

# Food drive organized for homeless

BY BARBARA KIRCHHEIMER  
KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Writing out a check to a local charity was not good enough for Kalamazoo resident Jacques Habra this year.

That's why he decided to round up a few friends and go directly to local restaurants and grocery stores, asking for donations of food that they could deliver to needy people on the street.

"To actually try to put my hand into the whole process, I decided to get together with a few fellow graduates from (the University of) Michigan and Western (Michigan University) to organize a holiday food drive that was extremely focused," Habra said.

The group planned to collect and drop off food on Monday night.

"It should be a lot of fun for us, the participants, and for the people who will be receiving everything," said Cristina Dunlop, a U-M student who lives in Ann Arbor but is visiting her

family here for the holidays. "This is a self-initiated type of thing."

La Cantina Pizza, located in the Southland Mall, planned to donate two large pizzas to the effort.

"People who wouldn't be able to have a hot meal otherwise will be able to get one," said store manager Lori Batzloff. Habra said Coney Island on East Michigan, Theo & Stacy's on South Westnedge, T.E. Murch's in Southland Mall, and The Old Country Buffet on South Westnedge all planned to donate food to the cause.

The food collectors were expected to take food downtown and give it out in Bronson Park, the downtown mall, the train station, and other areas Monday night. Habra said he hoped to feed about 125 people. Leftovers would be dropped off at local shelters, he said.

"It may not have as much of a volume effect, but it certainly will have a quality effect," said Habra, who is general manager of Web Elite, a web site design firm based in Ann Arbor.