



...a publication highlighting our work to help low-income families achieve independence.

A message from the President...

Dear Friends,

I am truly in awe of what Family Promise has become—a community of love and compassion, united in common purpose to help homeless families and their children. When I gave that first sandwich to Millie, a homeless woman, outside of Grand Central Station, I never imagined it would spark a movement that has grown into a national organization. I couldn't have anticipated the depth of human compassion or the commitment on the part of so many that has allowed us to grow into what Family Promise is today.

As you may know, I announced my retirement in October. I have thought for years about when I would want to retire, and I have decided the time is right. Family Promise has never been stronger. I have been blessed to work with a strong Board of Trustees and a talented staff at the national office. Our Director of Affiliate Services, Claas Ehlers, will serve as President of Family Promise after I retire on January 15. He has been with our organization for 14 years and is deeply committed to our mission. Claas possesses a rare combination of knowledge, dedication, and compassion along with a keen strategic vision. I can think of no one better to lead Family Promise in the future.

While I am stepping down as President, I will continue my involvement as President Emeritus. Claas has asked me to continue to speak at events and meet with Affiliate leadership, which I enjoy very much. I will also continue to

*(continued on page 2)***Fall Fling Packs the House**

Nearly 175 friends and benefactors attended Family Promise's Fall Fling Cocktail Buffet & Auction November 20 at Canoe Brook Country Club in Summit, New Jersey. It was a celebration of the work being done by Family Promise to help homeless and low-income families, as well as an opportunity to introduce the organization to new supporters.

The festivities included live music, cocktails, dinner, and silent and live

auctions to raise funds for the development and support of our Affiliates across the country. Auction items ranged from luxurious trips to New Orleans, British Columbia and the Sonoma Valley to fine dinners, cooking classes and golf packages at prestigious local clubs.

Fall Fling was also an opportunity to honor Family Promise Founder Karen Olson who has announced she will be retiring in January. Board Chair Cary

*(continued on page 2)***Engaging Students is a Win-Win Proposition**

In 2014, Amalia Tobias, a freshman at Summit High School in Summit, NJ, and long-time Family Promise volunteer, took two friends with her to spend time with families at a host congregation. They so enjoyed the experience that Amalia began to consider how she could get more students involved. She thought, "Wow, what would happen if I actually made this a club?"

That spring, the Family Promise Club was born. Less than two years later, nearly 50 students participate,

*Amalia Tobias*

working together to impact the lives of homeless families in the Union County program.

Amalia envisioned the club as a way to provide volunteer opportunities for students—visiting congregations to play with the children, helping kids with their homework and spending time with the families.

But once they began meeting with Union County Director Geleen Donovan, they realized they could also use their organization to raise funds and awareness in the community.

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President's Message

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volunteer locally with our Union County program.

I am so grateful for the involvement of so many people in this organization, which enables us to help so many families. From our incredible staff and our board to all those working in our 199 Affiliates across the country, to you, our donors. All change so many lives every day.

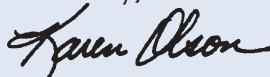
"When I look back on all that Family Promise has accomplished, I am filled with joy."

As I visit Affiliates across the country, I hear time and again about how Family Promise has changed lives. Families tell me that our staff and volunteers have become their family. They don't judge but believe in them and by so doing, guests begin to believe in themselves again. By providing encouragement and love, guests are given hope—hope that they can change their lives and have a brighter future. And volunteers tell me how much it means for them to be able to give back, right in their own community. This is a true testament to our founding principle—that people are compassionate and want to make a difference and together we can accomplish what we cannot on our own.

When I look back on all that Family Promise has accomplished, I am filled with joy. And when I consider how many hearts and lives we have yet to touch, I remain inspired.

My heartfelt thanks for your support of Family Promise.

Sincerely,



Karen Olson

Engaging Students

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According to Donovan, "It was a natural evolution with these kids, after they got to know the families by volunteering throughout the year, to create a formal club. They had the passion for our cause already through getting to know the families, which made it so easy and natural to develop as fundraisers."

This fall, rather than hosting a traditional charity run or fashion show, they chose to create "Pursue the Promise," a scavenger hunt designed to educate participants about homelessness. The club worked all summer, approaching local businesses for sponsorships ranging from \$100-\$500, as well as asking their friends and family for support. At the end of the

day, the club donated \$22,000 to Family Promise-Union County to help serve local families.

Tobias is still amazed at their success. "Our club, in less than two years, has achieved so much. We have students who are learning as well as impacting the lives of many homeless families, something that I never believed could happen on such a grand scale. The fact is that teenagers are capable of so much and when we put our energy together the ability to help others increases tremendously. One thing this has taught me—when you have an idea, act on it, because you'll never know how successful it could be without trying!"

