



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



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

We have just passed Thanksgiving, which, with its focus on food, family and gratitude is one of my favorite days of the year. All across this country, people enjoy the same traditions: a heavily laden table, laughter and conversation, a game of football in the backyard or on the TV.

The defining word of this holiday is hospitality. That is, of course, at the heart of Family Promise.

In this issue, you will read about Family Promise Week, which celebrates the spirit of sharing and the accomplishments that take place at each of our 200+ Affiliate locations. It is also an opportunity to educate people about the crisis affecting families right in their own communities. This concept of hospitality is wonderfully illustrated in the story of an Affiliate helping another Affiliate in South Carolina in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

But nothing exemplifies this spirit more than *The Power of One* and the legacy of Karen Olson. This November, we honored Karen at our Fall Fling, which featured moving testimony from her family, from longtime supporters and from Candice Stewart-Fife, who knew Karen as a guest of Family Promise 25 years ago and now is the director of our Affiliate in Bryan County, GA, outside of Savannah.

(Continued on page 2)



Candice Stewart-Fife and Karen Olson

## Family Promise Honors Founder Karen Olson at Fall Fling

One person can make a difference. Family Promise took those words to heart at our annual Fall Fling fundraiser on November 4 at Canoe Brook Country Club in Summit, New Jersey. The event, honoring Family Promise Founder Karen Olson, raised nearly \$350,000—our most successful fundraiser to date.

The evening's program centered on *The Power of One*; how one truly committed person can make a difference in the lives of others. The Olson family offered a heart-warming tribute to Karen and the 172 attendees also heard from Candice Stewart-Fife, a former guest in Union County, who now directs one of Family Promise's newest Affiliates in Bryan County, GA.

The Initiative Auction portion of the evening launched *The Power of One* campaign, aimed to create eight new Affiliates and serve an additional 1,000 children every year, above and beyond those we presently serve. The Initiative raised more than \$188,000—the highest amount in the event's twelve-year history. While this is a phenomenal success, unfortunately, the need for services nationwide continues to grow, while government and foundation funding reductions persist.



Angela and Jeffrey Schroeder open the bidding.

"Fall Fling was a fantastic opportunity to learn more about our organization, spend time with fellow supporters, and welcome new friends," said Family Promise Board Vice Chair Angela Schroeder. "We hope to strengthen this kind of outreach in 2017. Karen Olson's legacy is an inspiration to us all. Every person can make a difference in the lives of homeless children and their families."

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

(continued from page 1)

*The Power of One* speaks to the change every single person can make by being involved, whether preparing a meal, reading a book, serving on a board, or making a generous donation. It's the change Karen made, turning the compassionate impulse to give a sandwich to someone in need into the leading national organization addressing family homelessness.

Unfortunately, just as Thanksgiving is celebrated in every town across America, so is family homelessness an issue in every community. For too many families, not only is there no food for the Thanksgiving table, there is no dining room in which to gather.

But, for nearly 60,000 people a year, that is no longer the case. Because of Family Promise, they have the food, the home, and just as importantly, the community that Thanksgiving represents. That is all possible because of what Karen started 30 years ago.

This is something for which we can all give thanks.

Sincerely,



Claas Ehlers

# Friends in Need



Back in Florence, safe and sound, after the storm.

Jo Ellen Schneider, Director of Family Promise of Florence (SC), is no stranger to tropical storms. "Here along the southeastern coast, you get used to gearing up for hurricane season...we tend to be a little cautious."

As it became increasingly obvious that Hurricane Matthew was going to hit her community hard, Schneider called Kathleen Titus, her friend, neighbor, and Director of Family Promise of the Midlands in Columbia, about an hour to the west of Florence. Titus assured her that Midlands would be more than happy to help by hosting the Florence families if their local congregations were affected by the storm.



The entire southeast was underwater.

Matthew made landfall in South Carolina on Friday. By Saturday morning, the entire region was underwater. With winds approaching 100 mph buffeting the area, trees, structures, and power lines were at the mercy of the elements. By nightfall, 95% of the area was without power—1.4 million eventually lost power up and down the coast—and many were without drinkable water.

Florence's van driver picked up the families—two moms with three children each—around noon on Sunday and they made their way to Seven Oaks Presbyterian Church in Columbia. Schneider was thrilled with their reception. "The host church was fantastic! They made up additional space, had enough food and truly made our families, and my driver, feel at home." Schneider was able to work with Kathleen to make sure the families had activities scheduled in Columbia—they even arranged a day trip to the Riverbank Zoo for the kids—freeing her up to concentrate on getting her Affiliate back up and running.

Schneider spent her time securing the Florence Day Center, dealing with the power company, following up with their insurance company, and preparing for the families' return. They stayed in Columbia for a couple of days, returning to Florence on Tuesday, no worse for wear and tear from their brief adventure. Midlands volunteers even sent them off with fresh groceries as a parting gift.

"I'm not sure what we might have done if not for Kathleen's gesture," said Schneider. "It was such a comfort knowing our families were in good hands."

