

September

2025

STORIES OF HOPE



MEET AMANDA





Pastor John Simpson

Incoming President/CEO

SHELTER UPDATE

At Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries, we continue to pursue our mission of restoring lives through the hope and love of Christ. As community needs have grown, we've responded — but with that growth has come new challenges.

Over the last three years, overnight stays in emergency shelters have increased **68% for single men** and **51% for single women**. This surge has created overflow conditions in our emergency services beds while some program beds remain unused.

That's why, beginning October 6, 2025, we are taking a focused step to optimize our emergency services. We will **limit emergency shelter beds to 80 for single men and 60 for single women**, while continuing to offer **over 400 total beds**, most of which are connected to programs that provide long-term stability and transformation.

This change is not about serving fewer people. It's about serving more effectively — with better safety, deeper relationships, and intentional support that leads to lasting change.

Our goal is to **break the chains of chronic homelessness**, and we believe the key is **life-giving, Christ-centered programming**. Emergency shelter may be the first step — but transformation happens when guests engage in structured, supportive environments that address the root causes of homelessness.

We're walking closely with our guests, encouraging them toward the next step in their journey. **We are working closely with our city, county, and nonprofit partners to ensure a compassionate, coordinated transition.**

As we move forward, we ask for your prayers — especially for those guests navigating the decision to enter programming. **And we need your continued support — through financial gifts, volunteer service, and your faithful presence alongside this ministry.**

Together, we're not just providing shelter.
We're restoring lives.

God bless,



Lamentations 3:22 (NKJV)


“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end.”

MEET AMANDA

Amanda, along with her 23-year-old son, arrived at KGM feeling scared and unsure of what the future held. **With a background marked by challenges, Amanda grew up in South Haven with a father who frequently left, leaving a lasting impact on her mental health and decision-making.** After her sisters had supported her for a time, they recognized that she needed more assistance and encouraged her to seek help.

Upon entering KGM's door, Amanda was anxious but soon discovered that she was not alone. Although she considered herself an atheist at the time, she was drawn to the **New Life | New Hope Program (NL | NH)**, even knowing it had faith-based elements. She needed support with the mental health challenges she was facing, and the program would provide hands-on guidance. Since her son was an adult, he had to remain in the men's shelter downstairs, which made her anxious because she couldn't keep as close an eye on him.

Feeling overwhelmed in the middle of the night, not long after entering the program, she knew something was wrong with her son. Amanda reached out to God, pleading for him to protect her son. Following this heartfelt prayer, she felt a sense of peace. The next day, she learned that her adult son had



**"KGM's NL | NH Program
saved my life, and Jesus
saved my soul"**

— Amanda —

been dismissed from KGM due to one of his choices. He began to explain that as he was staying outside, a strange, alarming-looking man approached, looked at him, and walked away. This man came about the same time she had called out to God to protect her son. She knew God had sent the strange man away to show He was listening to her prayer for protection. **This revelation led her to accept Jesus into her heart, and after that, her son moved in with his father, allowing her to feel secure enough to fully engage in the Program.**

Throughout her time at **KGM**, Amanda found structure and support that were essential for her growth. She thrived in the well-organized environment of the **NL | NH Program**, which provided her with the tools necessary to improve her mental health and develop her newfound faith. *"KGM's NL | NH Program saved my life, and Jesus saved my soul," Amanda recalls.* The compassionate staff and volunteers played a vital role in her transformation, offering support during moments of anxiety and helping her navigate her feelings about her son during the early stages of the program.

Today, Amanda is not only a graduate of the NL | NH Program, she has now chosen to enter the one year Life Servant Program in KGM's Children's Ministry and Women's Shelter. Her dream for the future is to one day work hands-on in the **New Life | New Hope Program**, where she feels called to minister and disciple others who have struggled with the same challenges. Amanda's story is a testament to the transformative power of faith, community, and the support provided by KGM.

