



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

A message from the President...

Dear Friends,

As I travel around the country, I am continually amazed and inspired by the people I meet at our Affiliates nationwide. These are the individuals who dedicate their time and talents to do the work of Family Promise in their communities. This past spring, many of these same people gathered in Orlando at our 10th Annual Conference, *Dare to Dream*. Each brought their own inspirational story of the challenges and rewards inherent with our mission.

Each Affiliate is developed through a collaborative effort between the national office of Family Promise and local leaders. Family Promise does the labor-intensive groundwork to get an Affiliate started—needs assessment, clergy visits, core group formation and guidance. But no Affiliate would ever develop without the collective vision of a local core group of committed people with the desire and determination to make a difference in their own cities and towns. Family Promise can provide the tools but it takes these groups, and the leaders who guide them, to plant the seed and nurture an Affiliate's growth.

Leaders like Roxanne Klingensmith, a pastor in Bozeman, Montana. Roxanne would not accept that her only way to help homeless families was to buy them bus tickets to Billings or Butte, the nearest cities with shelters. She worked tirelessly to create an Affiliate in Bozeman, battling to change community attitudes towards the homeless.

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Daring to Dream at Our National Conference



Worshipping as One at the Interfaith Service

More than 275 people from Affiliates nationwide gathered in Orlando from April 30th–May 2nd for Family Promise's 10th National Conference, *Dare to Dream*—from Board members to Affiliate Directors and staff members to volunteers.

The conference featured two distinguished keynote speakers. Dr. Christine Pohl, Professor of Church and Society/Christian Ethics at Asbury Theological Seminary, applied the theme of her seminal book, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, to the work we do every day at Family Promise.

And Wintley Phipps, founder of the U.S. Dream Academy and world-renowned gospel singer, wove together songs and words of hope during his inspirational keynote address to close the conference.



Keynote Speaker Rev. Wintley Phipps

He shared his life-affirming message that family must be the foundation as we work to build a brighter future for our children.

There was a wide range of workshops over the weekend—from recruiting congregations to planning successful events to using social media. Anna Claire Kuchta, Board Member, Lawton, OK said, "As a start-up network, we appreciated the vast array of workshop offerings which covered the entire gamut of IHN services. The presenters were astounding. Kudos to all!"

Singer/songwriter Ken Medema provided the entertainment on Friday night, with his uniquely interactive and improvisational performance engaging the audience as he has around the world for years. *Dare to Dream* served as the official release of his new CD, "Home Again," celebrating the work of Family Promise. The CD is available at the Family Promise website's store.

There was even time set aside to relax and enjoy friends, old and new. Many attendees spent Saturday evening at "the groove," Universal CityWalk's most popular nightclub,

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President's Message

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Or Tom Cioffi, a successful businessman in Lawrenceville, Georgia and volunteer at an Atlanta soup kitchen. When his church built a beautiful, \$4 million family center for their youth, the disparity between the two endeavors made it apparent that he and his church could be doing so much more to help those in need in their community. Tom became the driving force behind the development of Family Promise of Gwinnett County.

And like Ann Park, a retiree in Longview, Texas, who had been a key member of the core development groups for two of our Texas Affiliates. When she and her husband moved to Irving and she discovered they had no homeless shelters of any kind, she contacted Family Promise and offered to lead development of an Irving Affiliate—her third start-up in ten years!

These leaders, and many more like them, are the foundation of Family Promise. Confronted by the needs of families in their communities, they roll up their sleeves and begin the hard work of effecting real change—of marshalling resources and motivating support in the community. It may take months, even years, but eventually their efforts are rewarded with a new Family Promise Affiliate. And people's lives begin to change.

Roxanne, Tom and Ann dared to dream to change the world around them. Family Promise could not exist without these visionaries, these dreamers. But it also could not exist without the help of countless others—volunteers, donors, staff and Board members, all of whom contribute in very special ways to transforming the dream to a reality.

Sincerely,



Karen Olson

National Conference

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Ken Medema performs

while others visited Sea World or just enjoyed the Florida Sun. Kathy Bolster, Director of Family Promise of Charlotte, summed it up perfectly, "The conference was, as usual, a wonderful tool, both professionally and personally. And of course, the fact that the weather was beautiful, I got to hang out by the pool for short periods of time, and enjoy the company and dancing skills of my colleagues was an added bonus!"

"The conference proved yet again that we are doing God's work! I am so blessed to be part of this organization."

