1 in 6 U.S. children live in poverty.

1 in 19 kindergarten students have already experienced homelessness.
Dear Friends,

Every life we change has a story. These stories can be intense, difficult, and heartbreaking. When we hear them, we know the very real costs of homelessness.

But these stories are also transformative, providing us the roadmap and the inspiration to bring about a change in how America understands—and acts on—family homelessness.

Homelessness takes many forms: families with children doubling up with relatives, sleeping in their cars, paying for motel stays, living in shelter. Tragically, the number of children and families experiencing homelessness is not abating. In its most recent report, the Department of Education identified 1.3 million children who were homeless at some point over the course of the school year. That does not include more than one million pre-K children, who are too young to be counted.

The implications of this are enormous. A child’s future begins at home, and allowing this disruption and deprivation is not only disastrous on a human level; it is short-sighted and self-destructive as a national policy.

For Family Promise, our aspiration is to change the future for one million children by 2030. To do so, we are putting our resources toward strengthening Affiliates, disseminating best practices, and ensuring that we are providing a holistic solution to family homelessness: not just shelter, but prevention and stabilization. We know that to end family homelessness, we must address the root causes and mobilize the community to sustain a family’s success. We also know that the stories we tell, representing the tens of thousands of children and adults we served in 2018, hold the answers to this crisis. That is why it is so important to share them.

We have a long way to go to achieve our goal, but this past year, we took many of the steps to get there. These include developing new programs, forming dynamic partnerships, challenging failed systems, and addressing the totality of families’ needs. Homelessness is a complex problem and this report details our comprehensive solution.

Realizing our aspiration will be a journey, but it is not one we take alone—there are more than 200,000 of us united in this effort.

This is our story. It’s a compilation of the thousands of narratives that have inspired us. We hope it inspires you.

Very best regards,

Claas Ehlers, CEO
Half of children staying in emergency shelter are under age six.
Family Promise graduates that helps shape organizational policies and initiatives.

“Family Promise gave me the foundation to succeed and the self-confidence to move forward,” Candice says. “I tell the families I work with, ‘If a pregnant woman can walk five miles in the snow for a second chance at life, anyone can do it.’”

Candice’s children are inspired by their mother’s journey. Though they never experienced homelessness, they acknowledge it changed their mother’s life and influenced their own paths. One is earning a master’s degree in social work, another aspires to start his own business, and the third plans to become a pharmacist.

Candice’s son Don-yea recalls his mother always encouraging her children to work hard.

“Family Promise showed my mom you can be and do whatever you want if you work for it. She taught that to us, and I want to teach that to my son,” he says.

“My kids were never homeless, but they know my story,” says Candice. “They see what I’ve done and tell me every day how proud they are of me.”

Homeless children are 9 times more likely to repeat a grade.
Without Family Promise, I don’t know where my mom and I would be today. They genuinely saved us and changed our lives forever. As a junior in high school, the volunteers at Family Promise believed in me when not many other people in my life did. The support that they offered me and my mother helped give me the strength and resources to strive for greatness in my own life.

Four years later, I am a junior majoring in human resource development at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Family Promise inspired my choice of a college major and instilled in me a desire to help others. I am unbelievably thankful for Family Promise and their selfless, supportive, and incredible volunteers.
Family Promise of Brevard (FL) helped them avoid eviction through its Hand Up initiative, a homelessness prevention program made possible with funding from Family Promise’s partnership with HUMI (Help Us Move In), a national nonprofit that works to keep at-risk families housed. Family Promise covered the family’s rent for the month, giving them time to contemplate next steps without the added burden and trauma of navigating the shelter system.

“Family Promise delivered the rent check as the eviction paperwork was about to be submitted,” recalls T J’s wife, Mary. She adds, “But Family Promise gave us more than just money for rent.”

Family Promise helped Mary and T J prepare a budget to manage finances until T J was back at work full-time and also helped Mary decide to return to school for a degree in counseling. Their teenage daughter learned from the experience, as well. She now deposits paychecks from her part-time job into a savings account, spending only the tips she earns.

T ara Pagliarini, Executive Director of the Affiliate, says, “The Shaws are a perfect example of why prevention is so critical: stable, doing well for a long period of time, and then a major life event occurred. Their story is about us being able to offer a hand up when they needed it the most. Our collaboration with HUMI kept them out of shelter and on the road to independence.”

