



A message from the President...



Dear Friends,

In this newsletter you will meet two exceptional women. One is Candice Stewart-Fife, the new Director for our Affiliate in Bryan County, Georgia, which will start serving families this fall. The other is Jen Isralowitz, a longtime volunteer and donor with Congregation Ohr Shalom here in New Jersey.

These women have much in common: They are dedicated, capable, loving mothers who have used their professional training to make their mark on the world. They both have a strong link to Family Promise and are fierce advocates for children and families who experience homelessness.

Their pathways to Family Promise, however, are very different. Jen left her job as an attorney to focus on her family. With her congregation deeply involved with Family Promise, she and her children volunteered to serve families in the program. Those families have helped shape her children's understanding of community and their role within it. Candice also connected with Family Promise in New Jersey, but as a guest, more than 20 years ago. The intervening years have seen her children grow up, go to college and the military, and Candice gain her degree and eventually become an Affiliate Director.

This is about making a difference. People like Jen and her children, along with the other 180,000 volunteers nationally, help change the future for children and

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National Support Brings Local Change

While the creation of Affiliates is a key goal for Family Promise, much of the national office's time and resources are spent helping Affiliates maximize their potential. A dynamic, energized Affiliate excels in making a real and lasting difference in the lives of the families it serves. Family Promise of Greater Roanoke, Virginia (FPGR) is a perfect example.

When Marie Muddiman became Executive Director in 2011, the Roanoke Affiliate had been in existence for nearly fifteen years; they were a staunch member of the local community of care. Muddiman said,

"Our job doesn't end with creating Affiliates. Our focus every day is on helping them march towards excellence."

—Family Promise President Claas Ehlers

when she started, "Families were being provided a safe, warm place to stay while they searched for permanent housing. Congregations were providing the love and care that they are so good at providing. But through our initial review, the board and I came to understand that we still had a long way to go to get where we wanted to be."

Muddiman reached out to the national office for help. Family Promise dispatched national Associate Kathy Stockburger to evaluate the Affiliate and assess its needs. Working closely with its board, Stockburger guided them towards the development of a rigorous strategic plan. The plan



Marie Muddiman (center) with staff and Regional Director Jeanna Beck (second from left).

called for a restructuring of their board and outlined steps to greatly increase their community engagement. Their goal was to go from good to outstanding—and to change many more lives in the process.

Just months after taking over as Director, Muddiman attended her first national conference and found it invaluable. "I learned more at my first Family Promise conference than at any conference I've attended in my career," she said. "In fact, one key lesson led directly to the creation of two new units of housing for graduate families."

FPGR continues to make good use of Family Promise's regional support structure, hosting national staff on a regular basis. According to Muddiman, national Associate Tom Cioffi's training on recruiting congregations was "phenomenal." He convinced the board that it has to be a full-time, year-round effort. "His visit totally changed the way we approach recruitment." And they also work

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President's Message

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parents we serve. They have a profound impact. The courage of people like Candice to come into Family Promise and accept the community's support to regain their independence has an impact as well. It helps inform our understanding that family homelessness is not acceptable and, importantly, we can change the conditions that cause it.

Candice and Jen have never met. Yet, neither would be where she is today if not for so many other people like themselves, involved in Family Promise across this country. The commitment of donors like Jen makes it possible for us to provide the training and guidance necessary for new Affiliates, like Family Promise of Bryan County, to develop. The wisdom and will of people like Candice, who not only regain housing but continue striving to realize their incredible potential—their promise—help us do our work even better.

I thank them both. As I thank all of you—our supporters, volunteers, guests and staff members, for what you do.

Sincerely,



Claas Ehlers

Welcoming our new Affiliates...

Butler County, OH
Larimer County, CO

National Support Brings Local Change

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closely with Jeanna Beck, their Regional Director. "When I need something, I can always call on her," said Muddiman. Beck is currently advising them on options for a new Day Center as well as training their case management team on best practices in volunteer engagement.

And Roanoke takes advantage of Family Promise's national partnership with Woodforest National Bank. Employees from the local branch volunteer at the Affiliate, using *New Beginnings*,



Family Promise President Claas Ehlers speaks at FPGR event.

Family Promise's financial literacy curriculum, to help guests work towards economic security. All current guest families take part, with former guests eligible to participate, as well.

"The total accessibility of the Family Promise national office has helped us move from where we were when I started to where we are now," said Muddiman. "They've provided intensive support, but always with acceptance if we were not yet ready to take a particular step. They've always been there to hold our hands through our growing pains."

And grow they have. In the past five years, FPGR has:

- increased its budget from \$158,000 to \$280,000,
- doubled the number of families served annually,
- improved their rate of permanently housed families to 85%, and
- decreased their families' average length of stay from 72 days in 2011 to 46 days in 2015.

It's an incredible success story and Muddiman has good reason to be proud. But she doesn't take all the credit. "We couldn't have done it without national. Nowhere else I've worked provides these types of resources. We're immensely thankful for their continued support."

