



MEET CIERA



STORIES OF HOPE

February 2024



Pastor Michael L. Brown

President/CEO

Psalm 91: 1-2

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

I am excited and encouraged when I think about this coming year. I'm excited for all the great things God has in store for us and those we serve. Every year, we look for more effective ways to provide encouragement and hope to those who may have lost the will to fight. Our goal is to ensure our guests have every opportunity to get back on their feet and overcome whatever obstacles they may face. For some of the people we serve, a reorganization of priorities is most important. For others, re-establishing a basic routine for managing daily tasks needs to be the first step. **Regardless of their challenges,** we always encourage a relationship with Christ as the foundation. We find that those who are the most successful have made their relationship with Christ their priority.

The encouraging part: Recently, we have been seeing an increase in the number of people applying for our educational programs, job training, etc. Some of our programs help individuals complete their GED and then allow them to prepare for college. **Our teaching volunteers have helped several guests get their student loans forgiven and secure funding for further education.** We make it a point to instill hope in our guests, who sometimes feel overwhelmed. **However, these guests need to be self-motivated**

to glean the best results. As you follow our newsletters, you will see the stories of folks who have successfully gained traction in life, often following devastating, unforeseen circumstances. These people have decided to do whatever it takes to recover from the life-altering challenges that have gotten in their way. The stories are as varied as the people who tell them. From abuse to addiction, our guests have experienced deep hurt and hardship. We, as a staff, need to be equipped to help regardless of their previous difficulties. **Those of you who faithfully support KGM are crucial to the success of these life-changing programs, and we cherish the trust you place in us through your support.** I pray that the Holy Spirit's power and presence become more evident in us with each passing day.

As we move through 2024, we are praying for more volunteers, especially mentors. We hope that more churches and civic groups will sign up to help prepare meals, raise funds, or serve in any way they can.

May God richly bless you!

MEET CIERA



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“I hope people will support KGM because this place is a stepping stone for people who want a different life.”

-Ciera

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Eviction. Ciera stared at the big red words on the paper, upset with God and unsure what to do.

Suddenly, Ciera remembered the place she and her parents volunteered at when Ciera was little, **Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries**. Ciera grew up in Kalamazoo and graduated from Comstock High School in 2009. College followed after; she graduated with her CNA and degree as a medical assistant. Life was looking up for Ciera; she returned home and was excited for this next stage of life. Ciera became pregnant at 21, and as she was working for Goodwill, she found it hard to find a babysitter to take care of the baby. Her parents would help when they could, but more help was needed for her to keep her job. After losing her job, Ciera still had the dilemma of being unable to provide child care. She continued to be unemployed, which led to her eviction.

She remembered KGM in her time of need and went for shelter. At first, she was scared but put on a brave face for her kids. However, once she got to know the staff, she realized all that KGM has to offer. Ciera was beyond grateful for all the support, especially in the Children's Ministry. ***“The staff helped my kids learn how to walk,”*** she said. Ciera was amazed by the lengths KGM went to in helping her get to a place where she could feel confident on her own, and she was beyond grateful for the staff's dedication to her wellbeing.



When she lost her house, Ciera's faith was shaken, and she was mad at God. But with the bible studies and morning devotions, she felt restored. She believes that her stay at the mission was the stepping stone she needed to get back on her feet. ***"I hope people will support KGM because this place is a stepping stone for people who want a different life."***

Although Ciera was at **KGM** for a year, and it was a challenging season in her life, she is now back on her feet and doing well. She now works as a supervisor at her kids' school and rents a house that perfectly fits her family. Ciera's hope for the future is to be a homeowner and to return to college to become a nurse. Even though it was a difficult season in her life, Ciera was thankful that KGM was there for her; not only then, **but she feels that KGM is still a phone call away whenever she needs help.** She is thankful and hopeful for the life that is to come.

