



KALAMAZOO GOSPEL MINISTRIES
SHELTER | DEVELOPMENT | PURPOSE

Hope for Single Parents



STORIES OF HOPE

April 2024



Pastor Michael L. Brown

President/CEO

Ever since we opened our *Women and Children's Shelter* in 2022, many single moms looking for a safe haven for their families have been finding shelter and healing at Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries. When we talk to them, they express both gratitude and relief. They receive love, support, and encouragement at a time when all hope seems lost. Each one of their stories is different. Some of them are or have been addicted, abused, or trafficked, or all three. What they all have in common is a desire for a better life and the need for love and support to become all God has created them to be. *I'm so grateful for our partners in this effort to rescue those who would otherwise be lost and alone during the worst time in their lives. We often talk about the warm beds where they can get a safe, peaceful night's sleep and the healthy meals they can enjoy, but what about when they finally get that long-awaited apartment or home? Now, the next leg of their journey begins. At our North Campus, KDC, we try to ensure they have the essentials to establish their new home. The furniture and housewares that are donated to KDC are given to them free of charge. They receive support while planning a budget, seeking employment, and beginning a new life independently. Hopefully, in the not-too-distant future, we'll be able to expand the warehouse at KDC to accommodate in-kind donations of appliances, furniture, and other housewares to aid them in their process.*

Each year, we celebrate these courageous women with an event, and this year is no different. *On May 17, we are having a Women of Worth Brunch exclusively for our guests. We hope to encourage and inspire the ladies staying at the shelter as they continue their journey to wholeness. They will receive a new outfit, a haircut or painted nails and a special, sit-down brunch. By building up the ladies and walking beside them, we hope that the growth that they experience will affect their children and future*

Matthew 25:40 (NKJV)

'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.'

generations. Over the past 27 years, I have watched how a course of a life has changed an entire family. One courageous mom chooses to get the help she needs, and KGM has been that safe haven for a new life to begin.

Make no mistake, without your continued, generous support, the road for these women would be much harder and, for some, may not exist at all. When Jesus said in Matthew 25, (NKJV) *'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,'* He expects that we would care for these moms just as if we were caring for Him. Thank you for all you continue to do to answer the call.

YOU PROVIDED THESE LIFE CHANGING SERVICES IN FEBRUARY 2024



8,955
Meals Served



9,988
Nights of Stay



171
Guests Served at KDC



17
Long Term Program Guests

SINGLE MOTHERS: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Motherhood is a multifaceted responsibility that comes with many obstacles. Many mothers have a nagging feeling that they want to be able to provide everything their kids need. **When as a mother experiencing homelessness; those feelings are heightened.** When families come into the mission for help, many fear the judgment and criticism of others and wonder if outside observers think they are bad parents. **At KGM, we currently have 22 single moms representing 43 kids.** Once they are at KGM, moms begin to settle in and see all the resources available for them and their children to help them get back on their feet.

Diana, who has been staying since



November 2023, has faced fears coming into **Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries**. She struggled to keep up and found it challenging to give all four of her kids the proper attention while navigating the change from being in a residence to coming into **KGM**. However, the staff and volunteers gave her hope during this difficult time. Diana found everyone uplifting emotionally, like Roberta, our Women's Shelter Advocate. **"It helps that most of the staff are moms; it's easier to connect and I feel understood," Diana said.**

Motherhood can be arduous and emotionally draining. When you don't have a place to go home to, it is a heartbreaking experience, causing moms to lose hope. Sara has found it difficult, having a special needs child and not being able to supply her son with essential infant medication or general care products and was grieved that she could not provide for her son financially. But she found hope by humbling herself and asking those around her for help. **"I couldn't have done it without the program and program staff, or else my son and I would have been out in the cold."**

It takes time to adjust to their environment and the situations they encounter while experiencing homelessness. However, these moms desire to help other moms and ensure they are not alone. Jackie advises new moms in the shelter: **"Don't stress; try to stay calm even when it gets crazy."** Diana suggests, **"Breathe and use the resources."**

Moms at the shelter go through a lot daily and need your help during this challenging time. They ask that you be sympathetic and understanding because their trials are unknown to those around them. These mothers aim to provide for their children in all aspects of life, from a house and food to taking them to fun activities. **But for most, this goal is impossible without Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries being the stepping stone they need.** You can make a difference in these mothers' lives and change the direction of future generations.