And Donovan, wearing her Affiliate director's cap, sees a long-term benefit to working with students. "As an added bonus, engaging these students at such a young age gives you the

opportunity to strengthen their commitment to the program for years to come. Our philosophy, for our families and our volunteers, is that you're joining a community. Now these kids are part of the fundraising community, which is pretty awesome."



Geleen Donovan addresses the troops.

Fall Fling Packs the House

(continued from page 1)

Hardy spoke for the entire organization when he said, "Karen's vision, inspiration and tireless commitment to helping families in need have been the driving force behind Family Promise. It is because of Karen's leadership that we have built an organization that has not only served more than 650,000 family members but has also provided a way for thousands of Americans across the country to make a difference."

Thanks to the generous contributions of our guests and sponsors, the event raised nearly \$275,000 in



Karen Olson and Trustee Carmine DiSibio.

Helping a Pennsylvania Family Build a New Life

Time was running out for Kristina Lucas and her four children, then ages 2, 5, 10 and 12. The family was staying in a homeless shelter that enforced a 15-day limit. Before that, for a few months, she had lived with family members, who could no longer make room for her family. Going back home wasn't an option, as the living situation she had left behind was violent, leaving Lucas and her children emotionally scarred. Fortunately, just as their stay at the shelter was coming to an end, they obtained a referral to Family Promise of Lycoming County (PA).

Lucas credits Family Promise with changing her family's future. "I loved the program," Lucas said. "So many things in my life are better now."

When Lucas entered Family Promise, she did not have a high school degree. Executive Director Melissa Magargle and Case Manager Jenny Hull worked with Lucas to obtain her GED, and then assisted her in enrolling in an associate's degree program and completing the financial aid forms. More importantly, they helped her gain the confidence she needed to be successful in college.



Kristina and her children.

Hull also worked intensively with Lucas on budgeting. Lucas said the classes helped her understand the importance of paying her bills first and saving whatever was left over rather than spending it (Hull calls Lucas a "super-saver"). Lucas proudly points out that her son now plays football and basketball and her daughter is a cheerleader, activities she could never afford before her stay in Family Promise.

The budgeting skills Lucas learned at Family Promise were tested this summer, as she works at a Head Start

program that follows a school-year calendar. While Lucas received unemployment during the two months when the Head Start was closed, the amount was less than her paycheck. "I knew I had to save to get through the summer, and we did fine," she said. "Since Family Promise, I have also been able to put away money for Christmas presents, for the first time ever."

The Affiliate's parenting and mentoring classes also helped the family heal. The younger boys learned how to calm down to interact with the other families in the program, while the daughter received the counseling she needed to heal from her violent childhood.

Lucas, now pursuing her bachelor's degree, said that Family Promise continues to provide care and support for her family. "Some of the church volunteers will still call me to make sure that I have enough food and other essentials," she said. "I know that I can call Melissa and Jenny, and I will have them right away."

"Through the program, I found more than a new home," she concluded. "I gained a family."

gifts and donations, including nearly \$100,000 pledged for the development of three new Affiliates nationwide. We gratefully acknowledge our sponsors: Guggenheim Partners; Ernst & Young; Johnston Asset Management Corporation; Bench International; Celgene; S. Rubenstein Family Foundation; Chubb Group of Insurance Companies; Fidelity Investments; Point View Wealth Management, Inc.; Basset Associates; Bourne, Noll & Kenyon, P.C.; The Glenmede Trust Company, N.A.; Lindabury, McCormick, Estabrook & Cooper, P.C.; Lois Schneider Realtor; The Other Fellow First Foundation.



Place your bids!

**FALL
FLING**
**RAISED
NEARLY
\$275,000**

**INCLUDING NEARLY
\$100,000
PLEDGED FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF 3 NEW
AFFILIATES NATIONWIDE**

Welcoming our new Affiliates...

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Double the Impact of Your Contribution!

Does your employer have a matching gift program? Many employers will match the charitable contributions or volunteer hours of their employees, retirees and/or employees' spouses. Please ask your employer for a match to help us provide more services to homeless families!

If you have questions, contact Annual Fund Director Penny Lacovara at placovara@familypromise.org or call 908-273-1100, ext. 21.

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Family Promise® is a national volunteer-based nonprofit organization founded on the belief that Americans are compassionate people who want to make a difference. We are committed to help low-income and homeless families reclaim and maintain independence through our five program areas: Family Promise Program, Family Mentoring, Just Neighbors, Community Initiatives and Voices Uniting.