Hand Up Program Coordinator Eddie White stresses the value of homelessness prevention and notes HUMI funds enable Family Promise to serve families who don’t qualify for other forms of assistance. “Other programs can be more stringent,” he explains. “For instance, a family with an eviction on their record isn’t eligible for certain supports. Hand Up allows us to prevent many more families from experiencing homelessness.”

Without the worry of losing their homes, families like the Shaws can focus on regaining stability.

Since 2017, Brevard has helped 1,400 households like the Shaws through Hand Up. And, through prevention, they’ve actually seen a decrease in families served in their shelter program. As T ara says, “The best solution to a lack of affordable housing is keeping families in the homes they already have.”

PREVENTION

Forty percent of Americans are just one unexpected $400 expense from financial distress. Preventing families from spiraling into homelessness is an essential part of the Family Promise mission.

Affiliates offer a variety of strategies to ensure the people we serve do not fall into the cycle of housing instability that can devastate families and alter the course of children’s lives. These include administering formal diversion programs with government funding, providing rental assistance and landlord mediation, and community-based approaches that keep families housed. Our national partnership with Help Us Move In (HUMI) helps support prevention programming in Affiliates and is an example of how best practices are applied through our federated model.

Ultimately, the cost—both human and financial—of allowing homelessness to exist is staggering. Preventing homelessness is an incredibly sound investment in our children’s futures.

A Family AVOIDS Homelessness in Florida

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Hospitality is a powerful word and it is at the heart of the Family Promise shelter program. Across this country, communities offer hospitality to families through Family Promise Affiliates. This innovative model—using existing space like congregations and volunteers motivated by compassion—has helped hundreds of thousands of children and adults in our 200+ Affiliates nationwide. Working with community resources, Family Promise Affiliates provide comprehensive and targeted services, including extensive case management, at one-third the cost of traditional shelter. Furthermore, Affiliates are able to serve families of all compositions, often providing their only shelter option in a community. On average, 88% of the people served in the shelter program secure housing within nine weeks. Because of the depth of services and community support, families stay housed, and Affiliates provide both prevention and stabilization services to increase their impact.

When Yusuf Kalule and his family came to Massachusetts from Uganda through a federal Diversity Visa program, they expected to live initially with a host family. But, shortly after their arrival, complications with their host situation left the family nowhere to stay. Fortunately, Family Promise Metrowest (MA) accepted them into its emergency shelter program before they could find themselves homeless. Yusuf’s wife, and their two-year-old daughter spent nights in the shelter program and days working with Family Promise to acclimate to their new country. Family Promise helped Yusuf find work and got his wife enrolled in a certified nursing assistant program, and even provided transportation and arranged for childcare.

“Family Promise was a great foundation for starting life in a new country,” says Yusuf. “But it wasn’t a quick fix.” Yusuf says Family Promise helped ease their adjustment to life in America and that the friends they made in the shelter program had a significant impact on their happiness.

Family Promise Metrowest’s emergency shelter program is supported by 50 congregations representing diverse faiths, from Christian to Jewish to Muslim. According to Director Sue Crossley, there is diversity in doctrine but not in mission. “Family Promise shows people it’s more about commonality than differences,” she says. “People of all faiths are passionate about the social issue of family homelessness. Seeing so many in the community come together for this cause inspires others to come forward, too.”

Metrowest engages more than 1,800 volunteers of all ages from every congregation who not only work together to serve struggling families but form friendships with one another and educate each other about their respective faiths.

“Of course, I measure our success by the stories of our families, but the way we’ve pulled a community together is also an achievement,” Crossley states. Yusuf concurs. “We all face a common enemy: homelessness. Family Promise brings people together to help others. That’s all that matters.”
Workforce development. Partnerships in housing. Financial capability. Health and wellness. Homelessness has many causes and housing stability involves many solutions. Family Promise Affiliates have developed and implemented more than 1,000 different programs that address every aspect of stabilization.

Our goal is not simply getting families into housing; it is keeping them in housing. Key to this is identifying needs specific to the local community and tapping into the diverse resources our volunteer pool and partnerships provide. The result is families no longer at risk of homelessness.

