



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



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

We like to tell our Affiliates that they don't have donors or funders. What they have are investors.

Why do we use that term? Because giving to Family Promise isn't a charitable contribution, it is an act of transformation. Isn't that what an investment is, ultimately?

There are many ways to measure the return on investment for those who support Family Promise. We have the high rate of success, the efficient use of resources, the mobilization of 180,000 volunteers, the creation of nearly a thousand additional programs. But in this newsletter we can see the most powerful return on investment: people's lives.

The Guest Advisory Council, which has added two new members, is one of the most important groups within Family Promise. The GAC is made up of former guests who are part of a team that gives advice, guidance, and input on every major decision we make at Family Promise. They are invaluable.

This is possible because people invested in Family Promise. Affiliates invested in families who needed help at a difficult time. And our former guests invested in themselves, working from their strengths to be empowered and successful in their home communities.

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A Community Comes Together

In November, Family Promise launched the *Power of One* campaign to create eight new Affiliates and serve an additional 1,000 children each year. The Initiative honors Family Promise Founder Karen Olson, and raised more than \$188,000 from 48 longtime and new supporters. Family Promise is leveraging these resources to respond to new Affiliate development opportunities in communities from Maine to Hawaii.

One of those Affiliates—Greater Portland Family Promise in Maine—is preparing to open in July. Just last summer, due to high demand on a strained low-income housing and rental market, Portland social services began housing families in administrative offices and makeshift sleeping quarters. Families could find no space at the 36-unit family shelter or at three area hotels. Parents were forced to travel long distances to their jobs, and, in some cases, were separated from their children. The Portland Public School system identified 186 homeless children in 2016 alone.

Family Promise diagnosed this need, offered expertise as the national leader addressing family homelessness, and engaged the community to respond through a cost-effective and sustainable model. Family Promise Regional Director Angelica Johnson has provided ongoing support and resources to a coalition of community members dedicated to making a difference. Within six months, the group secured \$55,000 in new funding with a series of grant proposals in the works. To date, nine host congregations and six support congregations have committed to participate and the Portland Branch YMCA will serve as the Affiliate's day center at no cost. The YMCA will likely offer additional resources for the coming year, including a refurbishing of spaces used by the guest families.



Angelica Johnson, Sara Ewing-Merrill, and Courtney Tabor-Abbott.



Nearly 100 attended a community meeting at Woodfords Congregational Church.

The Affiliate recently conducted board orientation and coordinator training, and is well on its way to a successful opening. Sara Ewing-Merrill, who is leading the effort, says the Family Promise model is unparalleled in its ability to bring people together around a common goal:

"Working to develop a Family Promise Affiliate in Portland has built lasting bridges across divides in our community. Muslims, Jews, Christians, and unaffiliated people now know and respect

one another because of our shared passion to help families experiencing homelessness in our city and beyond. These bridges will only be strengthened as we work together, week by week, to care for the families who will enter our program. Welcoming the stranger is a core value of all faiths. We are blessed to be building bridges across the many divides that separate us. We are many. We are one."

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Now, they are giving their time, experience, and wisdom to help Family Promise transform more lives. That is the greatest return on investment of all.

Sincerely,



Claas Ehlers

47% of Americans lack the ability to pay for a surprise \$400 bill without selling something or borrowing money



We are working to help families achieve sustainable financial independence.



Family Promise Launches *Pets with a Promise* Nationwide

When a family loses its home, it loses nearly everything. But, with Family Promise, they don't have to lose their pets. Family Promise introduced *Pets with a Promise* in February, which provides direct funding for Family Promise Affiliates nationwide for a variety of services, allowing families to keep their pets while working towards independence in the program.

The program was initiated with the help of a \$150,000 grant from PetSmart Charities,[®] the leading funder of animal welfare in North America, which will be disbursed in \$2,500 increments to participating Family Promise Affiliates. The funds will allow our Affiliates to offer direct services to families with pets including boarding, vaccinations, veterinary care, pet supplies, and transportation related to boarding or fostering.