A Donor's Voice...

I became involved with Family Promise seven years ago, when a friend invited my daughter and me to join her family at Summit's Unitarian Church hosting guest families on Christmas Day. Those few hours in the church basement exposed how little my family understood about homelessness in our local community.

My daughter spent time playing with several children of homeless families. She was struck by the fact that these children were so much like her—they listened to the same music, played similar games, and went to school every day. And I came to realize that these parents were working hard to provide

for their children, and just needed the support of the community during a difficult time in their lives.

Over the years, as my daughter became involved in the Family Promise Club in high school, we have volunteered in local churches and at our own synagogue, Congregation Ohr Shalom. These institutions form the infrastructure of the organization,



Jen Isralowitz

Coming Full Circle

Nearly 23 years ago, Candice Fife-Stewart gave birth to her first daughter in the Family Promise program. In what could have been her darkest hour, Candice encountered overwhelming tenderness, and was not alone. Today, the Union County, NJ, native is offering new life for families experiencing homelessness as the Director of Family Promise of Bryan County (GA), opening this fall.

"I never felt that I was a victim. Or that I was powerless," Candice said of her time as a guest. "Many people think 'I'm homeless so I'm helpless,' but that wasn't the reality for me." Candice attributes this outlook to her role models, Family Promise Founder Karen Olson and longtime director Barbara Aaronoff, who she says gave her "more time and kindness than she could ever repay."

Family Promise volunteers threw Candice three baby showers, determined to make sure she had everything she needed for the baby's arrival. They asked about her cravings and prepared meals accordingly. Candice built connections with these volunteers, strengthened her resume, and gained the confidence to apply to college.

An avid learner with a mindset for numbers and operations, Candice

went on to obtain five degrees in finance and accounting, including an MBA and a Masters in Management and Leadership.

Family Promise made this uniquely possible, she says. "It's what I needed to create a stable life. Family Promise is so much more than a bed and a meal in that way."

Candice had two more children and is proudly watching them go off to college and into exciting careers. Her eldest, born a tiny guest of Family Promise, will graduate this year with a degree in Sociology. "She likes helping people, too," Candice notes. Her son is planning to own his own business and her youngest daughter is studying to become a pharmacist.

With her family well on its way in the world, Candice has turned her efforts to the Affiliate in Bryan County, where "homelessness is unseen and everywhere," and Family Promise is the only shelter program. Working with a board of thirteen and a growing staff, Candice will offer a



Candice Fife-Stewart

unique perspective to the guests she encounters.

"Families look at me and think: 'You don't know where we're coming from; you don't know what we're going through.' But I do. And in that way, I can really reach them," Candice says. "If my story will help the next person experiencing this, then it's all worth it."

Going forward, Candice plans to focus on financial literacy for the families she serves and has a goal to see at least 10 transitional housing units built in Bryan County. "I'm partnering with the right agencies to get done what needs to be done in our community. And it's working."

Candice exemplifies the adage that life is a gift—it offers us the privilege, opportunity, and responsibility to give something back by improving ourselves. "I know I was meant to come back to Family Promise this way. I'm paying forward all the time given to me, all the kind conversations and love. It's just a small thank you."

Note: Candice will be speaking about her experience with Family Promise at the Fall Fling on Friday November 4, 2016 in Summit, NJ.

A Donor's Voice...

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uniting our community in service. I think it is important for my kids to see how we can make a difference in the lives of others by converting our local houses of worship into temporary homes for families in need.

The more I learn about this organization, the more I want to be involved. My husband and I became donors after hearing the stories of hardworking families who were able to secure housing and financial independence after a temporary assist

from Family Promise. I was especially touched by a proud family who received help when they were at a crossroads and whose children are now off to college.

I've watched Family Promise change lives, one family at a time—bringing together people who need a boost with volunteers who are eager to provide one. I believe our entire community benefits from the experience.

Jen Isralowitz
Summit, NJ

Our Impact Nationwide

6,000 Congregations and Organizations

180,000
Volunteers

738,405
BED NIGHTS
PROVIDED

2,215,215 meals shared

1,892,800
volunteer
hours served

\$44,594,368
volunteer
time value

FALL FLING₂₀₁₆



SAVE THE DATE

Family Promise
Fall Fling 2016

HONORING
KAREN OLSON, FOUNDER

Friday, November 4, 2016 7–11 p.m.
Canoe Brook Country Club

For ticket & sponsorship information, contact
Sandy Rodriguez at 908-273-1100 x38 or
srodriguez@familypromise.org

**Make a legacy gift to Family Promise and create
a brighter future for tomorrow's families.**

Talk with your attorney or financial advisor and
add this sentence to your will:

I give \$ _____ (or ____ % of my estate) to Family Promise, Inc., Summit, NJ

Please let us know if you have included Family Promise in your will by emailing
our Annual Fund Director, Penny Lacovara, at placovara@familypromise.org.

Family Promise

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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.