

Loaves and Fishes



Ministries

**Emergency Overnight
Shelter and Services**

831 N. Sycamore St.
(Corner of Oakland & Sycamore)
Lansing, MI 48906

**Transitional Housing
and Services**

Zacchaeus House for women
with children
Luke's House for single men

Telephone (517) 482-2099 Fax (517) 482-6848

loavesandfisheslansing.org

November 2012

It's a long road...thanks for journeying with us!

Dear Friends of our Loaves and Fishes Ministries Community,

Remember the song, "*He ain't heavy – he's my brother*," recorded by Neil Diamond in the 1970's? Those of us who lived through that period were deeply moved with the haunting lyrics (<http://www.elyrics.net/read/n/neil-diamond-lyrics/he-ain-t-heavy-he-s-my-brother-lyrics.html>). In fact, that song fully embodied the essence of community and generosity out of which our early co-founders started Loaves and Fishes Ministries. Fast forward to 2012 when we sadly heard politicians this fall writing off nearly half of the population (47% to be exact), denying how our country became such a polarized "have/have not" society – and feeling perfectly justified in blaming the victims for their plight in life.

In stark contrast, at L&F we live by a simple mantra from Benedictine monastic spirituality: "**Let all guests be received as Christ.**" In so doing we hold ourselves to a much higher standard, respectfully referring to those we serve as "guests" rather than clients, and calling ourselves and others to compassion for the homeless because we believe that every person is undeniably a manifestation of the Divine.

With this as our spiritual grounding, we continue to serve countless victims of foreclosures, the disenfranchised, the abused, the undereducated, the underemployed, the jobless. Each year our staff and volunteers **provide 3,650 bed nights and 7,300 hot meals** for men, women and children in our Temporary Shelter. And we also **provide professional advocacy services for several small families of women with children and for single men** in our two Transitional Shelters: Zacchaeus and Luke's Houses, *where guests can stay for up to two full years – establishing a new way of life.*

During the past year Loaves and Fishes has witnessed many changes in the need for shelter. At least **30% more guests come with some form of mental illness**, often resulting in our having 3 mentally ill guests at one time which demands much more involvement. In addition **calls from homeless families have increased over the last three months by about 25%**. Our staff does an amazing job meeting these needs as best we can. However, the heartbreaking reality is that we cannot accommodate all of them and the area family shelters are full, so we don't have enough places to refer them. **All the more reason to keep Loaves & Fishes Ministries (and other shelters) going and growing!**

Indeed, these are dire times. Donations and grants are down. Expenses are up. In light of these conditions, it would be virtually impossible to care for those who come with so many needs without your consistent financial support. So we ask you to give prayerful consideration to donating NOW – using the enclosed envelope OR through the 'Network for Good' link at our website www.loavesandfisheslansing.org.

SO while the journey IS LONG with many a winding turn that leads us to who knows where? We're strong...strong enough to carry them. They're not heavy – they're our sisters... they're our brothers (paraphrasing 1970's song). We are all ONE in this complex world – in this multi-complex universe!

THANK YOU for your persistence in journeying the long and winding road with us!
We hope and trust that we can continue to depend on your generosity NOW and in the years ahead.
Blessings on you and your families this Holiday Season!

With love and faithfulness to our shared mission ~
The L&F Staff and Core Community

Staff Comings & Goings!

Thank you, Liz & Peggy!
Welcome, Amy & Samantha!

By Erma Chastine, Director

It is with great disappointment that we have had two more staff people make life changing decisions that have lead them away from Loaves and Fishes Ministries in the past few months.

Peggy Farlin had been with L&F for over fourteen years working as the Weekend Facility Manager. Peggy not only kept the shelter clean and comfortable on the weekends, *but she brought love and compassion to each of our guests.* Peggy had a wonderful Christian way about her. She would leave prayers in co-worker's offices to encourage us to have a blessed week. She would put prayers on the door code number pad so guests could read them as they entered and left the shelter. Peggy was instrumental in starting a prayer book for guests to leave hand written requests for prayers from the staff and volunteers. Peggy is missed by all. We pray for her new life as a retired soul from her physical work, but we do know that Peggy will always be a worker for God. Thank you, Peggy, for passing this way and for your loving and dedicated service! *Good News!*

Peggy plans to continue her prayer ministry as a volunteer with our guests when she is able to visit the shelter.



Replacing Peggy is **Amy Morris**. Amy comes to us with a strong background in Adult Care. Amy has good listening skills and compassion for people suffering. We welcome Amy and are truly grateful to have her on board.

Liz McKay was our Weekday Facility Manager for three years. Liz was married in October and relocated with her husband Joe to the southeastern part of Michigan. In the short time she was with us she made a strong impact on the shelter. Liz came to teach us much more than we could have taught her. She helped us to create policies and procedures that would continue to increase the safety of our guests. She was a wiz at cleaning and organizing everything. She kept us alert by sharing different perspectives on shelter issues. She was the most dependable employee I have ever experienced in my thirty five years of supervising. Congratulations on your wedding! Thank you and be blessed, Liz. We will miss you!