This program continues a five-year effort to address the heartbreaking choice that families often face when losing their homes—to seek shelter or to keep their beloved pets. Family Promise President Claas Ehlers notes, “Just because children and their families lose their homes, they should not have to lose their pets. PetSmart Charities recognizes that its resources can prevent that additional trauma for families and keep the whole family—including its four-legged members—together. With their support and through the work of our 200+ Family Promise Affiliates, *Pets with a Promise* is an important part of a holistic, community-based approach to addressing family homelessness.”

Family Promise began working with PetSmart, Inc., in 2012, with the innovative *PetSmart Promise* program. On-site kennel facilities were built at Family Promise Day Centers nationwide to house guests' pets. PetSmart also donated and installed aquariums to help teach the values and responsibilities of pet ownership, provided boarding space at PetsHotels, and created a fostering manual and network to house pets when on-site facilities were not available. That program shifted to PetSmart Charities in 2017, but the mission remains the same—keeping families and their pets together.



“We’re staying together!”

“*Pets with a Promise* is an important part of a holistic, community-based approach to addressing family homelessness.”

—Claas Ehlers, Family Promise President

“At PetSmart Charities, our mission is to find lifelong, loving homes for all pets by supporting programs and thought leadership that bring people and pets together,” says David Haworth, DVM, Ph.D., President of PetSmart Charities. “By working with organizations like Family Promise to support *Pets with a Promise*, we hope to create more resources for families with pets during difficult transitions and alleviate pet homelessness across the country.”



President Claas Ehlers with Trustees Richard Vicens, Angela Schroeder, Cary Hardy, and Martin Wise.

A Focus on Leadership

Family Promise is always looking to take advantage of the extraordinary talents of those who have been touched by our organization. Whether a former guest or a captain of industry, compassionate individuals who want to make a difference are the magic ingredients in our recipe for success in helping families experiencing homelessness.

One area of focus over the past year has been on expanding the national Board of Directors to include new business sectors and geographical areas. We are proud to welcome three new board members, further enhancing our ability to fulfill our mission and build our brand.



Kevin Barrett

President of Altegra Health in Weston, Florida, Kevin brings more than 25 years of experience in business development in the healthcare industry, providing invaluable expertise in growing our organization nationwide.



Eileen Serra

Senior Advisor at JP Morgan Chase, Eileen adds elite skills in marketing and strategic growth initiatives as we look to raise our profile as a national influencer in the fields of social services and community engagement.



Nadim Ahmed

President of Worldwide Markets for Celgene Corporation, Nadim has extensive international experience in communications and marketing.

Angela Schroeder, Family Promise Board Chair, said, “We are thrilled to welcome our new Trustees to the National Board. Kevin adds impressive leadership while enhancing our national footprint in the south, Eileen

brings years of consumer marketing experience, and Nadim’s global strategic perspective is invaluable to our growth trajectory.”

Family Promise also continues to develop our innovative Guest Advisory Council, comprised of former guests of Affiliates nationwide. We added two new members this year, bringing the Council’s membership to seven.



Candice Stewart-Fife

A former guest of the Union County (NJ) program, Candice has gone on to obtain five degrees, including two Master’s, since graduating from the program and recently accepted the position of Executive Director of Family Promise of Bryan County (GA).



Syri Gerstner

Syri was a guest at Family Promise of Greater Phoenix, where she now leads the Graduate Program for families transitioning back to home and work life.

Our entire organization, and the families we serve, benefit immeasurably from the knowledge and generosity of these former guests. They help shape our efforts and spread our message of hope and compassion in the fight to end family homelessness.

Family Promise is not a top-down organization—each of our Affiliates is an independent entity, meeting their specific challenges with their own unique solutions. But the national office provides expertise and collates knowledge gleaned from helping more than 200 Affiliates develop over thirty years. Our Board of Directors and our Guest Advisory Council are key elements of that endeavor, and we appreciate their valuable contributions.



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Please Join Us

Our Promise to Children Breakfast

Wednesday, May 17, 2017
9 to 10 a.m.

Canoe Brook Country Club
Summit, NJ

For more information, contact: Corina Borg at
908-273-1100x14 or cborg@familypromise.org



Welcoming our *New Affiliates*

ATLANTIC COUNTY, NJ

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT, CT

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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.