



KALAMAZOO GOSPEL MINISTRIES  
**STORIES OF HOPE**

SEPTEMBER 2020 ISSUE



# MEET GARY

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## FEATURED STORIES

- Women's Shelter Staff
- Building Demolition





# Pastor Michael L. Brown

President/CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael L. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:11**

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

After what seems like an eternity, we are beginning the process of demolition and then construction to actually replace the old buildings on Burdick St. Our virtual groundbreaking was held on July 24th, and since that time things seem to be moving along quite well. If you were not able to attend that event you can find videos on our website and Facebook page. We are so thankful for all of you who have been part of this journey. Whether you were praying for us, supporting this project financially or volunteering at one of our facilities, your efforts and support has contributed to getting us to this place and we are so grateful. We invite you to follow along with us as we go through the journey of reconstruction. There will be updates of pictures and videos as we document this process over the next 13 months.

There is much excitement among the guests and staff as we look forward to increased flexibility of programming and improved accommodations. Our guests will be able to find the freedom they are looking for in a more efficient and comfortable environment.

Currently, our team is still navigating the challenging landscape of the COVID-19 crisis that has gripped our nation. Through this time, we are learning new ways of hosting volunteers and meeting with guests. Many of our team meetings have been on the ZOOM platform and have allowed us to continue to be both efficient and effective. We truly believe that our God will give us new and creative strategies, as we share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ as the way to wholeness and healing for the lost.

Over the last 87 years the Gospel has been the hallmark of our ministry as we find new methods to share the age-old message of the love of Christ and His power to save. Knowing that this new facility will continue the legacy of transformation into the future and perpetuate the healing power of the Gospel in the lives of so many, gives us joy for today and hope for the future.

Lastly, the coming together of KGM and KDC has increased our ability to reach a broader spectrum of the community who need our help. We have however, noticed a slight decline in the financial support for the ministry of KDC since our merger. Any increase in the support you might send be it \$5, \$10 or more, will help to off-set this decline.

I can't tell you how precious you are to us and how encouraging your continued financial and prayer support is to our team. Please know that we pray for all of our partners that God will honor your faithfulness and ongoing support in serving the "least of these" in our community. If I can be of assistance to you in any way, please give me a call at 269.345.2974 ext. 201.




# MEET GARY

"I had trouble growing up in my family; lots of them teased me. I had one aunt who liked to slap me on the back of my head," recalls Gary. It has been a lifetime of bullying, teasing and physical abuse that's made Gary question his value. Over the years, he has struggled to find his calling.

As an adult, he was married for 26 years, held jobs as a dishwasher and a personal caretaker, but in 2016, life began to unravel when his mother passed away. "I remember feeling lost when my mom died," says Gary. "I was living alone in an apartment and because of the drug activity with other renters in the complex, I decided to make a drastic change." He put his belongings in storage and found shelter at Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries.

It took months before Gary realized his next steps. A staff member told him about the educational opportunities that KGM offers. When he heard about the IDEA Center, Gary felt inspired and excited to get his GED. What he found at the IDEA Center has been so much more than he expected.

A person wearing a grey sweater is holding a clipboard and looking at a bookshelf. The bookshelf is filled with various books, including titles like 'LOSE IT & LIVE', 'BURNING BRIGHT', 'EXPERIENCING THE CROSS', 'CAMEL KEPT CHARGE - MARY', 'GRACE ABUNDANT', 'WE DANCE BECAUSE WE CAN', 'BURDEN OF TRUTH', 'LIFE SEVEN', 'WHO IS THE LORD OF THE RING', 'FINDING', and 'THE SACR'.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

***John 3:16***

Through the encouragement of staff and volunteers, Gary realized he had gifting, he never knew he had. He started to volunteer at the front desk, answering phones, scheduling appointments and greeting guests. "Gary is willing and eager to learn, no matter what I present to him," says Deb, Education and Life Skills Manager at KGM. "Over the last six months, he has grown in professionalism, customer service skills, organization and even computer knowledge. Gary is my right-hand man. Plus, he's making strides on his GED."

He is now a staff member and holds a part-time position at the Idea Center. Gary has found his calling and his value in God. With a renewed relationship in Him, he feels that his life is finally moving forward. "John 3:16 is my favorite verse because it says whosoever, and that includes me." His dream is to do what he is currently doing but to a greater capacity, get his GED and move into his own place. He is truly grateful for all that KGM has provided.



# WOMEN'S SHELTER STAFF

As staff and volunteers, we are all called to stretch beyond our own abilities and rely on God when working with a homeless population. Guests are often hurting when they arrive, dealing with mental health, addiction, and physical health issues. We sat down with Women's Shelter Staff members and asked them to tell you what it's like to work on the front lines of the shelter. They all agree, it is highly rewarding. Walking alongside guests, supporting them in developing their God given purpose, helping them obtain employment and transitioning them into stable housing is a true victory for each staff member. Women's Shelter Staff have the unique and complex role as supporter, teacher, leader, coach and friend.

Meet Jackie and Tammy, Lead Supervisors at KGM. "We have an awesome team of ladies who genuinely care for the Women and Children. Seeing guests transition into independence is a team effort and each one of us has a role," says Jackie.

Kathy, a former guest, now staff member recalls how hard it was to walk into the mission for the first time. "I was so scared; I wasn't street smart and needed a place to stay," says Kathy. "Jackie was the first person I met that night and she is part of why I am now in my own apartment and have a full-time job. Her support got me through a very rough point in my life."

Currently, there are twelve incredible ladies who serve guests with the love of Jesus. They are grateful for those who pray and support the ministry role they have at KGM. If you have a heart to help ladies experiencing homelessness and feel called to volunteer, there are multiple openings and flexible hours. Please contact Matt Furrow, Volunteer Coordinator, at (269)345-2974 ext.203 or email at [volunteer@kzoogospel.org](mailto:volunteer@kzoogospel.org).



**THANK YOU 12TH  
STREET BAPTIST  
FOR VOLUNTEERING  
WITH US!**

# DEMOLITION HAS STARTED

A SHELTER FROM  THEIR STORM  
KALAMAZOO GOSPEL MINISTRIES



**JOHN SIMPSON**  
Chief Operations Officer

This newsletter highlights many exciting things happening on our main campus at Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries. This has been a long journey and we are excited to see everything come together. So as the building is torn down and the first bricks are laid, we are already working on how we can make the inside of our new facility safe, comfortable, and an environment that launches our guests into a life of purpose and compassion. We are busy looking at paint colors, comfortable and functional furniture, wall hangings and more to outfit the bedrooms, intake offices, counseling spaces, and community rooms.

## Would you consider partnering with us to furnish these rooms?

As we get closer to finalizing the plans, we will be looking for partners to come alongside to help us purchase these needed items. There will be opportunities to sponsor specific items or rooms along with an opportunity to pray for the precious guests who will use these items. We will need every church and every individual to partner with us to maximize this gift from the Lord. I encourage you to begin to pray and ask the Lord to show you at what level He would like you to get involved both financially and through ongoing prayer and to keep your eyes peeled for updates in the near future.

You are helping us make a difference and we are honored to partner with you. Thank you for serving as the hands and feet of Jesus empowering those who desire Gospel-Powered life transformation! God bless you. For more information about furnishing these rooms, please contact Lynn Russcher at 269.345.2974 ext. 213 or email at [lrusscher@kzoogospel.org](mailto:lrusscher@kzoogospel.org).



You Provided **3,821**  
Nights Of Shelter In  
July



You Provided **10,437**  
Meals In July



You helped **96** Guest  
at KDC In July



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