



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



A MESSAGE  
FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

When I was five years old, I learned to play checkers. My teacher was Clara Seeger, the older landlady who owned the house where my mom rented the top floor, in Flatbush, Brooklyn. She was a master instructor, or I was a prodigy, because I never lost a game the summer I spent with her.

Of course, what she taught me was not just how to play a game. That home was the seventh I had been in by then, and the first my mom controlled. What she taught me was to value myself, to appreciate the incredible hard work my mom did, and that I could have the future—the opportunity—that allows me to lead this organization today.

I shared this story at our national conference because that theme runs through everything we do: opportunity.

There is the opportunity inherent in our core work with families. There is also the opportunity for Family Promise to have a much larger impact nationally.

Conference celebrated both of these. We engaged the Secretary of HUD, met with more than 100 congressional representatives, and had a dozen national partners present. We held sessions on ways to strengthen Affiliates and create more pathways for families to be successful. We announced several major partnerships, including an exciting new

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## 15th Family Promise National Conference Celebrates Change



Family Promise CEO Claas Ehlers addresses the conference.

Family Promise leaders from Juneau to Jacksonville, from Portland to Pearl Harbor, came to our nation's capital for the 15th Annual Family Promise Conference. The theme was United We Serve, but as Family Promise's CEO Claas Ehlers pointed out, it could just as easily have been United We Change.

"Being the national leader matters," said Ehlers. "The time has come for Family Promise not just to have an impact in the communities that Affiliates serve, but to be the default approach in any community where there is family homelessness, and where there are existing community resources. In short, everywhere in this country."

More than 350 Family Promise staff, board members, former guests, and volunteers gathered to participate in innovative and inspirational workshops and plenary events. And, on Monday October 16, Advocacy Day brought coordinated meetings on the Hill between 74 congressional offices, including those of 45 senators, and more than 100 Affiliate representatives from 29 states to advocate for the needs of children and their families.

The conference started Friday afternoon with a dialogue among HUD Secretary, Dr. Ben Carson, and former guests on our Guest Advisory Council. The conversation explored current HUD policy and making family homelessness a priority. That evening, noted author and radio host Krista Tippett provided a thoughtful and stirring speech about compassion and the imperative to serve that clearly resonated with attendees. As Tippett succinctly put it:

"Compassion is always linked to practical actions of hospitality, generosity, and presence...just being there."



HUD Sec. Ben Carson discusses policy with FP Reg. Dir. Angelica Johnson and our Guest Advisory Council.

Workshops were led by Family Promise staff, Affiliate leaders, and an impressive array of experts, including representatives from

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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collaboration with Woodforest National Bank that focuses on empowerment.

As the year comes to a close, we can look back at many impressive accomplishments in 2017. But we have the opportunity—and obligation—to do even more. Far too many children and their families still face the uncertainty of homelessness. With our 200+ Affiliates, and our programming in prevention and stabilization, as well as emergency shelter, we need to continue to be the leader on this issue.

What is special about Family Promise is that we do so by using what is already there—existing resources within the community. That includes volunteers, people like Mrs. Seeger, who know that even the smallest actions can change a child's future.

Thank you for being a part of that change.

Sincerely,



Claas Ehlers



Portland is Affiliate #207—same as Maine's area code.

## Welcoming our New Affiliates

PORTLAND, ME  
DAVIE COUNTY, NC

# Leaders Show Up

Family Promise was formed thirty years ago around the idea of providing shelter and hospitality to families in need, but we have grown into so much more. As the national leader in the fight against family homelessness, Family Promise recognizes that we have a responsibility to inform national policy that impacts our families and our service provision on the ground.

On Monday, October 16, as the culmination of our 15th Family Promise National Conference, our first Advocacy Day provided opportunities for more than 100 Affiliate leaders representing 29 states to visit their representatives' offices on Capitol Hill to be a voice for children and their families experiencing homelessness. Recognizing that this is a bipartisan issue, representatives and staffs from 74 congressional offices met with Family Promise, listening to our concerns, sharing their expertise, and strategizing together on how best to move forward legislation and policies that will help the families we serve reclaim their independence.

### Our policy priorities for Advocacy Day meetings included:

**Affordable Housing:** We are experiencing a national affordable housing crisis. Approximately 39 million households are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Another 19 million households are *severely* cost-burdened, spending more than 50% of their income on housing. We need support for existing programming that builds and maintains affordable housing units, and we need new programs that expand affordable housing opportunities.

**Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Funding:** We support the ask that HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants be funded nationally at \$2.6 billion in 2018. This would end homelessness for 40,000 more people and allow communities to keep up with rising needs due to lack of affordable rents.



Family Promise storms the Hill.

**Support of the Homeless Children and Youth Act (HCYA):** The definitions of homelessness between HUD and the Department of Education do not align, which results in the fact that the majority of children experiencing homelessness are not eligible for HUD homeless assistance. This critical bill would change that.

### Preservation of Shelter and Services:

With a focus on Housing First, we have seen decreased funding for shelters and services. We support the Housing First Model, but believe that shelter and services are an essential part of the continuum of care.

Family Promise is proud to engage national leadership as they shape policy and funding that impacts our local communities. The foundation of Advocacy Day efforts were requests for endorsement of the HCYA of 2017, and they were met with a great response—special thanks to Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC) and Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) for adding their names as co-sponsors to this legislation.

To get involved and add your voice, please contact Stacy Pollard at [spollard@familypromise.org](mailto:spollard@familypromise.org).