KGM remains committed to helping individuals like Amanda on their journeys to healing and transformation. And the programs we provide are possible with your dedicated support. **If you wish to be a part of the impact and support, visit the link below to get involved today.**

www.kzoogospel.org/give-help

YOU PROVIDED THESE LIFE CHANGING SERVICES IN JULY 2025

10,111
Nights of Stay



14,571
Meals Served



207
Guests Served at KDC



28
Long Term
Program Guests



KGM THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES: MEET LASHONDA

Lashonda found herself back at the mission after staying here with her family in the 90's. This time she was not here as a guest, but as a student on a tour. During the tour, she noticed how much had changed since her childhood. *"It was so cool to see the KGM history wall because, in a way, I'm a part of the history too,"* she said. Coming to the mission brought back memories of her time here as a little girl.

As a 9-year-old, Lashonda felt tired and uncertain about where they were going after getting off the bus from Chicago. Her parents led her to the mission, marking the beginning of a new chapter in their lives.

Both of Lashonda's parents were struggling with addiction and came to **Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries** for a fresh start. They stayed at KGM for about eight weeks, during which they received support and assistance in regaining their independence.

Lashonda recalls how her parents found jobs, regained their independence, and recovered from addiction after spending time at KGM. **Although they faced some challenges, they did not have to return to the mission after their stay in the 90s.**

Now, Lashonda is in her final semester of college, enrolled in the RN program at KCC. She is also working as an LPN at a memory care facility. **When she returned for the tour, she felt grateful to come back as a student rather than someone in need.** She was excited to see the children's ministry and recognized the positive impact it can have on parents, as she was a child herself at KGM at one point.

Many other inspiring stories, like Lashonda's, unfold at KGM, and you can be part of the story.

Visit the link below to learn how you can get involved.

www.kzoogospel.org

JOIN US FOR LEGACY OF HOPE

A FUNDRAISING DINNER FOR KALAMAZOO GOSPEL MINISTRIES

THURSDAY OCTOBER 16, 2025

5:30 PM

AT THE AIR ZOO
6151 PORTAGE RD, PORTAGE, MI 49002

Enjoy the Air Zoo exhibits, dinner, and a 1-hour program honoring Pastor Brown as he retires after 28 years of ministry and welcoming our new incoming President and CEO, Pastor John Simpson



PURCHASE TICKETS AT
kzoogospel.org/loh-fundraising-dinner
OR SCAN THE QR CODE



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GENEROSITY DETECTIVES:

Clues to Giving

At age 13, a child can bless struggling people by volunteering at KGM with a parent/guardian. **But can younger children make an impact too? YES!** Generosity Detectives provides ideas for how a young child can still have a big impact. Here are three:

- 1) Donate Items.** Together, take outgrown toys/clothes to a KGM thrift store.
- 2) Fundraise.** Contact Laura (info below) for a fun Quarter Folder to help your child raise funds.
- 3) Pray.** Pray together for the salvation and life-change of people staying at KGM.

For a complete look at the Generosity Detectives resources, visit KGM's website at kzoogospel.org/generosity-detectives or contact Laura DeMerrell by phone (269-345-2974 ext. 218) or email (ldemerell@kzoogospel.org).



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

at KGM

MEAL SERVER

- Individuals or small groups (4-6 people) to help serve meals - **any day of the week.**

BOX TRUCK DRIVER

- Individuals to help drive the KGM box truck to do food pickup for our kitchen - **weekday mornings. Chauffer's license preferred.**

THRIFT STORE ASSISTANT

- Individuals to help sort and hang clothes at our Portage thrift store - **Tuesday-Saturday.**

TUTOR

- Individuals to help tutor in our adult GED program - **Monday-Friday during business hours.**

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

- Groups to plan and carry out a fun kids party and activity time - **Saturday late mornings.**

To get connected please contact Matt Furrow at mfurrow@kzoogospel.org or visit our website at www.kzoogospel.org/volunteer



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