

## Kat Lilley Joins National Board



Kat Lilley is making her mark in the fight against family homelessness.

family's story of homelessness and recovery at a Family Promise event. Or you may have read one of many of the stories of how she has served families in crisis through her work at Family Promise of Greater Denver.

Family Promise is pleased to welcome Ms. Lilley to the Board of Trustees. Her insight and expertise make hers a valuable voice as Family Promise moves into its 31st year fighting family homelessness.

Ms. Lilley values Family Promise's holistic approach to battling homelessness. "Family Promise looks at what causes a homeless situation and what barriers must be overcome to make sure families have a solid foundation upon which to build their futures," she says.

If the name Kat Lilley sounds familiar, maybe it's because you've read of her advocacy efforts on behalf of families battling homelessness when she recently testified before Congress. Or perhaps you heard her share her

## FAMILY PROMISE®

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Family Promise® is a national nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization addressing the crisis of family homelessness in the U.S. Through a comprehensive set of solutions involving prevention, shelter, and stabilization, Family Promise empowers families experiencing or at risk of homelessness to reclaim and maintain their independence.

*Highlighting our achievements in the fight against family homelessness*



**A MESSAGE  
FROM THE CEO**

*Dear Friends,*

Even as we celebrate 30 years of service, Family Promise continues to look ahead. The face of homelessness has changed over the past three decades — a steadily rising cost of living and wages that don't keep pace make affordable housing beyond reach for a growing percentage of the population — and we're working harder than ever to change the future for families in need.

In this issue, you'll read about Family Promise's new Next Generation Committee, a group of millennials (young adults born between 1981 and 1996) who are advising us and sharing insights into an increasingly influential generation. We're excited about the diverse perspectives and potential this group brings.

Intentionally engaging future generations in our growth may be a new approach, but Family Promise has always focused on "the next generation" — children and the opportunities available to them as they grow up. Homelessness is many things: a tragedy, an indignity, a crisis. But it is also a thief that robs its youngest victims of the futures they deserve.

We continue to partner, innovate, and invest to level the playing field for children in our programs. We recently worked

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## Girls Battling Homelessness Find a Home in Family Promise Girl Scout Troops

Not long ago, eight-year-old Emma\* was worried about where she and her family would sleep at night. After losing their home, they spent weeks living out of a motel.

But since finding Family Promise, Emma and her family are in their own home, and Emma's learning valuable skills, making friends, and anticipating sleeping under the stars at summer camp — all because of Family Promise's new Girl Scout troops.

Family Promise empowers low-income families to sustainable independence with services and supports that include access to community programs like Girl Scouts. But Girl Scout troops are formed based on where members reside. What if a girl doesn't have a home?

Two years ago, a Girl Scouts employee living in a New York City shelter decided to create

a troop for girls there. Troop 6000™ was created to serve girls in the NYC shelter system.

Since 2017, a handful of troops based on this model have formed across the country, offering girls who are coping with unstable living conditions valuable friendships, new experiences, and growth opportunities. Troops receive funding from grants and private donors.

Two troops recently established in New Jersey are run by Family Promise Affiliates in Essex and Union Counties. Girls in the troops, led by staffers, scout moms, and community volunteers, are currently served by or have graduated from Family Promise's emergency shelter program.

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Campouts, field trips, new friends, and more...Family Promise's new Girl Scout troops have a busy year ahead!



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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with Sesame Street in Communities, serving on their Advisory Board to create resources on homelessness. The National Head Start Association, which cited homelessness as a priority in 2019, invited me to participate in a keynote panel at its winter conference this year. And as you'll read in this issue, we've partnered with the Girl Scouts to ensure that normative and affirming opportunities most of us take for granted, like scouting programs, are accessible to children who lack stable housing.

This year, we will expand these sorts of efforts, developing programming and linking with resources that address toxic stress, childcare, health, and more. We know that doing so creates meaningful change and moves us closer to realizing our aspiration: To change the future for one million children by 2030.

A child's future begins at home. Thank you for supporting our efforts to provide the opportunities every child deserves.

Very best regards,

Claas Ehlers

Family Promise joins the **8 percent** of charities that have received a **4-star rating** by Charity Navigator for 6 or more consecutive years, signifying strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.



Telling Stories

They say “a picture’s worth a thousand words,” but stories have the power to create change. Stories are what Family Promise is built upon, and StoryCorps™, a public service organization that shares and preserves the stories of people around the country, has partnered with Family Promise to give a voice to families’ experiences with homelessness.

