

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

Spring 2013

## Volunteers: The backbone of L&F

By Erma Chastine, Director

*(Editor's Note: This article is from the March 2013 issue of the Volunteer Newsletter "Crumbs & Minnows" and describes our silent servants – those who faithfully keep Loaves and Fishes Ministries going.)*

As we walk through the Lenten Season I can't help wanting to celebrate all those who support Loaves & Fishes Ministries with their time, treasure and talent. L&F has 252 active volunteers and over 2000 financial donors who give generously of themselves to serve the homeless. *Many of our active volunteers give in all three of these areas: Time, Treasure and Talent.*

A total of 194 volunteers grocery shop, prepare meals, and deliver the meals to the shelter. Another 50 volunteers do the 6 -10 pm shift and serve the meals, eat with the guests, clean, and do laundry. Volunteers who work the 6-10pm shifts spend time talking with the guests and encouraging them to keep up the good fight to change their circumstances. Another 8 volunteers do overnight shifts. They secure the building and make sure the homeless have a clean, warm or cool dry place to sleep. The goal is to make sure guests are comfortable and safe throughout the night.

Several of the volunteers work in groups. There are 3 church groups that take one day per month and provide the dinner, then work both the 6-10 and overnight shifts. We have 3 other groups that alternate between preparing a meal and doing 6-10 shifts.

Many of the others give their dollars and continue to support our ministry with ongoing donations of staple items such as toilet paper, paper towels, food items, etc. This helps to keep the shelter running smoothly and helps keep costs down. Each giving gesture is appreciated. It always amazes me of the generosity of people. It is so refreshing to know that many people live the Lenten Season all year round.

In 2013 we are going to rely even more on the generosity of others to help us continue to serve the homeless. With cuts and changes in funding sources, volunteers like you are the backbone to Loaves & Fishes Ministries. We cannot continue without your time, treasure, and talent...or the organizing of Beth Young, L&F Volunteer Coordinator!

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### *A Bit of L&F History*

When the original Core Group gathered in 1979 to dream about how Loaves and Fishes would work, they decided that volunteers would be an essential part of the design. WHY?

So the community-at-large would move from just 'knowing' there are homeless people, to being directly involved in caring for them as an organic part of their lives.

So they would see themselves as an essential piece in the workings of this ministry.

So they would come to celebrate and take personal ownership of the success of Loaves & Fishes Ministries.

*So they would experience the words of Jesus come alive in their hearts:  
"When did we cloth, shelter and feed You?" "When you did it to the least of my brethren, you did it to me."*

## Your dollars at work

By Erma Chastine, Director

Each year we like to share with each of you how your dollars were spent and give a brief overview of the state of homelessness in our local area.

In our overnight/short term shelter, Loaves & Fishes Ministries provided 3,410 bed nights for 203 guests in Fiscal Year 2011-12 and we served 7,648 meals. Based on monthly surveys, guests found our bed accommodations 98% good or great and 93% found our meals good or great. We are grateful that your dollars help us to serve the homeless with a comfortable home environment.

In our Transitional Housing Program where guests can reside for 6 months to 2 years working to rebuild their lives, we served 10 women, 17 children and 10 men. We had a 41% success rate in placing both women with children and single men into permanent housing.

**Donations Down:** In 2012 we experienced a \$50,000.00 drop in donations which seriously impacted our bottom line. Normally 49% of our revenue is the result of individual giving and 51% is from grants. We have experienced a significant decline in grant allotments and in individual contributions.

**Expenses Up:** In addition to these revenue declines, we will experience a 3% increase in expenses in 2013, plus our food grant has been decreased by \$2,000.00. Also we will no longer receive reimbursement for food items not purchased through the Greater Lansing Food Bank. Because the Food Bank does not always carry every food item we need, we will have to supplement with store purchases which are not reimbursed. Based on these cuts your dollars will be valued even more.

More than 100,000 people in Michigan were homeless in 2010-11. In May of 2012 an article in The Huffpost Detroit reported, "Michigan Homeless Numbers Drop as Poverty Rises." The Michigan's Campaign to End Homelessness found there were 6,143 fewer Michigan residents who were homeless for any part of 2011 due to the state's "Housing First" program. While this is good news, Eric Hufnagel, Executive Director of the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, which serves as a central clearinghouse for the state's HMIS data system which tracks the number of homeless in Michigan, stated that, "**While homelessness may be decreasing across the state, the numbers of Michigan residents living in poverty are increasing.**" Michigan's poverty rate rose from 13.5% in 2009 to 16.8% in 2011. (See *The Cold Hard Facts* in column 2)

### THE COLD HARD FACTS:

- At least 800,000 people are homeless in the US on any given day
- The National Coalition for the Homeless reports that the intense competition for low-income housing in the last two decades has put those with a history of mental illness and drug addiction out into the streets.
- The mortality rate among homeless adults is estimated to be 3 to 6 times that of the general population

### The Truth is: We Depend on your Generosity

*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 sending a donation to Loaves and Fishes Ministries, 831 N Sycamore, Lansing, MI 48906 OR through the 'Network for Good' link at our website [www.loavesandfisheslansing.org](http://www.loavesandfisheslansing.org).

