

**Emergency Overnight
Shelter and Services**

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

Loaves and Fishes



Ministries

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

**Transitional Housing
and Services**

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

Spring 2015

His Eye is on the Sparrow...

As the 2015 year progresses, we are grateful for your continued dedication of your many gifts to Loaves and Fishes. You generously share your time and financial gifts with us extravagantly!

We at Loaves and Fishes strive to place our guests' needs first. We aim to be prudent and conscientious with your financial gifts and our ongoing expenses and upkeep.

In that spirit, we would like to share with you our financial standing as we move forward. God is good. As we reflect on the year 2014, we were just shy of meeting our annual budget by approximately \$17,000.

Fortunately, we have modest long term funds that have sustained us during lean years. As recently as two years ago, we had been as much as \$50,000 below our budgetary needs. Fortunately, our long term funds have helped us during these times.

There are significant reasons for our budget deficit. Government allocations for the social needs of the homeless continue to decline. The federal sequestration affected us as well. Grant funding from some not-for-profit organizations we have counted on has declined over the years.

Yet despite these financial challenges, you, our Loaves and Fishes community has been faithful and have kept our mission afloat. We carry on. Despite our human concerns, we have faith that we will be here during the flush times and the lean times. Our faith calls on us to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." We are reminded to stand strong in our faith.

***"Let not your hearts be troubled," His tender word I hear,
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;
Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.***

April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month

In a recent letter of appreciation the L&F Staff & Core Community Advisory Board honored and thanked our VOLUNTEERS for:

- Providing 2,920 service hours from 6-10 p.m. ~ getting meals ready, washing laundry and being present with our guests
- Providing 3,650 overnight service hours from 10 pm to 7 am ~ keeping our guests safe and preparing a hearty breakfast each morning
- Providing 5,475 individual evening meals for our guests
- Providing countless hours preparing our Loaves and Fishes Newsletter (3x/yr) and our Crumbs and Minnow Volunteer Newsletter (12x/yr)
- Mowing lawns, raking leaves, shoveling walkways, keeping our grounds neat and tidy
- Cleaning attics and basements in our 3 shelter homes
- Preparing and sorting Christmas gifts for our guests
- Serving at Open House events
- Generously donating extra supplies when we are running low
- Providing skilled labor to keep our facilities up and running
- Serving on our Core Community

**We could NOT do this
without YOU!!**

Leaving Home: Erma Chastine retires from L&F

It has been a great experience to serve the homeless for these last five years as Director of Loaves and Fishes Ministries. When I first came to L&F, it was a challenge to return to work after retiring, but working at L&F never seemed to be work. It was indeed a ministry. So leaving the ministry is like leaving home at the end of five years of schooling. Working with the homeless has made me more aware of the struggles of people and of the fact that, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."



Let me say thank you to the Core Community (Advisory Board) for finding me worthy and capable of serving this ministry over these years. Thank you to staff, volunteers, financial donors and donors that provided ongoing food and supplies needed for the shelter and our beloved maintenance people. It takes a village to serve the homeless. Each of you has made L&F Emergency Shelter a place of respite for our most vulnerable. My continuous prayer will be that people like all of you will always serve the homeless no matter how pressing the homeless problem becomes.

My heart is peaceful that God is leading me to the next ministry adventure and all is well with my soul.
Thank You & Farewell

The L&F Core Community members extend our deepest gratitude and prayers to Erma as she retires from this sacred ministry. Erma has been a beacon of resilience, hope, compassion, challenge, and loving service. She has been like balm on open wounds to the homeless.....and a dedicated partner to those of us who are committed to keeping this critical ministry alive and thriving. We have extended an open invitation to her to join the Core Community to bring her extensive experience to bear on the decisions we make for the future. Our hope is that she will take us up on the offer...once she has had enough time to renew and regenerate. God's peace, love and blessings to you, Erma! ~ Joan Tirak, Co-President, L&F Core Community/Advisory Bd.



