

A Host for Families...and More

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette's allegiance to Family Promise is long-standing. For the past two years, she has co-pastored with her husband Bruce at Limestone Presbyterian Church, a host congregation for our Wilmington, Delaware Affiliate. Although this is their first host congregation, they have a seventeen-year history with Family Promise—they helped organize the Sussex County and Gloucester County



Affiliates in New Jersey before moving on to Delaware.

But that's not the extent of Carolyn's commitment. A world-renowned hymn writer, she has composed "O God, You Give Welcome," a hymn dedicated to Family Promise and the families they serve. Carolyn said, "I wrote the hymn as a way to personally support Family Promise and encourage others to do the same. It addresses the challenges faced by homeless families and how faith communities can respond to these needs."

Carolyn's hymns are collected in her two books: *Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor* and *Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today's Worship*. Her works have been sung by congregations around the world as well as on national television in the US and the United Kingdom.

Welcoming our new Affiliates...

Midland, TX
Santa Clarita Valley, CA
Greater Helena, MT
Collin County, TX
North Central Palm Beach County, FL
Bradley County, TN
Carteret County, NC
Carbon County, PA
Green County, WI
Lee County, NC
NewRock, GA
San Gabriel Valley, CA

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.

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Family Promise®



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

A message from the President...

Dear Friends,

As a new year begins, we traditionally take time to reflect upon the many blessings we have received. But for many families struggling with an economy that has left them vulnerable and with few prospects of relief, those blessings can seem few and far between.

Shockingly, nearly one in two American families is now classified as low income or is living in poverty. Many parents fortunate enough to have jobs are living paycheck to paycheck, often forced to choose between making rent, paying utilities, or feeding their children. With a national unemployment rate of 8.5%, and a safety net that has been stripped of many programs designed to help those in need, more and more families are falling through the cracks.

This year, some 3.5 million people will experience homelessness. Nearly 40% of them will be families, the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.

The statistics are alarming but it is the many requests we receive for help each day that are especially heartbreaking:

"Can you please help me, my mom, and my one little sister and three little brothers get a place we can call home? We have nowhere to sleep but in our car. It's been like this for three months."

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Breakfast Fundraiser a Promise to Children

Friends and supporters of Family Promise gathered at Baltusrol Golf Club on November 9 for the 3rd annual "Our Promise to Children" fundraiser. More than 175 people attended the breakfast, offering gifts and pledges totaling more than \$120,000.



Chris Bearden with Krystle Siegfried

Martin Wise, Family Promise's Chair, served as emcee and President Karen Olson spoke about the impact Family Promise is having nationwide. Krystle Siegfried, a former guest, spoke movingly of losing her factory job, and then her home, to care for her son when he became sick. Eventually, she found her way to our Warren County, NJ Affiliate and has rebuilt her life. Today, she is a certified medical assistant and lives with her two children in a three-bedroom house. "Now, when I think of family I think of everyone I met in this program," she said.

Event sponsors included Ernst & Young; S. Rubenstein Family Foundation; Celgene; Lois Schneider Realtor; Hilltop Community Bank; and Lindabury, McCormick, Estabrook and Cooper.

Family Promise Partners with The Company Store

Family Promise and The Company Store have teamed up again to bring comfort and warmth to homeless children this winter. Throughout the month of February, The Company Store will match each purchase of a comforter with the donation of one to a child served by Family Promise.

Last March, Family Promise was one of several nonprofits that received comforters from The Company Store during "Buy One, Give One's" first year. This year, The Company Store has named Family Promise as its exclusive partner for the initiative.

"We're thrilled to be a part of Buy One, Give One," said Family Promise



President, Karen Olson. "Our relationship with The Company Store will help us bring joy to thousands of homeless children."

To participate in the initiative, click on the "Buy One, Give One" promo box on the Family Promise homepage at www.familypromise.org.

President's Message

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"Is there any type of housing for my daughters and myself? I'm expecting and have no income or savings and we lost our home. We are struggling at every end."

These are hard times indeed for the families we serve. To help meet the critical need for support, Family Promise opened 13 new Affiliates this year, bringing our total to 171 across the nation. Whatever the area, we see similar challenges: families who have lost their jobs or have been downsized; communities lacking adequate shelter; and families forced to split up moms and dads, brothers and sisters.

