

Leelanau Enterprise

MICHIGAN NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Thursday, March 9, 2023 LEELANAU ENTERPRISE Section 1, Page 7

‘The Razor’s Edge’ PBS film highlights poverty, homelessness

Leelanau service organizations filmed, to be featured

By Meakalia Previch-Liu
mea@leelanaunews.com



Mary Stanton, Leelanau Christian Neighbors executive director, was one of several people that director and producer Keith Famie interviewed for his upcoming PBS documentary called “The Razor’s Edge,” which highlights poverty, food insecurity, and homelessness in America. Photo courtesy of Keith Famie

Poverty and food insecurity is very much prevalent even in scenic areas like the Leelanau peninsula, and this fact is portrayed in a new PBS film currently in the making.

Director and producer Keith Famie and his film crews from Visionalist Entertainment were out this past week filming in Leelanau and Grand Traverse counties for an upcoming PBS documentary on poverty and homelessness in America. The film called “The Razor’s Edge” highlights what daily life looks like for individuals that are in a state of poverty, but also features several respected organizations in the northern community that help these individuals and families with both food and shelter. While Detroit is the home base for the film’s production, it also explores homelessness from the perspective of a wide range of cultures, including large urban cities to rural locales around the country.

“There’s a thought that we all live on ‘the razor’s edge’ to some extent, we don’t realize how close we are to food insecurity, a poverty situation, or even homelessness,” said Famie. “The reason I wanted to do this film is because quite often people see

somebody panhandling or homeless, and their natural inclination is, ‘well, there’s plenty of jobs out there, they can go get a job.’ I thought let’s take a deeper dive into understanding what it is about homelessness, poverty, and food insecurity — how do you get there and end up in that situation?”

Representatives from local organizations like 5loaves2fish and Leelanau Christian Neighbors (LCN) were interviewed while Famie and his crew made their way around the county earlier this week. Michelle and Bill White, 5loaves2fish founders, were interviewed for the work they do as an outreach group that promotes social justice by providing nourishing meals to those experiencing food insecurity and homelessness, and LCN executive director Mary Stanton talked about how the nonprofit functions with a volunteer workforce of more than 200 people. Josh Deters, restaurant owner of the VI Grill and Fiddleheads, was also interviewed for the meal contributions that he puts together weekly for those in-need.

“We forget the people who are living under the radar, we don’t see them. We just don’t realize that they’re here, so we were really excited to hear that Keith and his organization were going to do this film so that everyone can realize what food insecurity is all about,” said Stanton of LCN. “These are really wonderful people living a normal life that just happen to fall in the cracks, and our job at LCN is to help them out of that... and with the support of our community, we can do that. We’re here every day to help them, and we help them one person at a time.”

Famie said as important as it is to understand the circumstances of those living in poverty, it’s equally important to understand who is helping those in-need and why they do it. Despite the presence of many wealthy individuals in the area, Famie explained how there is an ongoing need for services from groups like LCN to help so many others living in poverty.

“Families can’t afford those starter homes, so when you lose that youth base, you lose the ability to grow your communities... and that’s what we’re really learning,” he said. “As a filmmaker, what I’m walking away with from my short time of filming up here is what an amazing community this is and how individuals harmoniously work together to tackle a problem... It’s sad to see, and at the same time it’s inspiring and heartwarming how the community helps each other.”

For those interested in learning more about the film, go to <https://therazorsedgefilm.com>.

5Loaves2Fish’s team of volunteers in the kitchen prepping meals.
Photo courtesy of Keith Famie

