NEWEST AFFILIATE!

Tulsa County, OK

Dare to Make a Difference! Cara Did!

Looking for a way to give hope to a family in need? It’s easy to create your own FUN-raisers and ask friends and family to support Family Promise. Our Chief Impact Officer, Cara Bradshaw, recently participated in a trike race and raised over $1,000 for Family Promise! Use your smartphone to scan our special QR code or follow this link to learn how easily YOU can make a difference:

https://donate.familypromise.org/my-FP-Fundraiser

Dear Friends,

As fall approaches, we anticipate cooler weather, changing colors, and, except for Mets fans like me, the World Series. One of the first events to mark the change of the season is the start of school.

As I write this in August, retailers are promoting backpacks, supplies, and clothes to ready children for the new school year. But not all parents are back-to-school shopping. For many moms and dads, the basic needs of a roof overhead, food on the table, and a way to stay together take precedence. Despite a growing economy, wages have not kept pace with housing and living costs, and family homelessness has not abated.

Ending this American tragedy is not the province of any one sector. With Family Promise, we rally community stakeholders—corporations, civic groups, faith-based organizations, and volunteers—to undergird long-term success. But our government’s approach plays a critical role.

In this issue you will read about Family Promise graduate Kat Lilley who recently testified to Congress about critical legislation, the Homeless Children and Youth Act (HCYA). Lilley shared her story to bring attention to the vulnerability of struggling families who aren’t considered homeless as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). She also described a family who lived in squalor in an unsafe, low-budget motel and risked eviction because neighbors complained about their baby’s crying. Despite extreme poverty, the only assistance they were eligible for under HUD’s criteria was rapid rehousing since they already had some form of shelter.

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This HCYA passed committee and goes to a House vote this fall.

The Path to Affordable Housing

Two graduates of Family Promise Union County were invited to speak at a congressional reception in Washington, D.C., in July. The event, organized by Family Promise partner Monarch Housing, a New Jersey-based housing advocacy group, sent more than 350 supporters to the nation’s capital to engage with New Jersey’s congressional representatives about affordable housing.

Single mom Nichole Allen was two classes shy of her college degree when she came to Family Promise. Having overcome great obstacles, Family Promise graduates are often inspired to use their experiences to help others. This summer, several graduates ensured the voices of families battling homelessness are not forgotten.

Making the Voices of Homelessness Heard

Family Promise® is a national nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization addressing the crisis of family homelessness in the U.S. Through a comprehensive set of solutions, including prevention, shelter, and stabilization, Family Promise empowers families experiencing or at risk of homelessness to reclaim and maintain their independence.
Why I Give
DONOR SPOTLIGHT: SUSAN WATTS

Summit native Susan Watts became acquainted with Family Promise more than 20 years ago when a friend and Family Promise board member introduced her to the national organization headquartered in her hometown. Impressed by the nonprofit’s model for putting families on the path to independence, Family Promise has been an important part of her life ever since.

“I first volunteered by preparing and serving meals for families,” she recalls. Susan had always viewed the lack of affordable housing in this country as a major problem and welcomed the hands-on opportunity to address the crisis. She witnessed firsthand the transformative effect Family Promise had on the lives of struggling families.

“Later, when I was invited to join the board, I didn’t hesitate,” she says. “I loved how Family Promise was helping families in my community get back on their feet, and I was ready to make a difference on a national level.”

One of the meaningful ways Susan chose to help families in need was by becoming a founding member of the Legacy Society, Family Promise’s planned giving association. She says the decision to include Family Promise in her estate plan was a simple one: “I want Family Promise to continue to increase its impact, and I’d like to help that happen any way I can,” she says. “The work is so important.”

For information on how you can include Family Promise in your estate plan, please visit our website at familypromise.org/bequests and other planned giving contributions or call Melissa Biggar, Director of Annual Giving and Donor Relations, at 908.273.1100 ext. 21.

Family Promise Makes Good Neighbors

In an effort to engage all sectors of the community in the solution to family homelessness, Family Promise is excited to launch Keys to Good Tenancy, a program that matches real estate professionals with families seeking housing. Working with the National Association of Realtors (NAR), Family Promise developed the program to address all aspects of tenancy, from understanding a lease, to home maintenance, to being a good neighbor.

As Family Promise CEO Claas Ehlers notes, “It’s a perfect marriage. Family Promise and NAR share the same mission: putting people in homes!”

“We’ve developed a valuable relationship with the real estate profession and our affiliates, realtors are trained to teach the course. Graduates receive a certificate of completion and become more desirable tenants. Initial feedback has been positive, and other groups have expressed interest, including landlord associations that recognize the value of educating tenants.

“Today’s housing crisis isn’t only visible in neighborhoods, it brings violence to our schools. Ryan Desch and Rob Hulse of the Lawrence (KS) Board of Realtors were instrumental in launching the program in their community.

“Families learn the essentials of tenancy and how to advocate for themselves,” Hulse explains. For Affiliates, the program will deepen relationships with housing providers, creating more opportunities for families to find housing. For landlords, better educated tenants mean fewer challenges. Family Promise and NAR hope the curriculum will gain wider usage among all organizations that serve families facing homelessness.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING HOW TO MAXIMIZE THE IMPACT OF A GIFT TO FAMILY PROMISE?

For more information on how matching, planned, or recurring gifts can make a difference, go to: https://familypromise.org/donate and see the “Other Ways to Give”

MAKING THE VOICES OF HOMELESSNESS HEARD

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Family Promise, which she credits with helping her graduate and become a teacher, Nichole wants elected officials to understand how essential comprehensive programs like Family Promise are to the fight against homelessness.

“Family Promise addressed my needs across the board,” she said. “Homeless families need more than secure housing. I’m seeking for no budget cuts to housing; an increase in affordable housing, and more well-rounded programs like Family Promise that address life skills.”

Lawrence Mason and his family were evicted from their apartment and living in a motel when they found Family Promise. He experienced firsthand the pervasive impact of homelessness when his daughter was assaulted at school, suffering traumatic injuries that required extensive medical treatment.

“There should be more housing programs for families in need,” Lawrence told representatives. “Today’s housing crisis isn’t only visible in neighborhoods, it brings violence into schools.”

Now housed and stable, their experiences with Family Promise prompted all three graduates to lend their voices to the fight against family homelessness in the hope of making a difference.

Dana Ortiz, Executive Director of Family Promise of Lawrence, KS, says things are already moving in that direction in her community.

“We’ve developed a valuable relationship with the real estate profession and started an important conversation in the community about homelessness,” she says. “This can only benefit Family Promise and the families we serve.”