I'm proud of the work our Affiliates are doing in their communities. Our approach—working intensively with families to help them get back up on their feet and find secure, affordable housing—is making it possible for families devastated by the recession to achieve sustainable independence. Family Promise is, indeed, a hand up, not a handout.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, and the tireless work of 140,000 volunteers nationwide, we served more than 50,000 family members last year. Nearly 80% of the homeless families we assisted found housing within nine weeks.

This is only possible because of our donors' compassion, generosity, and enduring desire to make a difference.

Thank you for helping us continue to bring hope to families.

Sincerely,



Karen Olson

Moving Mountains in Salt Lake City

Family Promise representatives and supporters, more than 260 in all, convened from September 23-25, 2011 in Salt Lake City for Moving Mountains, their 11th national conference. The theme reflected the challenges faced by families and Affiliates alike in the current economy, as well as the amazing work being done by 171 Affiliates across the country each day. The conference was made possible, in part, by the generous sponsorships of American Express, MassMutual, Dinsmore Steele, Recycled Rides, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and Brian Jaffe Associates.

Two compelling keynote speakers framed the weekend's activities. On Saturday, Diana Butler Bass explored spirituality and hospitality's roles in social justice throughout history. Dr. Bass is the author of several best-selling books, including *A People's History of Christianity*.

And Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of *Tikkun* magazine, delivered an inspiring keynote on Sunday, urging attendees to challenge the materialism and selfishness in American society.

The conference also marked the debut of Family Promise's new volunteer sensitivity film, *How Can I Help?* The film was produced by Warren Harmon, a board member of our Rochester, Minnesota Affiliate and the head of Media Support Services at the Mayo Clinic, who generously donated his services for the project.



Diana Butler Bass

There were workshops for board members, staff, and volunteers throughout the weekend, all designed to help Affiliates flourish. Thirty-four workshops in all were offered at the conference, from best practices for fundraising to positioning Affiliates as Housing First agencies to online tools designed to build capacity and raise awareness.

It wasn't all work, however. Attendees still found time for a lively Friday night charity karaoke party (with proceeds benefitting three Affiliates) and a Saturday evening stroll down Main Street of spectacular Park City followed by dinner and dancing

amidst the natural beauty of the Swaner Eco-Center. And Sunday morning brought an inspirational favorite—the Interfaith Worship Service that has become a conference tradition.

Moving Mountains was a celebration of the dedication Family Promise supporters demonstrate each and every day to help families in need. Karen Olson echoed this theme in her

"The conference was exhilarating and exhausting! Our Affiliate is ready to combine hospitality and sustainability like never before!"

Cindy Wood, Director,
Family Promise of North Idaho

Moving Mountains

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President's address, articulating Family Promise's vision that every family has the right to a decent, safe and affordable place to call home.

Her overarching message was one of hope and promise. "Today, as I stand here, looking at each one of you, I am in awe of what has already been accomplished. It is no wonder that I have faith we can move mountains."



Saturday Night Fever!



Karen Olson

"The most remarkable things can happen when you bring that many bright minds and great ideas together. We all learn something wonderful!"

Carol Brady, Director,
Family Promise of Lake Houston

A Mother's Choice

Rochelle Starks, a single mom of four, was forced to make a choice no mother should ever have to face—between the health of her child or a secure home and steady job.

Her nine year-old son, Edward, suffered kidney failure and required surgery. His post-surgery routine required care every three hours by Rochelle. She hoped to keep her job as a social services caseworker, asking for family medical leave, but her request was denied. She was let go from her job and they were eventually evicted from their Phoenix apartment.

Rochelle and her children spent two weeks in shelters and hotels before finding Family Promise of Greater Phoenix. "The thing I liked about the program was that it was small. It was like a family—we'd all look out for each other. We're a faith-based family, so it was in our comfort zone." She felt it was the best environment for her family and for Edward to continue his recovery.

With the support of Family Promise staff and volunteers, Rochelle found a part-time job at Edward's school and entered their transitional housing program, which allowed her to spend time with her son during his recovery. Once Edward was able to return to school, Rochelle secured a full-time position working with adolescent boys in a group home. "I love working in the field," she says. "It's the job I was put on earth to do."

Rochelle has come a long way. She's studying psychology and counseling at Grand Canyon University, working towards a bachelor's degree in social work. Although the future looks bright, she won't forget the journey she has made.

"I had a good job, an apartment, a car, and I lost all of it. On top of losing everything, I was caring for my son. Family Promise provided us shelter; they gave us counseling and support. Every trial, every stumbling block, they worked it through with me. I can honestly say I am where I am because of them. Family Promise was heaven sent."



Rochelle and family look toward the future.