Advocate Jenny Leaf takes lead as director

In November 2013, I was a stay-at-home mom with my then-3-year-old son, Henry. One afternoon I received a phone call from Carol Baker. The Guest Advocate had given his termination notice and she wondered if I would be able to temporarily fill the position for a few weeks while they interviewed and hired a permanent Guest Advocate. The timing was perfect, I was ready to go back to work and I was more than familiar with Loaves and Fishes Ministries since my church has been active with the Ministry for many years and my father, Donald Leaf, was the Co-Coordinator for many years. I think it was just over a week later that I reported for duty. After just a couple weeks of my "temporary" position, I realized and felt that this was the place for me and I applied for the permanent position.

In my role as Guest Advocate, I have worked hard to not only help our guests with information and referrals but more importantly, to do my best to empathize and try to understand their lives and their truths and to treat them with kindness and respect. When Erma announced her retirement I decided I would apply for the Director position. Once again, the timing just felt right. Much of my work history and education is related to the administrative side of Social Work. I was offered the position and accepted without a second thought. I look forward to continuing the work of Loaves and Fishes Ministries and feel the last year working closely with the guests has given me important insight and understanding of how to best serve our guests. I have some very big shoes to fill and will certainly miss Erma's leadership and wisdom!

I was blessed to work with Don Leaf, affectionately referred to as 'Boss', during my time at Loaves and Fishes. Persistently reminding all the staff that respect, kindness and service to our guests were our primary mission, Don was also a pioneer and visionary for Loaves and Fishes, helping to spearhead and facilitate the expansion and renovation that included Zacchaeus House and the Gathering Place. Little did he know at the time that perhaps his biggest legacy for Loaves and Fishes would be his daughter Jenny. So, years later, Jenny is stepping into the Director's position at Loaves and Fishes, focusing on our mission of respect, kindness and service for our guests. It is a true legacy Loaves and Fishes moment. We are deeply honored and blessed. ~ Carol Baker, Co-President, L&F Core Community/Advisory Bd.

Soul-stirring story from former L&F guest

“As I moved beyond Loaves and Fishes, I have obtained a job and an apartment to live in. My plans are to finish my Master’s degree in counseling at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary; I will pursue my ED.D degree at a later date.” Mary L Waire

Before Loaves and Fishes

If I had one word to describe my childhood years, it would be unique. My father earned his living by following and working the harvests all around the United States. As a family we traveled in buses and caravans with other families, and once we stopped I would go to school during the day, and work the fields after school picking tomatoes, cucumbers, oranges, green beans, blue berries, and more. I learned how to skin rabbits and clean fish as my father was a skillful hunter and fisherman. I am an expert with washing clothes using a wash board and a boiling kettle. When I was in my twenties I moved out of my mother’s house and into to my own place. By this time, my father had died.

Although I had been saved at nineteen, at this point, seventeen years later, I re-committed my life to God, and He has remained my first love ever since. Even so, I did not always trust Him to supply all of my needs. I admit there were more times than not that I depended on my limited resources versus trusting His abundant blessings for my life, He must have warned me at some point; He most certainly knew how to get my attention. However, to this day, He is still Lord of my life.

In 2009, I would be without employment for nearly six years. I lived off of my unemployment for a while, but that ended February of 2012, and from that time to now I have been without an income. But somehow God always provided for me. September 2013, I would find myself homeless for the first time in my life. December of 2013, God had me move to Lansing, a city I never had any interest in. When I moved here, I had to stay in a different shelter prior to Loaves and Fishes.

