Family Promise Adds to National Board

Joshua Barer is managing partner at Barer & Son Capital, a New York-based asset management firm. Barer holds degrees from Drew University and Rutgers University and serves on the boards of several other nonprofits whose work centers around education and economic development.

“I’m excited to join the Family Promise board and community,” says Barer. “The mission of Family Promise is personally important to me, and I continue to be impressed by its scope and impact.”

Andrew Pierce is president of Prophet, a brand and marketing consultancy, and sits on the boards of Prophet and Zylinc, a Danish software company. Of his involvement in Family Promise, Pierce says, “I was immediately inspired by the passion, commitment, and focus of the Family Promise leadership team and Affiliates.”

In addition, Board member Leah Griffith has been elected Secretary.

Family Promise Looks to the Future

Dear Friends,

This year’s conference theme was “Mission Possible,” a play on our host city of San Antonio. It also encapsulates our beliefs here at Family Promise.

We’ve seen incredible growth over the past decade. We’ve added Affiliates, but more significantly, we’ve increased capacity. Last year, we served more than 100,000 family members. That’s mission possible.

But it’s not mission accomplished. The Department of Education estimates one in 19 children will experience homelessness by age six – approximately one child in every kindergarten class.

Mission possible means taking bold new steps to increase our impact, guided by our strategic plan and aspiration to change the future for one million children by 2030. This includes new programs in areas like shelter diversion and workforce development; increased technical support and funding streams for Affiliates; tools like online training to engage the wider community; and strategic national nonprofit and corporate partnerships.

We’re excited to turn mission possible into mission accomplished by 2030. Thank you for helping us get there.

Very best regards,

Claas Ehlers

Family Promise CEO Claas Ehlers introduced Family Promise’s strategic vision and goal to change the future for one million children by 2030: “Not only do we have to solve the problems of today, we have to solve the problems of tomorrow, too,” he announced.

Ehlers discussed plans to expand programming; ensure excellence, engage stakeholders, and elevate impact. He introduced Family Promise’s new logo, the familiar star whose points represent the organization’s five fundamental principles—prevention, shelter, stabilization, community, and promise.

The overarching theme of Family Promise’s expanding role as the national leader addressing the issue of family homelessness resonated throughout the conference. As Ehlers noted, “What’s the point of a national organization if we can’t increase impact?”
An Ounce of Prevention

The federal government shutdown of 2018 may be remembered for long airport security lines and national park closures, but government employees and their families had much greater worries. People like Kevin*, a furloughed truck driver, were concerned about keeping food on the table and a roof overhead and even risked eviction.

Fortunately, a local Family Promise Affiliate provided rental assistance to keep Kevin and his family in their apartment and case management services to ensure they survived the crisis.

Through a partnership with HUMI (Help Us Move In), a Washington State-based nonprofit that provides funding for homelessness prevention, Family Promise can keep struggling families in their homes. The HUMI two-year challenge grant offers Affiliates $10,000 for homelessness prevention and rehousing services, which they must then double-match for a total of at least $30,000 in prevention funds each year. It’s a simple concept with considerable outcomes: children and families stay in their homes and life remains stable, averting widespread trauma, expense, and disruption.

Affiliates say the program also impacts how they interact with their communities. For instance, Family Promise of Colorado Springs is partnering with other service agencies and developing relationships with landlords that help families in crisis retain housing. Affiliates in Lawrence (KS) and Hawaii also note better landlord relations.

“The combination of funding and support appeals to landlords,” says Samantha Church, Executive Director at Family Promise of Hawaii. Since 2016, 22 Affiliates have used HUMI funds to keep nearly 2,500 children in housing. HUMI grants have totaled $350,000, with matching support from communities surpassing $1 million. With government estimates that rehousing a family costs between $11,000 and $16,000, it’s more cost effective to prevent homelessness in the first place. (By comparison, the HUMI program spends about $1,200 to keep a family housed.)

One Family Promise graduate whose family received support through HUMI funding says of her experience: “Even though it was a one-time deal, we’re so grateful for what Family Promise did. Without them, our lives would have taken a completely different turn.”

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

Why I Give

 Volunteer Spotlight: Summit H.S. Family Promise Club

Any teenager will tell you high school is a busy time of life—school, homework, friends, jobs. But a group of students at Summit High School (SHS) in New Jersey regularly finds time to help families battling homelessness.

Now in its fifth year, the SHS Family Promise Club has found many ways to serve local families: a “Walls of Wishes” posted at the school that past winter listed items needed for Family Promise-Union County’s emergency shelter program.

Club President Juliana Fiore says the club has made students aware of the drastic contrasts in housing throughout Union County: “People don’t realize there are struggling families here,” Fiore explains. “Being able to raise awareness of that—and help—puts everything in perspective.”

Treasurer Will Stern sums up the club’s work and the satisfaction members receive in helping to bring families a sense of normalcy during a time of crisis: “I’m glad we can make a difference for the kids. It’s amazing that they don’t lose themselves given their situations—they’re still able to just be kids.”

FAMILY PROMISE MAKES NETWORK NEWS

NBC’s The Today Show recently featured Family Promise’s work serving families experiencing homelessness. News anchor Craig Melvin interviewed Karen Newsome, Executive Director of Family Promise of the Midlands (SC), as well as two mothers whose families were served by the Affiliate.

You can view the segment on our YouTube channel at: familypromise.org/todayshow

Upcoming Events

New Jersey State Triathlon

July 20
Mercer County Park, West Windsor, NJ
Donate, race, or cheer on the Family Promise team as they run/bike/swim to raise money for families battling homelessness!
Support the team: www.familypromise.org and select “Events”
Race info: thecommracing.com and select “NEW JERSEY STATE TRI”

Family Fun Day

Saturday, September 28
11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Free (rain date 10/5)
Memorial Field, Summit, NJ
A fun-filled day for the whole family:
• Food trucks, bounce houses, games, and more!

Register at www.familypromise.org and select “Events”

Family Promise Giving Day

October 25
395 Springfield Avenue, Summit, NJ
www.fpgives.org

Our first 24-hour online giving campaign to raise awareness and funds for Family Promise.
Stay tuned for more details!

Family Promise’s First Giving Day

October 25
www.fpgives.org

Our first 24-hour online giving campaign to raise awareness and funds for Family Promise.
Stay tuned for more details!

Family Promise Giving Day Gala

October 25, 6 – 10 p.m.
Summit House, 395 Springfield Avenue, Summit, NJ
A child’s future begins at home. Family Promise will change the future for one million children by 2030 through community-based programs. Join us to celebrate the culmination of our first Giving Day!

The Today Show noted why Family Promise families are so successful at regaining independence: “They’re not just given a place to stay. They’re given the support to get back on their feet.”