Innovating Ways to Avoid Homelessness

One of Family Promise’s core values is innovation. Well, truly innovative grants, funded by individual and corporate donors, were launched last summer to help Affiliates increase programming to address shelter, homelessness prevention, and stabilization. 

As we focus on the Innovation Grants, we are spurring creative responses to the challenges of COVID-19’s pandemic. Critical among them was helping Affiliates start homelessness prevention programs, change best practices, and use rational incentives to help families find housing, even at a time when shelter capacity was compromised by the virus. To date, such programs have put at least 160 families on the path to taking independence.

Claire Kelly’s family in Jacksonville, FL, is one of them. Davina left her home to help her daughter and grandkids in Ohio escape an abusive situation but the onset of COVID-19 pushed Davina and her family into homelessness.

With health concerns and severely strained shelter options and friend networks to accommodate the family, they faced their worst nightmare – the family, they faced their worst nightmare – living on the streets.

“We would spend all day with our stuff, walking around and we wouldn’t do it anymore,” Davina recalls. “Then we would forever look like a safe spot to sleep.”

It was only when Family Promise of Jacksonville entered the picture that they found housing and began to see light at the end of the tunnel.

The Innovation Grants fostered new partnerships, 45 community programs that helped build unique programs to address local needs. Whether they focused on homelessness prevention, like in Jacksonville, alternative to shelter, or stabilization services that increased skills, Affiliated innovations ensured our communities could have long-term success. Due to this success and the ongoing efforts, Family Promise will offer a second grant cycle specifically devoted to prevention.

Overall, between Innovation Grants and other programs, Family Promise and its partners will invest more than one million dollars in dynamic and proven programs to keep families from experiencing homelessness.

“This grant aligns with our strategic plan,” says Family Promise CEO Claas Ehlers. “We’re critical to helping Affiliates serve more families, grow capacity, increase impact, and diversify our holistic approach to family homelessness.”

Dear Friends,

The rallying cry throughout this year has been, “We’re all in this together.” That’s been echoed by the way our family strongholds have changed. Affiliates have adapted and changed the plan.

Because of you, we know that we are in this together. The challenges of this year have amplified the message that preventing family homelessness is critical.

You’ve driven a message that families we serve and the compassion and commitment of the volunteers who support them make a difference.

You’ve amplified the message that you’ve ensured resources are available. You’ve driven the success of our innovation, and you’ve continued to bring hope and solutions to those who need it the most.

You’ve driven the success of our Innovation Grants, which help Affiliates innovate in the blink of an eye, and our holistic approach to family homelessness.

Thank you, and please continue to stay well and persevere. The result has been remarkable. The result has been remarkable. More families, grow capacity, increase impact, and diversify our holistic approach to family homelessness.

As challenging as the year has been, you have given us the tools, resources, support, and donors – have done. You have ensured resources are available. You have taken our message that preventing family homelessness is critical.

Thank you, you have made a difference. Thank you, you have made a difference. Thank you, you have made a difference.

Elijah’s story is a tale of resilience and innovation. It’s not simply a roof overhead that creates a sense of home. It’s the sense of security that comes with knowing you have somewhere to call your own.

Elijah’s family struggled with homelessness when he was a teenager living in New York City. Times were tough, the family moved to new homes, growing relationships as they planned for a new home. That tradition wasn’t as seamless as they’d hoped, but Elijah, now 26, his mom, and sisters found Family Promise before things became dire.

Elijah’s mom obtained a job and saved money for his company. However, he didn’t have the funds for the home or microenterprise as he was training to regain and maintain stability. Family Promise helped him acquire the necessary to get his business up and running.

“Knew with [the pandemic], that business wasn’t going to work. So, I adapted and changed the plan.”

Elijah and Family struggled with homelessness when he was a teenager living in New York City. Times were tough, the family moved to new homes, growing relationships as they planned for a new home. That tradition wasn’t as seamless as they’d hoped, but Elijah, now 26, his mom, and sisters found Family Promise before things became dire.

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Community Promise Making Program

The fall, southern department store chain known more for its high fashion shoppers than charitable donations, has decided to try its hand at helping families in need. By donating $500,000 million to Family Promise, the company is taking the opportunity to strengthen southern communities, like Lakeland’s support. Affiliates in the southeastern United States, 7000 masks and 1,000 hygiene kits were distributed to nearly 7,000 families and 7,000 children.

Family Promise Week

This year, 32 Affiliates raised nearly $200,000 during Family Promise Week, October 18–24. And, thanks to home donations from Family Promise affiliate Clayton Homes in the third such donation, the number of families from Family Promise of Lake Houston in Humble, TX, moved in their new home. "It made me feel pretty awesome becouse this was their own spot," said mom Caren. At the donation ceremony, "It made me feel so excited to see the moment Caren and her family saw their own spot," said mom Caren at the donation ceremony. "We moved into a family. Nowhere else does a program attract people who want to help so many to help each other."

Despite the challenges presented by the health crisis, Family Promise Week was an exciting time for the organization. To her, Family Promise reacted quickly to sheltering and food insecurity, losing housing. Taking the lessons learned from COVID-19 proved how valuable and critical the work is. Donovan called it "now or never."

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!

In October, Family Promise hosted its second virtual Donor Town Hall, inviting the public and more. Prominent speaker, activist, and expert on social and racial disparities talked about the state of homelessness in the U.S. and solution strategies. In November, Family Promise hosted its fourth of its kind event and more. Prominent speaker, activist, and expert on social and racial disparities talked about the state of homelessness in the U.S. and solution strategies.

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