Through programs we have launched for tenancy preparation, micro-entrepreneurship, and virtual career pathway training, Affiliates create the basis for security and stability that separates families from poverty and allows them and their children to aspire to the future every child deserves.

In addition to ongoing case management, graduates can attend weekly workshops conducted by volunteers that cover topics like budgeting and spending, conflict resolution, and more. Family Promise also created an online community for graduates to connect, seek help, and lend support.

“The greatest thing about these programs is they involve families, staff, and volunteers,” says Ortiz. “We’re offering healthy supports within a healthy community.”
Changing the future for children

**PREVENTION**

**SHELTER DIVERSION**
Keeping families out of shelter is good public policy and good fiscal policy.

**RENTAL ASSISTANCE**
With HUMI, we have helped 1,000 families, including 2,500 children, since 2016.

**TRANSPORTATION**
Gas cards, bus passes, & car donations help families get to jobs and school.

**STABILIZATION**

**HOUSING**
Innovative solutions like tenancy training, rapid-rehousing, & home ownership.

**FINANCIAL CAPABILITY**
Creating the foundation for sustainable financial independence.

**CAREER PATHWAY**
Preparing families for professional success in a rapidly changing economy.

**SHELTER**

**HOSPITALITY**
200,000 volunteers create a temporary home for the families we serve.

**CASE MANAGEMENT**
Our 200+ Affiliates provide comprehensive guidance and resources.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
6,000 congregations & organizations serve families at 1/3 traditional shelter cost.

**A holistic solution to family homelessness**
After years as a stay-at-home mom, when Kat Lilley became a single parent she had to find housing and a way to support her children, who ranged in age from 18 months to 11 years. A motivated entrepreneur at heart, she found employment and started two home businesses and, for two years, she steadily rebuilt a life for her family.

Then, one of her sons suffered a health crisis, and the family's life was upended. His care became Kat's full-time job—she was forced to scale back her work and find more affordable housing.

Kat's rental applications were repeatedly denied despite good credit and no history of evictions or other complications. A landlord finally explained that her reduced income, combined with the size of her family, made her an undesirable tenant. Her appeals for assistance from various social services agencies were continually denied as well.

On the day their lease expired, the family loaded most of their possessions into a storage unit and packed the bare essentials into their minivan. Fortunately, they spent only one miserable night in a Walmart parking lot before finding Family Promise of Colorado Springs (CO). They enrolled in the emergency shelter program and, with Kat’s steady employment history, she soon found a job. Kat figured it was just a matter of time before she’d saved enough for the family to move on.

“I thought I just needed shelter and time, but Family Promise saw I needed to rebuild my self-esteem. I didn’t realize it at the time, but they showed me I had value,” she remembers.

Over the next several months, Kat’s confidence grew, as did her savings account, and when she next applied for a lease her application was accepted. But stable housing didn’t mean Family Promise’s work was done. As they settled into their new home, volunteers and other Family Promise families made sure the family continued to be supported with child care, transportation, meals—anything that would ease their return to independence.

Within a year, Family Promise of Colorado Springs unexpectedly joined the Board’s finance committee and, shortly after that, the Volunteer Director announced she was leaving and asked Kat to take her place. A year later she was promoted to Operations Director. Now she was truly in a position to create meaningful change.

Working through Family Promise’s Partners in Housing initiative, an innovative solution that enables Affiliates to purchase and refurbish manufactured homes, Kat launched Hope Homes, a program that enables qualified families to move into homes and, after extensive case management, assume the property’s title.

In 2018, Kat and her colleagues created Heart and Home, a homelessness prevention and diversion program made possible with funding from HUMI (Help Us Move In), a Washington state-based nonprofit that provides funding for homelessness prevention. “The program is working very well,” says Kat, noting that 54 families have participated to date.

“We offer families a full range of homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, and stabilization services,” says Kat.

But Kat isn’t stopping there. The very fact that families are falling through the cracks when it comes to this country’s housing crisis has drawn Kat into advocacy work.

She explains, “The way HUD defines homelessness means many families don’t qualify for assistance. I hope to make a difference.”

To this end, last spring, Kat testified before Congress about the Homeless Children and Youth Act, which would expand HUD’s restrictive definition of homelessness—which excludes many families in crisis—and allow communities to identify families who need assistance.