My Experience at Loaves and Fishes

Jesus, the Son of God, could have had anything He desired at His fingertips, but He chose to live a homeless life as a servant (Matt 20:28). He had no place to stay at night as He traveled the countryside ministering to those who needed to be fed spiritually and physically, as well healed. In fact He said, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head,” (Matt. 8: 20). I believe if Jesus had been on earth during this time and era, L& F would have given Him a place to lay His head and pampered Him, and He would have approved of the services He received. I know this because I had needed a place to lay my head at night and a place to shower and eat. It was God’s *Grace* that enabled me to obtain temporary shelter at L & F when I called them. However, L & F went beyond the basic needs; I was literally treated as a guest. The staff and volunteers were unbelievable in the way they took care of me. I did not have to do anything for myself – they provided everything I needed. My experience there was remarkable. The services I received could only be compared to a nice Hotel Resort...without the swimming pool. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to meet and fellowship with everyone that was at L & F – staff, volunteers and guests.

I was amazed at the administration and structure of the facility. I felt that Jenny was the perfect advocate during my stay at L & F. She was vibrant. She made sure each individual felt important. There was no favoritism; everybody was treated according to their need. It would have been hard to feel down and depressed about my situation being around her vivacious personality. Jenny would be so eager to hear how my progress was going that she would ask me in a plural form rather than singular. She would say, “So, how are we doing?” which made me smile. This spoke volumes about her character as a person and leader.

Erma (Director) does an amazing job in running the shelter. It was my honor to have met and talked to such an eloquent lady during my stay at L & F. It is unusual to meet people in her position, especially in this type of environment (homeless), who show humility to the guests by personally associating with them. She was reachable when I needed to talk to her. I was the guest and she treated me that way – not as though she was better than me. I have also witnessed how L & F has reached out and accepted the community from all walks of life.

The cleaning crew did an outstanding job in keeping the facility clean. Every day when I returned to the shelter, it was always clean and smelling fresh and restocked with personal needs products. The volunteers were distributed perfectly to cover all the areas. Some of them cooked meals and delivered them to the shelter daily, while others prepared and served the meals to the guests. Yet others prepared breakfast every morning, then they washed the dishes and cleaned up afterward. I had clean clothes every day (I was spoiled). I loved how the volunteers would fellowship with us; they did not have arrogant and prideful attitudes. For me it was like one big family. *“Real servants make themselves available to serve.”* (Pastor, Rick Warren)

Closing:

Even though Jesus did not have a place to sleep at night, He still took two fish and five loaves of bread and fed five thousand people. I know He would have been proud of L& F because they have been doing what He commissioned us all to do. In a symbolic way, they did give Jesus a place to sleep at night and fed Him each time they welcomed a new guest into the shelter. Jesus said, “For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in. (Matt 24:35)



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Join us at the shelter for a
Special Open House

**Gratitude Gathering
for
Erma Chastine
Retiring Director of
Loaves & Fishes Ministries**

Saturday, April 18th

11 am to 2 pm

**831 N. Sycamore Ave
Lansing 48906**

**R.S.V.P. by calling
517-482-2099**

CURRENT RESIDENT OR



Help Make a Difference in the lives of those we serve!

**MAKE A SPECIAL DONATION TO LOAVES & FISHES MINISTRIES
IN HONOR OF RETIRING DIRECTOR**

ERMA CHASTINE



JOIN US FOR THE SPECIAL GRATITUDE GATHERING OPEN HOUSE on April 18th (see above) in honor of our retiring director Erma Chastine to thank her for her dedicated and compassionate leadership. Donations made in honor of Erma will be used entirely for the support of our guests, whom she loved so dearly and served so faithfully. You can also make secure donations through our Loaves and Fishes website www.loavesandfisheslansing.org. Just click on "Donate." Then click the "Network for Good" button.

If you prefer, you can simply send your donation in the enclosed envelope.

All donations made to L&F Ministries are Tax Deductible.

WE ARE MOST GRATEFUL FOR WHATEVER YOU CAN GIVE

To help insure L&F Ministries' longevity, please consider naming Loaves and Fishes Ministries as a recipient of your gratitude giving through your will or estate planning.

May God bless you!