

**Emergency Overnight  
Shelter and Services**

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

*Loaves and Fishes*



*Ministries*

**Transitional Housing  
and Services**

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

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

**Snapshot of L&F Story & Services**

**Loaves and Fishes Ministries Mission**



Loaves & Fishes Ministries provides short-term emergency and long-term transitional housing, advocacy and support services for homeless men, women, and children in a caring Christian environment. Our purpose is to serve, not convert, respecting each person's spiritual path, different though that may be from ours. All are welcome who are in need, regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, country of origin. If Loaves and Fishes Ministries cannot meet some one's needs, our staff refers them to a medical or social service agency that can.

**Brief History**

In the late 1970's, a group of community volunteers came together to respond to the growing poverty and homelessness in the greater Lansing area. Five leaders emerged and decided to start a shelter.

They bought the house at 831 N. Sycamore with no financial backing – just their own determination and whatever personal savings they could pull together for the land contract down payment. They incorporated the property as a 501-C3 organization under the name Loaves and Fishes.

In February of 1981 after 181 days of meeting and negotiating with Lansing City Council, Lansing City Zoning Board, and neighbors in the 2 blocks around the house, the group was granted a Special Use Permit to open and maintain a temporary overnight shelter to single men and women. The doors were officially opened to guests in April of 1981.

In 1996 the L&F Core Community Board of Directors (CCBD) was granted Lansing City

Zoning Board permission to expand services to include long term (6 mos to 2 yrs) transitional housing for single women with 2-3 children. They bought the house next door at 835 N Sycamore which was seriously neglected and in a dire state of disrepair.

With a \$271,000 MSHDA grant – plus a very generous unsecured loan from Dart Bank in Mason - they renovated the house and built a large connecting wing complete with a commercial kitchen, large dining room, 2 handicapper accessible bathrooms and 2 staff offices. They called the addition The Gathering Place, and the new transitional housing program Zacchaeus House.

A few years later, a local realtor, relative of one of our volunteers, generously donated a house about 7 blocks away. The CCBD designated it as transitional living for single men and called it Luke's House. Because of these extended services being offered by L&F, the official name was changed to Loaves and Fishes Ministries.

## **Services Provided**

- Emergency shelter short-term housing up to 30 days for single adults, occasionally accompanied by a child
- Caring, competent, professionally trained staff
- Compassionate, non-judgmental, non-discriminatory advocacy and mentoring services
- Financial assistance with securing personal ID's and purchasing needed prescriptions
- Help with travel to/from appointments
- Support in finding housing and jobs where available
- Safe, clean environment, beds and bedding, daily meals, and personal laundry services
- Dedicated, professionally trained volunteers who cover daily 5 -10 and overnight 10-7 shifts, providing personal support plus hot breakfasts and dinners
- Small 2-room apartments plus shared space with kitchen, laundry, bathrooms, visiting area and storage for 3 single woman families (2-3 children) in Zacchaeus House Transitional Housing program (24/7 housing)
- Personal bedrooms plus shared housing amenities for 3 single men in Luke's House Transitional Housing program (24/7 housing)
- Periodic in-service support group meetings to address parenting, personal finance, job hunting, personal hygiene, school, etc.
- Mentoring/advocacy support in completing GED's, going to college, obtaining jobs, finding permanent housing

## **Challenges in working with Homeless**

- Dealing with all levels of mental illness and unaddressed substance abuse issues
- Responding to complex list of guests' immediate needs
- Addressing underlying causes of homelessness as much as possible
- Making appropriate referrals for health care, counseling, and ongoing personal services
- Helping guests deal with social, medical, and systemic challenges
- Balancing staff responsibilities to guests along with management responsibilities
- Dealing with the challenges that severe weather brings - ice, snow, excessive heat
- Recruiting, training, and scheduling reliable volunteers to work 365 days a year
- Maintaining buildings and grounds
- Having enough money to hire, train and pay staff fair wages plus a stipend for basic health care benefits
- Managing all the demands of COVID-19 and the impact it has had on our staff, our volunteers, and our guests

## **FINANCIAL CHALLENGES**

- Dealing with the economic trends that affect personal, church, local, state, and organizational donations
- Providing for fiscal and financial longevity
- Maintaining buildings and grounds to ensure the safety and security of the guests
- Having enough money to make repairs, and replace furniture and appliances as needed
- Finding volunteer fundraising partners who can help L&F keep out of the red as grants and donations fluctuate

## **Feedback from L&F Guest Surveys**

What one thing do you like best about Loaves and fishes?

- Lots of smiles
- Meals, volunteers, cleanness
- Safe place
- Feels like home
- The respect I received from the staff and volunteers
- The friendliness, helpful
- I love this place
- Feels like family
- Meetings on Monday morning - the talks keep me going
- I don't want to leave
- This is the best homeless shelter that I have stayed at
- Loving care, wholesomeness
- The staff does a really good job assisting with problems
- The nicest volunteers
- Warm beds and hearts
- The way they treated me was so uplifting
- The many resources provided
- You show the love of Christ