Kat also sits on Family Promise’s national Guest Advisory Council, a body of Family Promise graduates using their experiences with poverty and homelessness to help shape organizational policies and initiatives. She was also recently elected to the national office’s Board of Trustees, bringing a valuable perspective to the organization.

“There’s empowerment in giving back,” Kat says. “It’s the distinction between ‘I am indebted’ and ‘I can make a difference.’”
Built on the success of the New Beginnings® financial literacy curriculum and piloted a micro-entrepreneurship program, which will allow families to create stand-alone businesses and additional income. Digital tools offered through this partnership enhance the long-term stability of families and create assets for the future.

Clayton Homes

CLAYTON HOMES

Home for the Holidays

Presented the DePaz family with a brand new home of their own upon graduating from Family Promise of Greater New Braunfels (TX). Working with community partners, Clayton Homes and Family Promise fully outfitted a home for this deserving family in December.

As one of the leading builders of prefabricated and site-built homes, Clayton Homes brings decades of experience in the industry to move families from homeless to homeowners.

Woodforest National Bank

WOODFOREST

Building Skills and Resources for the Future

Built on the success of the New Beginnings® financial literacy curriculum and piloted a micro-entrepreneurship program, which will allow families to create stand-alone businesses and additional income. Digital tools offered through this partnership enhance the long-term stability of families and create assets for the future.

Belk

Belk

Empowering Women and Children

Joined with its customers to donate more than $1 million through Project Hometown for the development of 10 new Family Promise Affiliates and to support 75 existing Affiliates in the South. Together, these new Affiliates will engage roughly 10,000 volunteers to help provide shelter, rental assistance, workforce development, financial training, childcare, and more to nearly 2,000 homeless and low-income family members each year. Belk is leveraging its family-centered brand to raise awareness and funds through in-store campaigns, product donations, and employee volunteerism to change the lives of thousands of southern families.
HUMI Preventing Homelessness and Creating Opportunity
Engaged ten additional Family Promise Affiliates in prevention and stabilization programs to ensure children are “Homeless No More.” A truly innovative approach, the HUMI partnership encourages community support for homelessness prevention services while raising awareness about the crisis of family homelessness. 22 Family Promise Affiliates have received HUMI funds since 2016, serving more than 1,000 families, including nearly 2,500 children.

PROSPERITY NOW
Moving Families into Homeownership
Piloted the Partners in housing program with five additional Family Promise Affiliates, refurbishing manufactured housing units and providing assets to qualified Family Promise graduates. Through this community-driven effort, families go from homeless to holding the keys to their own home.

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Nonprofit Partners & Allies:
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
- New York Fed Community Advisory Group
- PetSmart Charities
- Project Night Night
- Prosperity Now
- Rutgers School of Social Work
- Sesame Street
- StoryCorps
- Summit YMCA

FAMILY PROMISE AFFILIATES:
- The Bassuk Center
- Charity Care
- College of Saint Elizabeth
- Encore.org
- Food Donation Connection
- Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey
- GrantStation
- Help Us Move In
- Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey
- Imagine: A Center for Coping with Loss
- KaBOOM!
- Monarch Housing
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
- New York Fed Community Advisory Group
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SESAME STREET
Supporting Children and Families in Transition
Collaborated with Family Promise to re-introduce Lily, the shy, fuchsia muppet who has experienced homelessness, to children across America. With Family Promise’s expertise, Sesame Street in Communities launched a suite of bilingual online resources to help children cope with the trauma of losing their homes. Our 200+ Affiliates nationwide are incorporating these new materials into case management and sharing them with partner agencies.

PETSMART CHARITIES
Keeping Families and Pets Together
Kept tails wagging across the country through the Pets with a Promise program, which provides accommodations for pets while families are in shelter and prevents the trauma of additional loss for children. 92 grants were made to Family Promise Affiliates in 2018 through this heart-warming partnership.
In 33 states, childcare costs more than in-state college tuition.
For the fifth consecutive year, Family Promise has been rated a Four Star Charity by Charity Navigator with a score of 99.97 out of 100.

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Every $1 you donate is matched three times over by community and in-kind resources.
A complete list of our 2018 donors is available in the online version of our Annual Impact Report at www.familypromise.org.
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Annual Impact Report 2018

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