# Fall Fling Fundraiser Recalls the Roaring 20's

Flappers and fedoras were the order of the evening as Family Promise hosted its annual Fall Fling at Canoe Brook Country Club on November 3. With 145 guests in attendance, the Twenties-themed event supported Family Promise's mission to mobilize communities and empower families experiencing homelessness into sustainable independence.

The gala was an opportunity to reconnect with old friends as well as reach out to new supporters, as 50 percent of this year's guests were new to Family Promise. They learned of the work being done by more than 180,000 volunteers in 200+ Affiliates across 43 states nationwide. 2017 saw the organization's 1,500th Community Initiative developed—targeted solutions created by Affiliates at the community level.

"Many people don't realize that Family Promise is a national organization, founded right here in Summit 29 years ago by our own Karen Olson," said Angela Schroeder, Chair of the Family Promise Board of Trustees. "Attendees of our Fall Fling have been the foundational support needed for nearly 70,000 children and their parents to secure sustainable independence each and every year."



Kat Lilley tells her story.

The event netted more than \$280,000, the majority secured through the *Power of One* campaign, an initiative to develop eight new Affiliates and serve an additional 1,000 children every year in areas that have no support systems in place for families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Kat Lilley, a mother, former guest, volunteer, and now a staff member at Family Promise of Colorado Springs, provided the evening's emotional highlight when she shared her inspirational story about the transformational experience of Family Promise:

"Just when I thought I had nowhere to turn, I found Family Promise and my life immediately began to change.

Our time at Family Promise was a period of worry and anxiety, but also of support, compassion, and most important of all, family. Before long, I was able to re-establish a stable life for me and my children, and I have Family Promise to thank for that," Kat said.

Cara Bradshaw, Family Promise's Chief Impact Officer, acknowledged the generosity which made the evening a smashing success. "We are so grateful for the many community leaders who make this event possible. Our vision is to be recognized as the national leader addressing family homelessness and an innovator in community-directed action. Our individual good—and our collective good—are served when families in America are offered the resources and skills to thrive."

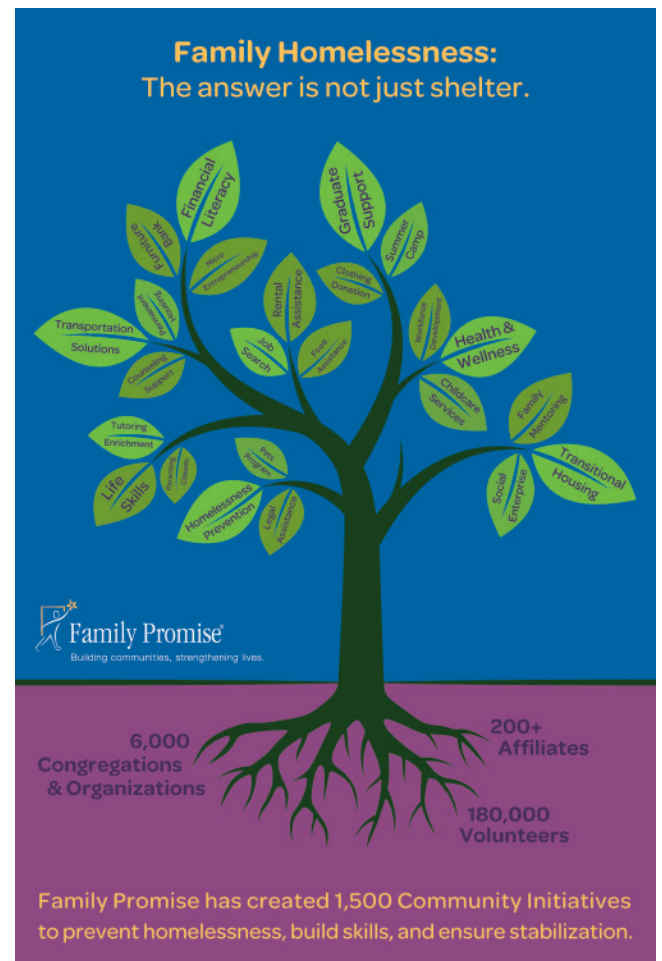
Family Promise thanks its sponsors Woodforest National Bank, PetSmart Charities, Celgene, Philadelphia Insurance, Ashley HomeStore of Central New Jersey and Staten Island, Point View Wealth Management, and Lois Schneider Realtor.



Fall Fling Planning Committee celebrates in style.

***We are so grateful for the many community leaders who make this event possible.***

*—Cara Bradshaw,  
Family Promise Chief Impact Officer*



## 15TH FAMILY PROMISE NATIONAL CONFERENCE CELEBRATES CHANGE

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universities and corporate partners, the Federal Reserve, and the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Topics included best practices in board growth, fund development, and case management. Among the more than 40 workshops and roundtables offered, many focused on the challenges ahead, such as the future of the workforce and how

to expand our volunteer base. Numerous partnerships and initiatives were debuted, addressing permanent housing, enterprise, and financial capability for Family Promise guests.

As always, the conference included myriad opportunities to network, celebrate, and reflect. Saturday evening saw attendees cruise the Potomac for an unparalleled view of the national monuments at night. Sunday's Interfaith Worship Service tied millennia old concepts of hospitality with the work today of more than 6,000

congregations and organizations across the country.

United we Serve. And with the collective impact of more than 180,000 volunteers, United we Change!



Cara Bradshaw, Krista Tippet and Karen Olson

## 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 helping 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.