changed is the way that **KGM** is supported financially. Over the last few years, the number of **Foundations that support Christian Ministries has decreased.** Many foundations that in the past, supported the broader community, have withdrawn their support. Also, **KGM** no longer receives government funding because of **requirements that violate our core beliefs.** For this reason, it is vitally important that community members diligently put their faith into action and partner with **KGM** to care for the most vulnerable members of our community.

In 1933, when Jacob and Anna Hildebrand began seeking support for the homeless, they were motivated by an unwavering faith in Christ. Jacob had recently given his life to Christ, and he wanted to share that same relationship with others who were **"down and out"**. He believed the power that raised Jesus from the dead was the same power that had changed his life. **Knowing first-hand how sin and addiction could destroy a life, he knew that the power of Christ was the only answer. Today in 2023, as we celebrate 90 years of ministry, we at KGM still believe that to be true.**

In Matthew 25, Jesus talks about a group of people who cared for those who were lost, hurting, hungry, and homeless. His response to them for their caring was; *Matthew 25:34-36, 40 (NKJV) 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

As a way to help us commemorate our 90th anniversary, would you consider sending an extra **\$9, \$90, \$900, or even \$9000 if you have been blessed with the ability and resources to do so?** I pray that God will continue to richly bless you for all the love and care you have shown to the least of these.

God bless,

Matthew 25:40

And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'



MEET RYAN

After several years in prison, **Ryan** was given the choice to go to **KPEP** or **KGM** when transitioning to parole. Ryan decided to go to KGM; unbeknownst to him, that decision would change his life. Born in Allegan, Ryan had a hard childhood. His dad walked out of Ryan's life at a very young age. His mom remarried, but his stepdad was very abusive, so much so, that his mom had to give up the parental rights of him and his brother when **Ryan was thirteen**. Without the opportunity for counseling, Ryan turned to drugs to cope with the pain. After several years of being a heroin addict, Ryan found himself in prison. But prison was the beginning of his healing journey.

“I believe that, what keeps you in homelessness and in addiction is lack of relationships, but the mission provided that for me,”

Ryan's aunt and uncle told him about the **New Life | New Hope program at KGM as a option when he got out of prison**. Initially, Ryan didn't have the right mindset about the program and

manipulated it to his wants. **But five months in staff member, John Simpson**, impacted his life, by supporting him and calling him out on his actions. Ryan faced being terminated from the program because of his decisions. **But John extended grace** and gave him a second chance. He helped him stay and be accountable for his actions, which switched something in his brain that helped him realize people were **for** him and not **against** him.

Graduation came, and with the help of numerous staff members, Ryan graduated from the program and, to this day, is sober! His life has changed drastically. **He worked as a kitchen manager for three years at KGM** and is now a heavy machine operator, field manager, and homeowner. While looking back at his time here at the mission, Ryan is thankful for the relationship the mission provided. **"I believe that, what keeps you in homelessness and in addiction is lack of relationships, but the mission provided that for me,"** Ryan said. **"It is never too late; God will meet you where you are."** he continues. Ryan is thankful for his time at **KGM** and grateful he didn't end up as a statistic and back in prison. Ryan is doing well and appreciative that people cared enough to help him get where he is today.



YOU PROVIDED THESE LIFE CHANGING SERVICES IN 2023



59,377
Nights of Stay



60,281
Meals Served



28
Long Term Program
Guests



1,243
Guests served at KDC

TOGETHER, MAKING AN IMPACT...

As we look back over the decades, we are grateful for the investment of the countless men and women who have impacted this ministry. Our founders, **Jake and Anna Hildebrand** served tirelessly for decades to provide for those in need. Past board members like **Ken Goodenough** recalls how integral prayer was when we had a vision to expand the ministry. Ken recalls, **"Board members would walk around the block of the mission and pray for opportunities to expand our reach. Miraculously, things would open up and it gave us the ability to build and house more people."**

Wanda, who has served as a staff member for **23 years**, firmly believes that God called her to **KGM** for a purpose. She is passionate about helping our guests, but also has a heart for the staff who are called to the ministry. **"Even early on, I had a heart to help our staff in whatever capacity God has called them to, I wanted to see them fully equipped to serve."**

For long standing donors, like **Fred and Diane**, their generosity is rooted in sharing the gospel. **"We have watched over the years as people's lives have been helped physically, and financially. But more importantly you introduce people to Jesus."**

Kurt and Jen Scmitt have been volunteers for over **7 years** and Kurt had this to say about their experience. **"Volunteering at KGM fulfills a purpose in my life that I haven't found anyplace else. In addition, the relationships that I've built with staff are great!"**

Thank you all for supporting us in 90 years of ministry we are excited for the years to come.



"We have watched over the years as people's lives have been helped physically, and financially. But more importantly you introduce people to Jesus."
-Fred and Diane



"Even early on, I had a heart to help our staff in whatever capacity God has called them to, I wanted to see them fully equipped to serve."
-Wanda



"Volunteering at KGM fulfills a purpose in my life that I haven't found anyplace else. In addition, the relationships that I've built with staff are great!"
-Kurt



"Board members would walk around the block of the mission and pray for opportunities to expand our reach. Miraculously, things would open up and it gave us the ability to build and house more people."
-Ken Goodenough



THANK YOU FOR 90 YEARS

KGM EVENTS

A BIG THANK YOU
TO OUR RESILIENT SPONSORS

SEELYE

FORD
"BETTER SEE SEELYE"

Willis Law
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS

RALPH MOYLE, INC.
RMI
Transportation & Warehousing

BEST WAY
DISPOSAL

avb
BUILD SOMETHING BETTER

Walther Farms

KELLOGG COMMUNITY
credit union

MIGALA CARPET ONE
FLOOR & HOME

ServiceMASTER
Restore

CHERRY CREEK
COMMUNITY CHURCH

DAN Wood
QUALITY HOME SERVICES

VanderSalm's
FLOWERSHOP & GARDEN CENTER

MainStreet Financial Advisors
CLARITY | CONFIDENCE | CONVICTION

SEBER TANS, PLC
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL FLOORING

SAVE THE DATE FOR....
HOPE TAKES FLIGHT

JOIN US FOR A FUNDRAISING DINNER FOR
KALAMAZOO GOSPEL MINISTRIES

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2023

5:30 - 8:00PM

(When doors open you can enjoy the Air Zoo rides and exhibits)

The Air Zoo

6151 Portage Rd



Visit our website to learn more

[KZOOGOSPEL.ORG/HOPE-TAKES-FLIGHT](https://kzoogospel.org/hope-takes-flight)



KGM
269.345.2974
info@kzoogospel.org
448 N. Burdick St. Kalamazoo

KDC
269.344.7333
info@deaconsconference.org
1010 N. Westnedge Kalamazoo



CITYGATE
NETWORK
Help and hope found here

MISSION MEMBER
CERTIFIED EXCELLENT