Are you interested in mentoring a mom and walking alongside them in encouragement? Consider volunteering as a mentor, where you will engage our guests and help them reach their goals. **Contact Matt Furrow, Volunteer Specialist at mfurrow@kzoogospel.org 269.345.2974 ext 203**

" IT HELPS THAT MOST OF THE STAFF ARE MOMS; IT'S EASIER TO CONNECT AND I FEEL UNDERSTOOD."
-DIANA



STATISTICS OF SINGLE HOMELESS MOTHERS IN AMERICA

34%

Of the homeless population consists of homeless families.

84%

Of those families experiencing homelessness are headed by mothers.

53%

Of mothers experiencing homelessness do not have a GED.

92%

Of mothers experiencing homelessness have trauma from sexual or physical abuse during their lifetime.

—Source: the U.S. Census Bureau, as presented by www.singlemotherguide.com

Kindness | Dignity | Compassion

KDC stands for Kindness, Dignity, and Compassion. It is located on Kalamazoo's north side, and is a ministry of Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries that aids the working poor. KDC helps provide people with furniture, clothes, hygiene products, food, and more. One of the crucial parts of this ministry is our warehouse workers and the donations they collect.

Gert, Warehouse Manager, helps process and facilitate all of KDC's donations. Previously, she worked with UPS for 30 years, and after retirement she volunteered at **Galilee Baptist Food Pantry**, which is housed inside **KDC** and is an important partnership. This partnership helps us in giving the people we serve the food that they need. Gert became more interested in **KDC** and desired to move into a different position to be more hands-on with the people we serve, so she became a **DRS (Direct Response Servant)**. Now she is the warehouse manager, interacting with our donors and helping distribute donated goods to those in need. Another aspect of the warehouse is the truck pick-up process. Many people wish to donate large items but need help to get them to **KDC**. So our warehouse staff will pick them up.

Gert has seen God work in many ways at KDC, and has witnessed God's unexplainable timing in instances when



items they need will appear at the right time. One example is when they had reserved furniture for three months and tried getting it to the recipient but it didn't work out. Gert felt it was time to take off the reservation tag and give these donations to someone else in need. The minute she took off the tag, a DRS came in with a need for all the items she had just untagged. A couple with only a Bible and a mattress went home with a fully furnished apartment. Another thing Gert is amazed by is people's generosity. **Many people who KDC has helped come back to donate bags of newly purchased items because KDC helped them in their time of need and they desire to give back.**

KDC is a vital part of Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries and helps those struggling to make ends meet; **KDC is overflowing and outgrowing its current location and we hope to expand in the future with your help.**

To get involved or donate, check out our website
<https://www.kzoogospel.org/give-help>



PLEASE CONSIDER BEING A SPONSOR FOR THE WOMEN OF WORTH FUNDRAISING BRUNCH ON MAY 17, 2024

We are hosting an exclusive event to bless the women staying at the shelter. They will receive a new outfit, a haircut or painted nails and a beautifully served meal. Your sponsorship will provide encouragement to the ladies and bring words of hope to each woman as she discovers how God views her as a Woman of Worth. You will also support the increased needs for programs and assistance that more and more women are asking for to change their situation.



A \$50 ticket sponsorship will bless two ladies with a lovely brunch experience.

visit our website to be a sponsor <https://www.kzoogospel.org/wow-brunch>

Thank you for feeding our kids

Thank you to everyone who answered the call to give snacks for our snack drive. We are very thankful for the opportunity to love these kids. If you didn't get a chance but wish to donate, please visit our website for more information.

<https://www.kzoogospel.org/donation-wish-list>



The 73rd annual **National Day of Prayer**

Join us for prayer:

**THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024 AT 12:00 (NOON) AT
THE KALAMAZOO CITY HALL (241 W SOUTH ST).**

(PARKING AVAILBLE AT METERS AROUND BRONSON PARK)



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