Nicknamed “America’s oral history project,” Brooklyn-based StoryCorps has taped more than 60,000 interviews involving over 100,000 participants from all backgrounds and walks of life. Pairs of individuals — family, friends, colleagues — record interviews with one another that are archived at the American Folk Life Center at the Library of Congress.

As the StoryCorps Mobile Tour makes its way across the U.S. for the 14th consecutive year, Family Promise Affiliates in many regions are sharing their stories. The tour will stop in ten cities, recording up to 150 interviews per stop, including many from Family Promise.

“StoryCorps is intentional in our community partnerships,” says Fernanda Espinosa, StoryCorps’ Associate Manager of Mobile Tour Partnerships. “We learn what’s going on in communities and invite

impactful organizations like Family Promise to be partners.”

In addition to recording interviews, StoryCorps offers workshops on collecting and sharing stories so storytelling will continue.

“Emotional, autobiographical storytelling has the power to heal and, in this case, the ability to expose the hidden truth of family homelessness in America,” explains Sandra Miniutti, Chief Operating Officer at Family Promise. “We’re honored to work with StoryCorps to share and preserve the stories of families we’ve empowered to overcome homelessness.”



The StoryCorps Mobile Tour may be coming to a city near you.

StoryCorps features some stories on their website and offers an online archive where tens of thousands of interviews can be accessed. Stay tuned — Family Promise stories will be hitting the airwaves in the months ahead!

Go to <https://storycorps.org/listen> and discover the voices of America.

Why I Give DONOR SPOTLIGHT: RICHARD SUN

Richard Sun has been involved with Family Promise for several years and values the direct way volunteers impact lives. A second-year student at Harvard Law School, Sun recently joined Family Promise’s new Next Generation Committee (see story in sidebar on this page) and will work with the group to engage younger supporters in the organization and the issue of family homelessness.

*“I’m excited to serve on the NextGen Committee and help broaden Family Promise’s reach, volunteer base, and impact.”*

It was through Boy Scouts that Sun first volunteered in his community, and he says that helped establish his philanthropic mindset. A past city councilman in Summit, NJ, he now volunteers with an urban research and advocacy organization in the New York Tri-state area.

Sun suspects today’s increasingly digital society impacts how younger people approach philanthropy, but he doesn’t doubt the social commitment of his generation.



Richard Sun wants to see younger generations getting behind the issue of family homelessness.

“We’re incredibly active and vocal,” he says.

Sun believes young people are aware of the affordable housing crisis and that Family Promise’s mission resonates with them, which could translate to an investment in the issue of family homelessness if approached the right way.

“I’m excited to serve on the NextGen Committee and help broaden Family Promise’s reach, volunteer base, and impact,” Sun says.

GIRL SCOUT TROOPS

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So far, scouts have gone “camping” at Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, attended a Radio City Christmas Spectacular performance and backstage tour, and participated in “Cookie Rookie” training, a workshop that teaches new scouts all they need to know about selling Girl Scout cookies.

Geleen Donovan, Executive Director of Family Promise-Union County, says scouting offers opportunities that are usually beyond the means of low-income families — like learning outdoor survival skills

at summer camp or tracking cookie sales.

“I’m so grateful for this opportunity,” the mother of one scout comments. “We could never afford to do this on our own.”

The variety of experiences Girl Scouts offers young girls can be transformative, but none so much as the relationships they form with one another. One Family Promise scout sums it up simply: “It’s fun to be a Girl Scout. I met a lot of new friends here.”

*\*Name and other identifying details have been changed to protect privacy.*

Philanthropists of the Future

Millennials (born 1981–1996) have surpassed baby boomers as the largest adult generation. Often characterized as social and passionate about values, involving them in philanthropy is vital to the future of the nonprofit world. Recognizing the potential impact younger generations can have in the battle against family homelessness, Family Promise has formed the Next Generation Committee.

Seven accomplished young women and men representing diverse backgrounds and experiences will meet quarterly to brainstorm and devise strategies to engage younger audiences with Family Promise.

Committee member Nora Ali, a youth mentor and attorney, looks forward to the task.

“Millennials want creative, enduring ways to give back,” she says, adding, “I think the committee’s efforts will help sustain Family Promise and make its work even more meaningful.”

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