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Highlighting our achievements in the fight against family homelessness



A MESSAGE
FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

When we initiated *A Future Begins at Home* several years ago, we did not know how critical prevention and diversion would become in addressing family homelessness. By moving in this strategic direction, Family Promise Affiliates increased their impact at a time when the pandemic rendered the core shelter program untenable.

Our partners, notably Clayton, Synchrony, and Help Us Move In (HUMI), have helped us make the program operational. Their support allows us to provide Affiliates grants to kickstart their prevention and diversion programs, as well as the extensive training, data analysis, and best practice sharing that have made them so successful.

Collectively, what the support of these partners has facilitated is the exceptional growth in the number of children whose futures begin at home, not in shelter. To date, the lives of more than 7,000 children have been directly impacted by Clayton's grants, made possible by our combined efforts in establishing this critical new direction for Family Promise.

Thank you,

Claas Ehlers

12,000 Children and Counting

More than 12,000 children are sleeping in their own homes tonight thanks to *A Future Begins at Home*, Family Promise's innovative homelessness prevention and shelter diversion program. In its third year, the program has helped more than 7,000 families avoid the trauma of homelessness through case management, rent assistance, utility assistance, landlord mediation, and transportation, among other critical resources that keep families in crisis from losing their homes.



One family in Sherman, TX, was home for the holidays thanks to Family Promise, Clayton, and *A Future Begins at Home*.

National homebuilder Clayton has partnered with the initiative, providing grants and donating 12 homes to Family Promise Affiliates over the past three years. Nearly half of the families served through *A Future Begins at Home* have benefitted from the Clayton partnership. The latest home donation, to Family Promise of Grayson County in Sherman, TX, will serve as transitional housing where families can live for six to 12 months while they regain stability and seek permanent housing.



A Future Begins at Home has attracted funding and support from other partners, as well, such as Connecticut-based financial services company Synchrony, increasing both its reach and impact. Last year, six Family Promise Affiliates received grants for homelessness prevention and housing innovation efforts. In 2022, the initiative will distribute at least 120 grants. Since its inception, *A Future Begins at Home* has

served approximately 21,600 individuals at risk of homelessness. Equally impressive are the long-term outcomes: more than 75 percent of the families who receive assistance through the program continue to have stable housing.



New transitional housing for Family Promise of Grayson County will help put families battling homelessness on the path to lasting independence.



"I come home to my own home now. The kids love it—they have a backyard and their own room. We finally have a place we can call home."
— Family Promise graduate



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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.

Family Promise Announces New Board Chair

Family Promise recognizes the service of outgoing Board Chair Leah Griffith. Griffith, managing partner of Watts Consulting, began her term in early 2020 and has been a volunteer with Elizabeth, NJ-based Family Promise Union County for more than ten years. During her tenure as chair, Family Promise’s work in homelessness prevention and shelter diversion grew exponentially, including the introduction of a new prevention program, *A Future Begins at Home*, which enabled Affiliates to serve thousands of families – and help them avoid the trauma of homelessness - during the pandemic. Griffith will remain a trustee.

Betsy Bernard, a public company board director and retired president of AT&T, has assumed the role of board chair. Her significant board experience spans two decades, and she has received numerous professional and personal honors for her distinguished accomplishments and service, including being named to Fortune magazine’s “50 Most Powerful Women in Business” for three consecutive years.

“It’s an honor to support Family Promise’s critical mission of helping families achieve sustainable independence,” says Bernard.



“Every child deserves a home!”

Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo, Jr., associate dean of institutional diversity and community engagement at Princeton Theological Seminary and senior pastor of La Iglesia Presbiteriana Nuevas Fronteras, has been appointed board secretary.

“I couldn’t be more grateful for Leah’s support and leadership,” says Family Promise CEO Ehlers. “Without her partnership, the level and quality of service to families at risk of homelessness would not be possible. And I look forward to working with Betsy. Her strategic insight and commitment to empowerment are incredible assets in our work to help families overcome homelessness.”

Why I Give
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: JEAN WIKSTROM

Sometimes making a difference comes down to the basics.

That’s what Jean Wikstrom was thinking when she started volunteering with Family Promise of Las Vegas, NV, 15 years ago.

“I saw how little families had when they came to Family Promise and wondered, ‘What do they have to start their new lives with when they finally move into a home?’” she recalls.

Jean organized a group of volunteers to procure items for “startup kits” that would help families transitioning to housing quickly settle into their new homes. From housewares like plates, glasses, utensils, and pots and pans, to bathroom supplies like

toiletries, towels, even wastebaskets, Jean and her team procure kitchen and bathroom staples to ensure families have all the basics.

Word of the project quickly spread.

“We’ve even had the police department ask about kits for families in need in the community,” she says.

Jean estimates more than 800 kits worth \$115,000 have been donated over the years. She also coordinates two annual garage sales that bring in thousands of dollars toward the startup kit program.

Every kit is packaged with a card from the volunteers, and Jean has seen replies from



families expressing thanks and gratitude, but for her, simply making a difference in this critical way is enough.

“We want to help families get started,” she says. “They can replace items later, but at least they have the basics to begin with. I’m glad we can do that.”

Spreading the Word About an Invisible Crisis

Family homelessness is often referred to as an “invisible crisis” because of the way families go to great lengths to hide their situations. But several national media outlets recently shined a light on this crisis - and Family Promise’s efforts to address it.

The Guardian, which published a photo essay last year featuring two Family Promise families included the piece in its “2021 Year in Photos” compilation. The essay profiled

the stories of Cherokeeena and Priscilla, two single mothers in California who had turned to Family Promise in their fight against homelessness. In addition to demonstrating some of the ways Family Promise supports families facing a housing crisis as they work toward independence, the article raised awareness of the struggles many low-income families face trying to balance work, family life, and the ongoing challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

NPR highlighted a Family Promise graduate in a piece about women-led households. When Texas mom Romona and her family faced homelessness, she worked with Family Promise of East Bell County. She found steady work and began pursuing an associate degree. The family is now in their own home, one Romona purchased herself. “I think if it wasn’t for Family Promise...I would still be stuck, and I would not be able to do this,” she says.

The New York Times recognized Family Promise volunteers, the heart of the organization, in an article about the emotional benefits of serving others. Patricia Novy, a long-time volunteer with Family Promise Union County (also known as FPUC) in Elizabeth, NJ, was interviewed about her efforts to help local families in need. The retired art teacher spoke about her efforts coordinating colleagues, friends, and neighbors to create kits that help FPUC families celebrate holidays like Christmas, Easter, and even Independence Day. Patricia has also led art workshops for a FPUC-run Girl Scout troop for girls whose families are experiencing homelessness.



Sierra and her mom lived out of their car before finding Family Promise of Orange County in Anaheim, CA. Photo credit: The Guardian

Family Promise Giving Day and Virtual Gala

April 28, 2022

We’re celebrating our 4th annual Giving Day this spring! Show your support for families in crisis on April 28. And join us online for our virtual gala—an evening of musical entertainment, an interactive cocktail mixology class, and an online auction, plus special guests and an awards presentation in support of families battling homelessness!

6:30 – 7:00 p.m. ET Cocktail Event

7:00 – 8:00 p.m. ET Gala w/ Entertainment and Live Auction

Learn more about
Giving Day:



Learn more about
Night of Giving:



Thank you to our generous
sponsor Clayton!