Kokie Dinnan, Director,
South Palm Beach County, FL

Dare to Dream was truly a collaborative effort, not just of the staff and volunteers who worked together for months to make the conference a reality, but of all the Family Promise representatives from across the country who strive each day to make a difference, one family at a time. Karen Olson, Founder of Family Promise, recognized that work in her President's Address on Friday evening. "People often ask me if I ever dreamed that Family Promise would become all that it has become, and the answer



Family Promise President Karen Olson opens the conference.

is 'yes.' I could dream it but I couldn't make that dream come true. You have built upon that dream. You have made us what we are today." ■

"When we get together in a setting of national Affiliates and consider how many families, parents and children are being helped to realize their dreams it is both humbling and gratifying."

Charlie Roe, Board President,
Salt Lake City, UT

Sowing the Seeds of Hope

Last spring, Bob Neff gave a unique gift to our Colorado Springs Affiliate – dirt! Responding to Executive Directors Tom and Bev Agnew’s idea to plant an urban garden at their Day Center, he offered to provide organic soil for the project. Volunteers and guest families would plant fruit and vegetables and tend them as they grew. The bounty they harvested would complement the meals already being created by the Affiliate’s volunteers and the garden would serve as both an educational and nutritional project for kids as they moved through the program.

Planting began in May. The kids handle most of the weeding and

watering day-to-day, but moms and even a few single dads have surprised themselves by pitching in and getting their hands dirty. Initially it was pretty much a pick-and-eat affair, with any leftovers ending up in the Day Center’s kitchen. But as the summer progressed, the garden has so flourished that they are donating produce to the local soup kitchen and hope to sell some at a nearby Farmer’s Market next year.

It’s become more than just a source of fruit and vegetables. As Laura Wacker, VISTA for Colorado Springs says, “The garden gives purpose to waiting parents, diffuses the energy of restless children and creates a bridge of interest between what a child wants to eat and what is most nutritious.”

Not far away, in Post Falls, Idaho, another garden is thriving. Members of Family Promise of North Idaho have created the Earl Kendle Family Promise Garden in honor of the founder and past president of their Affiliate. Generous donors provided plants and topsoil as well as the time and energy



Seth bringing a little piece of home to the Day Center

to prepare the plot while guests maintain the garden.

Executive Director Cindy Wood sees much value in the endeavor, as illustrated by a young guest’s story. “Seth had been given a plant at school which he took home and nurtured. When his family became homeless, he was heartbroken that he had to abandon his plant. Upon arriving at Family Promise, he immediately gravitated towards the garden and was a big part of its success. For Seth, the garden restored the feelings of normalcy and continuity that are so often absent when children lose their home.” ■



Destiny shows her skills in Colorado Springs.

Family Promise Introduces Theme Song—“Home Again”

“Home Again,” a new CD in celebration of Family Promise composed and performed by Ken Medema, had its official debut at our national conference in Orlando. It comprises several versions of the new Family Promise theme song, “Home Again,” as well as other songs written specifically to help advance our mission. “Home Again” is a powerful collection of original songs, perfect for congregations and choral groups to use for inspirational concerts and fundraisers.

“Home Again” can be purchased for \$12 on the Family Promise website at www.familypromise.org. A special discount rate is available for bulk orders. Included with the CD is sheet music to facilitate live performances. Sales will help support Family Promise efforts nationwide. ■



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: Interfaith Hospitality Networks, Family Mentoring, Just Neighbors, Community Initiatives and Voices Uniting.

Family Promise's Spring Event – *Fun with a Purpose*



Let the bidding begin

Friends of Family Promise gathered at Baltusrol Golf Club on May 21st for our 7th Annual Spring Event. Guests enjoyed good company, a perfect spring evening, a delightful venue and a shared desire to help families in need. We wish to thank our donors, volunteers, Board Members and loyal friends for their donations of more than \$250,000 to help homeless and at-risk families.

Auctioneer Brian Jaffe led a round of spirited bidding on vacations ranging from a luxury ski package in Deer Valley, Utah to an executive fly-fishing retreat on Montana's Madison River. But the evening's highlight was the New Affiliate Initiative auction, in which attendees generously contributed \$139,000 to help establish five new Family Promise Affiliates across the country. Specifically, the donations will support the development of IHNs in Cumberland County, NJ; Helena, MT; Rockdale, GA; Anoka, MN; and Cherokee County, OK. Each has a strong team already in place, working with Family Promise to establish a successful, independent Affiliate. ■

Welcoming our new Affiliates...

Casper, WY

Odessa, TX

Northern New Castle

County, DE

Anderson County, SC

Chicago North Shore, IL

Nassau County, NY

Washington County, WI

Lycoming County, PA