

MEET LISA



KALAMAZOO GOSPEL MINISTRIES
SHELTER | DEVELOPMENT | PURPOSE



STORIES OF HOPE

April 2026

Gospel | Freedom | Transparency | Community | Service | **Development** | Respect



Pastor John Simpson

President & CEO

Transformation rarely happens overnight.

At Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries, real life change is the result of intentional development—walking alongside men and women with **truth, grace, and time** as they move from crisis toward purpose and stability.

While many people know KGM for providing meals and shelter, we see every day that our deeper mission is to walk alongside men and women as they pursue lasting life transformation. Development takes patience, intentionality, and the right environment for growth.

In this issue of the newsletter, you will read the story of Lisa, whose journey through our **New Life | New Hope** program and later our **Life Servant** program reflects the kind of long-term transformation we hope to see in every life we serve. Her story is a powerful reminder that when people are given the opportunity, support, and time to grow, meaningful change can occur.

Programs like these are intentionally designed to foster development. Through biblical teaching, life-skills classes, case management, counseling, job-skills training, and meaningful opportunities to serve, guests are encouraged to move beyond crisis toward stability, purpose, and renewed hope.

At KGM we often speak about our culture of **truth, grace, and time**. Real development requires all three. The **truth** of the Gospel provides direction and hope. **Grace** offers the compassion and encouragement needed along the way. And **time** allows the deep work of transformation to take root.

Development is never the work of one person—it is the work of a community committed to walking with others until hope becomes reality.

Every day, you—our volunteers and donors—play a vital role in what God is doing here. Volunteers share meals, lead chapel services, mentor guests, and offer encouragement. Donors faithfully provide the resources that make programs like **New Life | New Hope** and **Life Servant** possible.

As you read Lisa's story in this issue, we hope you are encouraged by the impact of development done well. If you have not yet joined us in this work, we invite you to consider how you might partner with us—through volunteering, prayer, or financial support—to help more men and women move from crisis to calling.

Because every transformed life begins with someone willing to invest the **truth, grace, and time** it takes for real change to grow.

*But thanks be to God,
who gives us victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 15:57



LISA'S STORY

Lisa was at the lowest point in her life.

Living in Big Rapids, she was drifting—homeless and caught in addiction. She knew this was not the life she wanted, but she could not find the strength to change.

Lisa first entered a short-term residential treatment home. While there, she learned about the **New Life | New Hope** program at Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries (KGM). She sensed it could be the next step she needed. Willing to start over, Lisa made the decision to relocate to Kalamazoo.

When Lisa arrived at KGM, she was determined to do whatever it took to change. She spent her first weeks in **Women's Emergency Services**, then quickly moved into the **Next Steps** program, which prepared her for the long-term program.

Lisa entered the long-term program in 2024. The first month was the hardest. There were new routines, daily expectations, and healthy choices that were very different from her old life.

"I hit a wall about a month into the program," Lisa said. "It was so different from the way I was living, but I wanted to change so much that I chose to keep going."

Over the next three semesters, Lisa committed herself to the process. She attended classes each morning and served at KGM in the afternoons through the work-study program. When graduation day arrived, Lisa felt hopeful for the future.

Soon after graduating, an opportunity opened for her to serve as a **Life Servant** in KGM's **Women's Shelter**. In this role, she worked part-time helping oversee daily janitorial responsibilities.

Another step forward came when Lisa moved into one of KGM's transitional houses, a fully furnished apartment that allowed her to live independently while still receiving support.

"It was great to have my own space, but still have support from staff and volunteers," Lisa shared.

Today, Lisa is working full time at KGM and has moved into her own apartment in the community. Her life continues to grow and develop.

"Before KGM, I believed the lie that I was worthless and that my life would always revolve around drugs," Lisa said. "Now I see that God has a plan for my life."

Lisa now hopes to return to school to study social work so she can help others find the same hope she has discovered.

With your help, we will reach more individuals like Lisa. Each one of us has an opportunity to grow and develop if there is a personal desire to change and the support of a community to walk alongside. Thank you to all our donors in supporting countless lives like Lisa's.

*"Before KGM, I believed the lie that I was worthless and that my life would always revolve around drugs," Lisa said. "Now I see that God has a plan for my life."
-Lisa*



Dignity Through Development

Janae had a job interview. She wanted to look presentable, but purchasing new clothes simply wasn't an option. Hoping for help, she reached out to our ministry.

At our Northside campus, a volunteer welcomed Janae and connected her with the clothing area of KDC. Janae didn't expect much—just something simple she could wear to the in-person interview.

Donya, KDC's Clothing Team Lead, helped Janae select a professional outfit. When Donya realized the clothing was for a job interview, she smiled and said, "You need shoes and a purse. We need to make the outfit complete." Together they found just the right pieces.

Several days later, Janae returned to KDC with a big smile. She had gotten the job and wanted to celebrate with the staff and volunteers who had encouraged her along the way.

Every day, individuals in our community who are working to better their lives visit our campus. KDC focuses on serving those who may have a place to stay but are struggling to make ends meet—people who simply need a little extra support to move forward.

Donya learned how meaningful this ministry can be from a longtime staff member, Rhonda, who faithfully served in her role for more than two decades. Rhonda recently went home to be with the Lord, but she made it her priority to show Donya what it looks like to truly care for those in need. Today, Donya carries that same heart, sharing the love of Jesus and making the most of every interaction with guests at KDC.

Rhonda's legacy continues around the campus. She loved helping women feel beautiful and confident, so as a tribute, Donya and her team created "Rhonda's Glam Closet," a collection of formal dresses for special occasions.

"Clothing and a little confidence are the first step toward something new," Donya says. Through gently used donations, individuals are given the opportunity to step forward with dignity and hope.

If you have gently used clothing suitable for job interviews or special occasions, please contact us at (269) 344-7333 for drop-off times and location.



"Clothing and a little confidence are the first step toward something new..."

-Donya

Please consider being a sponsor for the WOMEN OF WORTH FUNDRAISING BRUNCH MAY 22, 2026

We are hosting an exclusive event to bless the women staying at the shelter. They will receive a colorful shirt, a new pair of shoes, a pampering manicure, and a celebratory brunch. 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. Other sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Visit our website to be a sponsor
www.kzoogospel.org/wow-brunch

Questions? Contact Mary Denison at mdenison@kzoogospel.org



The Gift That Keeps on Blooming

There's a rich history behind the National Cherry Blossom Festival, marked by values that span generations. As you read, consider your story and the legacy you'd like to leave.

This story begins with Generosity. In 1912, Tokyo donated 3,020 trees to Washington, D.C. as a gesture of goodwill to honor the relationship between the U.S. and Japan. What causes are important to you?

Relationships are central. Friendship between Japan and the U.S. motivated the original donation and the trees continue to be symbols of goodwill. What relationships have shaped who you are?

With relationships often comes the need for Reconciliation. After World War II, the National Park Service sent budwood from the original trees to Japan to restore the trees in Tokyo. How has the reconciliation you have through Christ changed your life?

To request the full article or learn how to include KGM in your will, trust, or estate plan, contact Laura DeMerell at 269-345-2974 ext. 218 or ldemerell@kzoogospel.org. Or visit kzoogospel.legacywill.org.



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