YOU PROVIDED THESE LIFE CHANGING SERVICES IN DECEMBER 2023



7,751
Meals Served



8,953
Nights of Stay

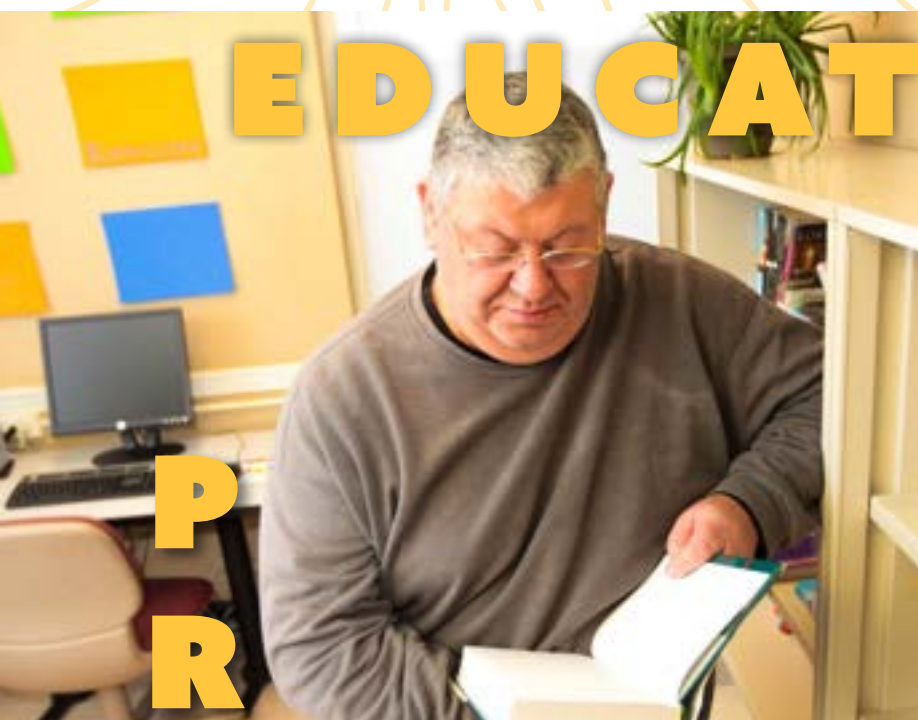
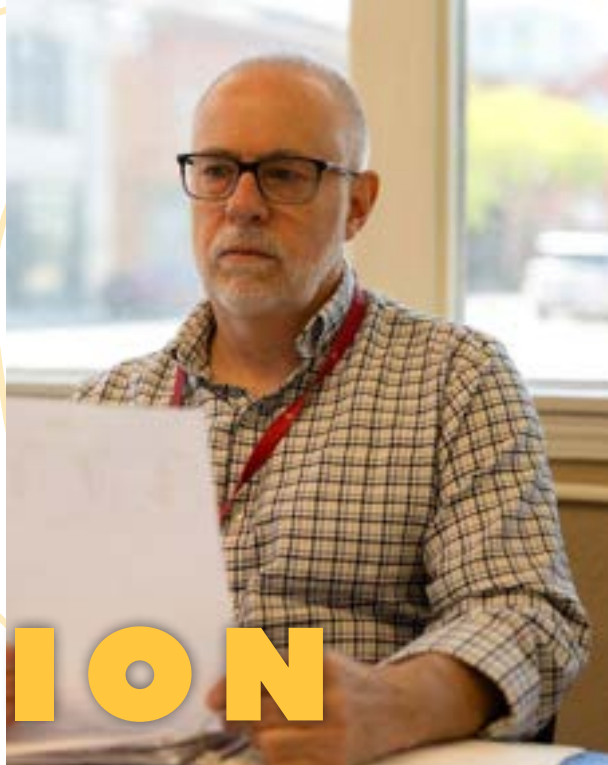


155
Guests served
at KDC



5
Long Term
Program Guests

KGM desires to provide essentials for our guests, whether that's a bed, a hot meal, clothing, spiritual restoration, or educational opportunities. Being a night shelter, we saw the need for daytime programing that provides personal development. Our one-year residential program, **New Life | New Hope**, is an opportunity for our guests who desire to press reset and pursue a new path. Part of the **NL|NH program** is an education component. Our program members have weekly education classes and are individually trained depending on their educational level. Each student is assessed at the beginning of the program. Our Education and Career Manager evaluates their needs and helps them take steps toward the goal they desire to achieve.



NEW LIFE | NEW HOPE
REGENERATE | DISCIPLE | COMMISSION

The education program is comprised of three components: GED, college prep, and literary classes. Guests can choose how much help they need and which direction they want to go. At KGM, we value meeting people right where they are and helping them along the way, no matter their previous education. While in the program, one of our graduates was identified as having some previous college work under his belt. The education department was able to aid him so he could return to college after he graduated from the program. The education staff supplied assignments for him, similar to the college work he would see when returning. Not only did KGM aid him with class prep, **but the staff also helped him apply for FAFSA and KVCC classes.** After graduating from the NL | NH program in the fall, he started classes full-time and completed all his courses that semester.

If you wish to be a part of this life-changing program, whether you have a teaching background or not and would like to volunteer, **please call Matt Furrow, Volunteer Specialist, at (269) 345-2974, ext. 203.**

How Creating a Will Shows You Care

Before Dr. Gary Chapman was a bestselling author, he was a husband in a struggling marriage. His wife was frustrated that he didn't help around the house. He was disappointed she didn't respond to his encouraging words. When they realized they expressed love differently, the discovery led to Gary's book **The Five Love Languages**, a resource that has helped millions of people.

Have you ever thought about legacy planning as an act of love? **It's a loving deed that:**

1. SHARES WHAT MATTERS.

Your will allows you to communicate with your loved ones about your cherished beliefs and values.

2. SERVES YOUR FAMILY.

Creating a will ensures your financial house is in order, your final wishes are clear, and your family is saved stress and expense.

3. SPREADS THE LOVE.

What better gift to give than one that changes lives? That's the impact you have when you leave a gift in your will to **Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries**. Your loving generosity embodies these words from Mother Teresa: **"Love has no meaning if it isn't shared. Love has to be put into action."**

For the full version of this article, request a **FREE** copy of **"Legacy Planning is an Act of Love"** by contacting **Lynn Russcher** at **(269) 345-2974** ext 213 or **lrusscher@kalamazoogospel.org**
Visit <https://kzoogospel.legacywill.org/wills-101/> to bless your family with an up-to-date will.

MOST NEEDED ITEMS

- Women's deodorant
- Women's body wash and shampoo
- Twin sheets (gently used or new)
- Wash cloths and Towels (gently used or new)
- Adult Hats and Gloves

For more information contact: James Crosswhite (Director of Maintenance)
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