Replacing Liz is **Samantha Nelson**. Samantha comes with a strong background in domestic cleaning and is currently seeking a degree in Hotel Hospitality. Samantha has excellent organizing skills and has created new storage systems to help volunteers and staff be more efficient. "Our Cup Runneth Over." **Our gratitude to those who have left and welcome to those who are new!** ♥



A THANK YOU TO OUR GUESTS

By Meri Krause, Core Community
Advisory Board Member

The holiday season is a wonderful time to reflect on our blessings and express our gratitude. A very special blessing we receive every day is our service to the guests at Loaves and Fishes Shelter. *Anyone who doesn't serve at the shelter may think I've mistyped that last sentence; that surely it's the guests who are blessed by our service to them.* However, I know that I receive so much more from the people I meet at the shelter than I could ever give back.

Albert Schweitzer once said, *"In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit."* Like so many, my life is filled with situations and people that can dampen my spirit and stamp out my inner fire. But each and every time I walk into Loaves and Fishes, I meet someone who fans my spiritual flames. I am moved by their stories, honored with their trust, encouraged by their faith, and inspired by their strength. I leave renewed in spirit and with a sense of purpose. *My inner spirit has been rekindled. For this, dear guests, I thank you!* ☀

Core Community/Advisory Board

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 Samantha Nelson, Weekday Facilities Mgr.
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Volunteer Scheduler

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LCC Welding Dept Comes to the Rescue

By Erma Chastine, Director

It is with humble gratitude that we share this story with you!



Some of you may be aware of the nationwide bedbug epidemic that our country has been experiencing in the last few years. As a shelter provider we have had to make large changes to assure the health and safety of our guests. *These changes brought on added cost for items that we had not budgeted in this calendar year.* We have had to replace ten solid wood built bunk beds with ten metal Steelcase beds. *The dismantling and reassembling was an added cost.* *There was added cost of replacing well cushioned living room furniture with less cushioned furniture.* Our expenditures also increased each month because we have a professional exterminator spray each month for bedbugs. This spraying is a preventive solution. Although sightings of bedbugs did occur we were able to maintain a non-infested bedbug environment.

After receiving our new beds it was evident that *the ladders that came with them were inadequate.* Because the population that we serve has a variety of health problems these ladders presented challenges, such as, small round pipes for steps attached to the beds which made climbing up and down dangerous. The bed company suggested we have our guests climb up the end of the beds, which we completely rejected. *This did not solve the problem but added to the risk of someone falling.*

So, the search was on to find ladders that were safe. When we zeroed out trying to find them in stores that sell the metal beds, one of our Core Community members who had been an instructor and academic advisor at Lansing Community College, suggested that we contact LCC's Welding Department. Following up on that lead, I talked with **Catherine Lindquist**, Lead-Faculty of LCC's Welding Technology, who agreed to have her students take on the project of building us the perfect ladder for our beds *at no cost.* *All L&F had to do was pay for the materials and her students went to work.* As you can imagine, this was no small undertaking. Here in brief is what happened: 1.) the ladders were designed and prepared by **Roger Morrison** (Teaching Technician). 2.) Then **Jenna Lone** (Welding Lab Technician), **Mike Taylor**, (Manufacturing Lab Technician), and **Nathaniel Ellis** (Lab Technician), welded the ladder pieces together. 3.) They were then sent to the collision lab where Instructor **Dale Franks**, with the assistance of **Karen Dupree** (Collision Program Lab Technician), aided by **five students** from the Introduction to Refinishing class put the finishing touches on the ladders by painting them, utilizing their newly learned skills.

Pictured at the right are the five students along with those mentioned above – *with the exception of Nathaniel Ellis:* (Left to right): Catherine Lindquist (Lead-Faculty Welding Technology); Collision students, Kevin Wicks, Rhett Dungey, and Christopher Clark; Roger Morrison (Teaching Technician, Welding); Collision student Pierre Williams; Mike Taylor (Manufacturing Lab Technician); Collision student John Sheets; Jenna Lone (Welding Lab Technician); and Karen Dupree (Collision Program Lab Technician).



We are so grateful to Lansing Community College's Welding Technology Department faculty and students for choosing Loaves and Fishes Ministries for their internship project, and for doing such an outstanding job of designing and building the new ladders for our bunk beds. We are excited to report that the beds are much easier to navigate. *Thanks to all of you, guests can now climb in and out of bed with no fear of falling or hurting the bottoms of their feet. Muchas Gracias!*

May the joy of helping others add to the joy of your Thanksgiving!



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LOAVES & FISHES
ANNUAL VOLUNTEER
APPRECIATION DINNER

will be held on
April 6, 2013

at

St. Gerard Church in Lansing.

This is our time to
THANK EACH VOLUNTEER
for caring for our guests.

More info coming in January



*Blessed Thanksgiving and
Christmas to all of you!
May the Spirit of the Loving God
who was born to us
through Jesus
be with you
always,
guiding and
protecting you.
This we ask, O
God, through
Jesus ~ Your son and our brother.
Amen.*

