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**WELCOME TO OUR
NEWEST AFFILIATE!**

**Family Promise of
the Flint Hills
Emporia, KS**



**“My advice to other kids
going through homelessness
is to keep an open mind. My
siblings and I didn’t want
anyone to know about
our situation. But Family
Promise is there to help you,
and they’ll make sure it all
works out in the end.”
— Family Promise graduate**



**A MESSAGE
FROM THE CEO**

Dear Friends,

Family Promise has always had a dual mission: empowering families and mobilizing volunteers. This past year gave us unprecedented challenges in both areas. But it also created new opportunities.

While Affiliates pivoted to help prevent homelessness and keep families in housing, on the volunteer side, we went from “lasagna, Uno, and overnights” to dynamic new ways of involving the community.

Whether it is virtual volunteerism, like tutoring and job skill programs, providing essentials to families in housing, or projects like IKEA’s wonderful home “makeovers,” volunteers remain the lifeblood of Family Promise. We cannot change the future for children without them.

As we move forward, we will have a broader range of volunteer opportunities and the ability to engage anyone, anywhere, as part of the solution to family homelessness. And of course, we will always have a place for lasagna, Uno, and overnights.

Thank you,

Claas Ehlers

P.S. To learn how you can volunteer at an Affiliate near you, visit familypromise.org/get-involved.

Highlighting our achievements in the fight against family homelessness

Making a House a Home

Home furnishing retailer Ikea touts its stores as “an experience,” and if you’ve ever visited one of its warehouse-sized spaces, you’ll understand why: the maze of room displays transport you to modern city apartments, traditional suburban houses, and beyond.

Now, Family Promise is partnering with the retailer to bring the multifaceted experience of home to families battling homelessness.

This spring, Ikea launched its initiative A Place Called Home and joined forces with Family Promise to help expand homelessness prevention services across the country. A \$150,000 donation will help at least 30 Family Promise Affiliates establish or expand homelessness prevention and stabilization services to keep families in housing and

“IKEA believes that home is the most important place in the world.”

support them once they have secured housing to ensure they remain independent. In addition, \$150,000 in product donations are being distributed to support upgrades to



IKEA employees are making sure families in crisis have a comfortable place to call home.

Family Promise day centers and permanent shelter sites at ten Affiliates.

“IKEA believes that home is the most important place in the world. We recognize that now more than ever, many families are in crisis as the pandemic has exacerbated issues facing lower-income students and at-risk and already homeless populations,” says Jennifer Keesson, country sustainability manager at IKEA U.S. “Everyone deserves a place called home.”

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The temporary housing apartments at Family Promise of Lawrence are move-in ready thanks to IKEA.

FAMILY PROMISE
FOUNDED IN 1988

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Claas Ehlers

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.

NATIONAL
GIVING DAY

April 21, 2021

77 Affiliates
2,212 Donors

\$\$\$
\$903,300
Dollars raised

Thank you to the friends and partners who made Family Promise Giving Day 2021 a success!

Making Tomorrow’s Dreams Possible

When Susan first learned of Family Promise, she was struck by their holistic, family-first approach to putting families in crisis on the path to independence.

“I loved how Family Promise was helping families in my community get back on their feet,” she recalls. After volunteering locally for many years, Susan wanted to make a difference on the national level by joining the Legacy Society and including a gift to Family Promise in her will.

The decision was a simple one, she says, and an easy way to ensure Family Promise could continue to serve families in years to come.

“I want Family Promise to continue to increase its impact, and I’d like to help that happen any way I can.”

Family Promise has partnered with FreeWill to offer a free online estate planning tool that makes it easy to create a legal will that



includes any charitable designations you wish to make.

Consider taking this powerful step for families by becoming a member of the Legacy Society and joining dedicated friends like Susan who want to make a difference for families in need for generations to come.

Visit freewill.com/familypromise and start your legacy today!

Belk Volunteer Day



Belk department store employee Brianna Lajoie (pictured above left, back row center) organized a volunteer event to spruce up the day center at Family Promise of York County in Rock Hill, SC. The Affiliate was overwhelmed by the support from Belk.

“We were so happy to have Belk take on this painting project,” says Executive Director Leslie Starnes. “Our Family Center looks so much more inviting now!”

To learn about volunteer opportunities, visit familypromise.org/get-involved

Why I Give
STAFF SPOTLIGHT: WALT GRIFFITH

Family Promise volunteer Walt Griffith tells a Christmas Eve story that sounds vaguely familiar.

It was 1979 and he was a minister in upstate New York. After the Christmas Eve service, he and his family piled into the car and headed out of town for the holiday. A snowstorm forced them to stop in a small village for the night. Walt found the town’s only inn but learned it was closed for the winter. A snowplow driver eventually discovered the family hunkered down in their car and went in search of the innkeeper, who had just returned from a Christmas Eve service where her pastor had shared the traditional “no room at the inn” story. Moved by the sermon, she opened her inn for the Griffith family.

That Christmas Eve sprang to mind when, nearly 20 years later, the church Walt joined upon retiring to Wilmington, NC, sought

volunteers for the newly formed Family Promise of the Lower Cape Fear. Walt has been its volunteer coordinator ever since. One of his favorite Family Promise memories involves a family who first arrived during Walt’s volunteer shift.

“The father walked in, and I greeted him just like I’d greet anybody else,” he recalls. “I didn’t think anything about it.”

But at a Family Promise event some time later, the father, whose family had since graduated from the program, shared his story with the audience. He spoke of their first night at Family Promise and how a volunteer had eased his fears, noting the impact that had on his journey to regain independence.

That volunteer was Walt.

“Walt is great at thinking outside the box to solve challenges,” says Anne Best, the



In his 25 years with Family Promise, volunteer Walt Griffith (pictured here with Executive Director Anne Best) has done everything from preparing meals to driving a pregnant mother to the hospital to deliver her baby.

Affiliate’s executive director. “He has had a huge impact on our organization!”

At 90, he has no plans to slow down.

“Most people can’t understand how I’m still doing this, but that’s just the way I am,” Walt remarks. “It’s a fantastic team, and I’m lucky to be here!”

MAKING A HOUSE A HOME

(continued from page 1)

Family Promise of Lawrence, KS, was one of the Affiliates to receive Ikea furnishings for its temporary housing apartments. As Executive Director Dana Ortiz notes, it’s not just about dropping off donations; Ikea employees are involved in assembling and arranging furniture to get spaces ready for families.



Ikea furnishings and houseware kits offer Family Promise families all the comforts of home.

“They’re setting up apartments. They’re likely going to get to know some of the people living in here,” she notes.

In addition, Ikea is creating home furnishing kits (supplies like kitchen and dining ware, bedding, and towels) for families who graduate and move on to their own homes.

“I couldn’t be more thrilled with our partnership,” says Family Promise CEO Claas Ehlers. “Ikea has meant home for generations of families, providing comfort, style, and affordable furnishings that make a house or apartment truly a home. The commitment Ikea has to families at risk of homelessness and our Affiliates who work tirelessly to support them is inspiring.”



This spring, Family Promise’s virtual conference, “Innovation Starts with You,” featured two days of workshops and presentations on family homelessness and nonprofit operations. Keynote speaker Amanda Andere, CEO of Funders Together to End Homelessness, challenged Affiliates to lead with racial and housing justice to end homelessness, and NJ Senator Cory Booker shared an inspirational message about Family Promise’s work during COVID.