

# News From FamilyPromise

Highlighting our work to end family homelessness



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

As a new school year begins and we witness the housing crisis across our country, I think about children whose families are facing homelessness. Imagine preparing for school or work from a car or while bouncing between houses, something many families who have lost their homes do every day. How do children do homework without a quiet space to study? Too often, families don't have the resources for things we take for granted to help their children succeed in school: reliable internet, computer equipment, even basics like backpacks and notebooks.

Over the years, I've heard young people express shame and sorrow at the loss of their homes. They regret they can't bring friends home when they don't have a place to come home to. Homelessness is especially traumatic for youth: it puts them at much greater risk for academic failure and mental and physical health challenges, the impacts of which extend far into the future.

Today, one in 19 children experiences homelessness before age six. That's a 160 percent increase from just a few years ago. Despite drastic growth in the demand for services, Family Promise Affiliates across the country continue to keep pace with the evolving needs of families in crisis. In this issue, you'll read about the unique ways our Affiliates are bringing communities together to change the landscape of family homelessness. Your support plays a major role in this work.

Thank you for being there for families in crisis! We couldn't do this work without you!

With gratitude,

Cheryl Schuch  
CEO

## Affiliates in Action

Across the country, Family Promise Affiliates are keeping pace with the changing needs of families facing homelessness. Here are three addressing the crisis in unique ways:

### A Family Promise Hub

On Florida's Space Coast, Family Promise of Brevard is connecting the dots between the diverse causes of homelessness and the many needs of families in crisis. The Affiliate created a hub for service providers that places multiple resources under one roof.



The Firehouse, a community hub coordinated by Family Promise of Brevard, brings resources for families under one roof.

The new space, known as the Firehouse due to its former use, hosts services for housing, healthcare, childcare, employment, and education, all areas of concern for families facing homelessness. The single location facilitates access to resources for families who might otherwise spend a full day traveling between agencies.

"We've taken a family-focused, community-powered approach," says Executive Director Tara Pagliarini. "Housing isn't a stand-alone issue. It's accompanied by concerns about health, childcare, economic factors, employment."

Using the Firehouse as a nucleus, Family Promise creates intentional relationships in the community. A leadership council on educational and professional development opportunities connects families and local employers. Another partnership offers professional certification classes which have already helped 10 individuals obtain full-time employment.

Says Pagliarini, "Family Promise is the backbone of this effort to pool community resources to impact a family's access to stable housing."

Collectively, providers at the Firehouse can serve 65 percent more families, and Family Promise expects to serve more than 2,500 families this year.

### Expanding the Conversation Around Homelessness

When the housing crisis in Spokane, WA, spiked, it launched a community-wide conversation. But Family Promise of Spokane realized not everyone had a voice, namely, families experiencing homelessness. The Affiliate explored ways to educate the public about family homelessness and the work being done to address it.

"No one was talking about homelessness and families," says Emma Hughes, Family Promise of Spokane's outreach and recruitment director. "We wanted people to understand the crisis, so we created a podcast that addresses questions we hear all the time: Why don't parents just get a job? Why is it so hard to work your way out of poverty? How does homelessness really impact kids? What jobs can you realistically get if you have young children but no childcare?"

The podcast examines the multifaceted issues surrounding homelessness and brings industry experts into the conversation. It's name, "On the Corner of Homelessness and..." reflects how homelessness intersects with virtually



A podcast about the crisis of family homelessness is educating and enlightening listeners.

every aspect of life. Each episode highlights a different element of the crisis, such as the history of homelessness in America or what "affordability" really means when it comes to raising a family.

(Continued on page 3)

## FAMILY PROMISE

FOUNDED IN 1988

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Cheryl Schuch

### FAMILY PROMISE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Betsy Bernard, *Chair*

Andrew Pierce, *Vice Chair*

Linda Henry, *Treasurer*

Leah Griffith, *Secretary*

Nadim Ahmed

Omar Minaya

Josh Barer

Michael Moody

Sarah Bird

Stacey Slater

Alex English

Sherina Smith

John Ferrie

Dan Tinkoff

David Fleck

Stephen Wallace

Tim Gamory

Rev. Vernon Williams

Robert J. Hugin

Lori Winkler

Christopher King

**EDITOR:** Melissa Biggar

**LAYOUT:** elah designs

Family Promise is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit addressing the crisis of family homelessness in the U.S.

# Why I Give:

MITCH PETIT-FRERE, *DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, FAMILY PROMISE*

When Family Promise Director of Marketing Mitch Petit-Frere joined the national office five years ago, he never imagined his work would lead him into uncharted waters in a literal sense. But he has found himself swimming (and biking and running) on behalf of families facing homelessness.



