

Comparing his experience before and during the pandemic, Mr. Robert Oakleaf will explain what it means to be a nonprofit leader and how the pandemic has changed the way leaders tackle managerial and strategic challenges. A particular emphasis is placed on fundraising and managing change, areas where he has significant experience. Questions are welcome in order to support his informal and conversational style.

Impact of the Pandemic on Nonprofit Leadership, Fundraising, and Organizational Change

Mr. Robert Oakleaf

Executive Director

Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity

Having ascended into the role of the executive director of the Kalamazoo Habitat for Humanity in the middle of the pandemic, Mr. Oakleaf is currently navigating the challenges of leadership like no other. While the challenges are generic for an outsider—building rapport, engaging with volunteers and stakeholders, carrying out the core mission of home-building, and planning for the future—the pandemic has forced nonprofits like KVHH to claim their continuing relevance.

Rob was formerly the executive director of Ministry with Community—Kalamazoo’s day shelter and resource center—where he led through tremendous organizational change. His demonstrated impacts included programmatic improvement, resource expansion, capital campaign, and construction of a new facility.

Having volunteered and tutored since his teen -age, he was a high school teacher for several years. He has served on various boards and committees including the United Way Director’s Council, United Way Community Health Investment Team, Emergency Food and Shelter Program, and WMUK’s Friends Advisory Committee. He is also an avid public radio enthusiast.

Born and raised in Kalamazoo, Rob is a proud graduate of Loy Norrix High School. He earned his Bachelor’s degree in computer science from Kalamazoo College, where he also completed the study abroad program at the University of Nairobi, Kenya.



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