## Welcoming our New Affiliates

**BRYAN COUNTY, GA**  
**FORSYTH COUNTY, GA**  
**WICHITA, KS**



# 4th Annual Family Promise Week Celebrated Nationwide

Every October, we take a week to step back from our full-time focus on helping families out of homelessness to commemorate our successes while raising awareness. Family Promise Week was celebrated this year from October 16-23, with Affiliates recognizing volunteers, giving tours of their facilities, and hosting fundraisers to engage support for their missions.

In Burbank (CA), Family Promise of the Verdugos went all out. Director Albert Hernandez said, "We planned an activity for each day of the week. We wanted to make sure it was more than just recognition—that it was a real celebration of the big things Affiliates are doing across the country."

Activities included:

- The Rotary Club of Burbank toured their Day Center and created 25 Welcome Home packages of essential supplies—detergent, sponges, laundry supplies—for the next 25 families moving into housing.
- The Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill hosted an all-day fundraiser, with 20% of the proceeds going to the Affiliate.
- South Hills Church held a week-long household goods drive for the Day Center, collecting a full year's worth of supplies.
- Mayors of Burbank and Glendale presented proclamations declaring it Family Promise Week, with both ceremonies televised locally.

In New Jersey, Family Promise of Morris County used the week to engage with the community, celebrating with congregations, local businesses and students from area schools.

The Mount Freedom Jewish Center participated with outreach to local business owners as part of the Sukkot holiday message, "moving from a place of sorrow to a place of joy." The Atelier Salon kicked off a long-term "Day of Beauty" initiative: once a month, they will close the salon to the public and provide services to guest families. St. Patrick School in Chatham dreamed up Sock-tober—a donation drive that collected nearly 800 pairs of socks for guest families. And students at the Mountain View Middle School, in addition to collecting 25 boxes of toiletries and clothes, built furniture in woodworking class as housewarming gifts for graduating families.

Family Promise Week is recognized by each Affiliate in its own way, but we all share its common purpose. In Morris County Director Joann Bjornson's words, "National Family Promise week is a fantastic opportunity for us to collectively tell the story of each and every family we help and the impact that has nationwide."



Burbank Mayor Jess Talamantes, Verdugos Board Chair Renee Johnson and Director Albert Hernandez



Sock-tober surprise!

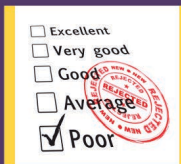
## OFFICIAL PROCLAMATIONS OF FAMILY PROMISE WEEK INCLUDE:

Verdugos, CA  
 Greater Houston County, GA  
 North Fulton/DeKalb, GA  
 Kandiyohi County, MN  
 Gallatin Valley, MT  
 Union County, NJ  
 Warren County, NJ  
 Washington County, OK  
 Southern Chester County, PA  
 New Braunfels, TX

And New Jersey Governor Chris Christie officially recognized Family Promise's 30th Anniversary during Family Promise Week.

## The Risk of Family Homelessness

**1.7 Million Households**  
 live on cash  
 income of less  
 than \$2/day per  
 person



**55%**  
 of people have  
 subprime credit

**75%**  
 of people are  
 living paycheck  
 to paycheck



**Poverty Thresholds,  
 2016:**  
 \$11,880 for individuals  
 \$16,020 for a family of 2  
 \$20,160 for a family of 3  
 \$24,300 for a family of 4

**50 Million People**  
 live below the  
 poverty level

**Family Promise helps families  
 achieve sustainable independence**



Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
New Brunswick NJ  
Permit No. 1818

Longtime Family Promise supporter Susan Watts is a **Founding Member of the Family Promise Legacy Society**, a special group of friends who support Family Promise through their estate plans.



Legacy giving is a commitment to supporting future generations of families on their journey to self-sufficiency. It's a lasting gift that lifts the morale of an organization.



Secure your place as a Founding Member of the Family Promise Legacy Society by March 31, 2017. For more information, please contact Penny Lacovara, Director of Annual Fund, at **908-273-1100 x21**.

# Save the Dates!

## *Our Promise to Children Breakfast*

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

## *Fall Fling*

Friday, November 3, 2017  
7 to 11 p.m.



Canoe Brook Country Club  
Summit, NJ

## Family Promise®

**EDITORS:** Chris Kaul, Roberta Samuels  
**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:** Chris Kaul, Cara Bradshaw, Claas Ehlers  
**LAYOUT:** Trillion

**PHONE:** 908-273-1100

**FAX:** 908-273-0030

**EMAIL:** [info@familypromise.org](mailto:info@familypromise.org)

**WEB:** [www.familypromise.org](http://www.familypromise.org)

### FAMILY PROMISE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cary R. Hardy, *Chair*  
Claas Ehlers, *President*  
Angela F. Schroeder, *Vice Chair*  
Martin Wise, *Treasurer*  
Neely Dodge, *Secretary*

Kevin Barrett	Sig Huitt
AJ Cass	Robert W. Parsons, Jr.
Carmine DiSibio	Stacey Slater Sacks
Regina Feeney	Eileen Serra
Edwin J. Hagerty	Richard Vicens
Cassandra A. Hardman	Mary Weger
Robert J. Hugin	

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.