Mitch Petit-Frere supports families facing homelessness through his racing.

In 2019, several Family Promise colleagues decided to support families in need with a New Jersey State Triathlon fundraiser. An avid soccer player, Petit-Frere considered himself in good shape and accepted the invitation to join.

"It was a humbling experience," he recalls. "I was in over my head – literally!" Petit-Frere was pulled from the water mid-swim, unable to complete that portion of the race. "I completed the bike and run but was disappointed," he says. "I vowed I'd do it again and finish."

As he dove into training and racing, he developed a new passion for triathlons and for finding a way to support families facing homelessness. This fall, he ran his first Half Ironman for Family Promise. Over the years, he has raised more than \$1,000.

"Racing is a huge part of my life now, thanks to Family Promise," says Petit-Frere. "The least I can do is give back. I've seen firsthand how Family Promise staff dedicate themselves to the organization and people who need support, and it's incredible."



1 in 19 children in the U.S. experiences homelessness, putting them at increased risk for academic failure and physical and mental health challenges. Mark your calendar for Family Promise Week, October 15-21, when we'll be raising awareness about family homelessness and how you can make a difference in your community and beyond.



## Building for THE FUTURE

A child's future begins at home. But in this country, more families than ever face housing insecurity. Thanks to friends like you, we're changing the landscape of family homelessness.

**We need your help!** Please give today and help families in crisis begin **building for the future.**

Use the QR code above or visit [familypromise.org/FPFuture23](https://familypromise.org/FPFuture23)

**FAMILY PROMISE  
WELCOME HOME  
Gala**

**NOVEMBER 2, 2023  
7:00-10:00 p.m.**

Join us in New Jersey on November 2 to support families in the Family Promise Union County program! Scan the QR code for details.

## AFFILIATES IN ACTION

(Continued from page 1)

"In a world where you can care about a lot of different things, we all have a role to play," says Hughes. "This podcast can show you how."

You can listen to "On the Corner of Homelessness and..." on most podcast platforms or through the Affiliate's website, [familypromiseofspokane.org/podcast](http://familypromiseofspokane.org/podcast).

### It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia

Family Promise of Philadelphia loves a sunny day. But it's not just blue skies that energize this Affiliate: it's the first to power its day center, offices, and shelter space using solar energy. It's also the first known collaboration of a nonprofit social service agency and a faith group generating solar power to benefit vulnerable members of the community.

Executive Director Bob Byrne says the initiative began at the suggestion of a long-time supporter and renewable energy advocate. Since none of the Affiliate's buildings was suitable for installing the system, a nearby congregation that has served as a Family Promise shelter site agreed to install the system on its roof.



Family Promise of Philadelphia is harnessing solar power to better empower families in crisis.

Donations covered the purchase and installation of the system and funding for future maintenance. The Affiliate is now almost 100 percent carbon-neutral and no longer requires operating funds for its energy use.

"This concept is replicable and scalable," says Byrne, who hopes other Affiliates will explore renewable energy options. "It allows us to direct more resources toward our work with families."

## Family Promise Welcomes New Chief Development Officer

Michael Kerkorian has been named Chief Development Officer at Family Promise. Kerkorian has 20 years of experience successfully driving revenue, creating innovative partnerships, and optimizing operations.

"I'm thrilled to welcome Mike to the national office of Family Promise," says CEO Cheryl Schuch. "His extensive background in resource development and his strong relationship-building skills will help us develop partnerships and create strategic alliances that will be instrumental as we expand to meet the growing needs of families facing homelessness."

Most recently, Kerkorian led the global account team at United Way Worldwide, focusing on fundraising, social impact, and volunteer strategies. At Family Promise, Kerkorian will lead the development and marketing team to diversify funding streams and drive brand awareness.

"Everyone has the right to safe and affordable housing. I'm honored to join an organization dedicated to making sure all children and families have a home and a chance to thrive," says Kerkorian.



Michael Kerkorian, Chief Development Officer, Family Promise



71 Summit Avenue • Summit, NJ 07901

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ  
PERMIT #1

**OFFICE:** 908-273-1100  
**EMAIL:** [info@familypromise.org](mailto:info@familypromise.org)  
**WEB:** [www.familypromise.org](http://www.familypromise.org)

 FamilyPromise

 family.promise

 Family Promise, Inc



News From  
**Family  
Promise**

*"We lived out of our car for a while after we lost our home. Getting the kids ready for school was tough during that time. When we got to Family Promise, we had our own space. The kids had a quiet place to unwind and do homework. It made life during a terrible time so much easier."*

*-June, Family Promise mom*