## Loaves & Fishes Successes

Dec 2012 – Feb 2013

### *Another confirmation that your dollars are at work*

WOW! Do we have Good News to report! **Since our last mailing in November 2012 we have had 16 people make significant strides toward empowering their lives** The Good News summary is:

- 7 obtained employment
- 5 entered into a long-tem Transitional Housing Program
- 2 returned to school
- 1 found permanent housing
- 1 received Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) medical benefits

Our thanks for these successes go to our Guest Advocate Mark Bonello, who joined the Loaves and Fishes Ministries staff in the fall of 2012. His personal style, dedication, advocacy skills, persistence and professionalism have resulted in building very effective advocacy partnerships. In reporting these successes Mark wrote, *“As you can see we have been doing quite well. Working closely not only with our guests, but also with other agencies as a team, has been producing some great results. I am excited to see so many of our guest residents being able to finally move forward.”*

**Bravo, Mark! You have made a significant difference in a very short time.**

## ***The Gift of Time: Meet Sandra***

*By Jim Veurink, L&F Core Community Member*

There are so many ways generosity manifests itself. One way is through the giving of time. Meet Sandra. *Sandra currently volunteers an average of eight evening or overnight shifts per month! She also serves on our Volunteer Advisory Committee.* Beth Young, our Volunteer Coordinator, shared that she is confident that the shelter is in good hands when Sandra is here.

Sandra first “stumbled” onto the work of Loaves and Fishes when stopping by our booth at the Marshall Street Armory approximately a year and a half ago. With her young adult children finishing school, she knew in her heart she could devote time and energy to new and different things.

Sandra was intrigued with the work of our shelter, and she had a desire to see how a shelter works “from the inside out”. Being a “people person”, she displays a quiet confidence that she could help out folks from many walks of life that are “one paycheck away” from experiencing homelessness. Sandra has a knack of knowing when a guest

may be supported with an understanding smile. She also enjoys a meaningful conversation encouraging our guests to make the most of each and every day.

I asked Sandra why she had the passion in her heart to become such an active volunteer. Sandra told me about a life lesson she learned from her parents years ago. She says, *“Through the loving nature of the family I was raised in, I experienced Christmas every day of the year!”*

Her parents lived out their faith in practice, not just with words. As ordinary folk, they took on an extraordinary lifestyle: they parented many foster children during her growing up years. Sandra says, *“How can’t I give back when I experienced such life altering role models as my parents!”*

Sandra, thank you for sharing your gift of time with our community. And, thanks to ALL of our L&F volunteers, who also give of your time so regularly...and with quiet humility.

**YOU are our loaves and fishes miracle!**



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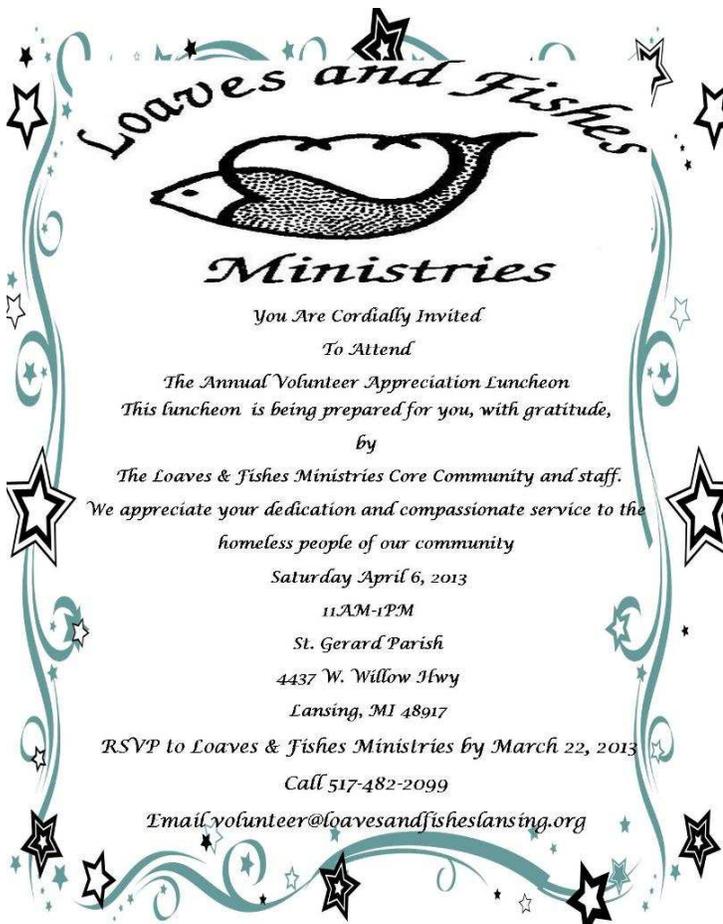
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**L&F Staff**

Erma Chastine, Director  
Mark Bonello, Guest Advocate  
Beth Young, Volunteer Coordinator  
Samantha Nelson, Weekday Facilities Manager  
Amy Morris, Weekend Facilities Manager.



*Spring 2013*  
*Easter and Pentecost*  
*come to L&F*

Loaves and Fishes Ministries IS an Easter celebration...and a Pentecost passion.

Through you, generous givers of time and resources, we experience Easter like a phoenix rising from the ashes in the lives of our guests.

Through your consistent and open hearts, we experience Pentecost with flames of passion to stay true to our mission...day in and day out.

May you experience God's love and grace as we journey together. Amen.