

# News From FamilyPromise

Highlighting our work to end family homelessness



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

As 2023 comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on the past 12 months. What strikes me most is the amazing sense of gratitude and appreciation I have for everyone involved in our work...the friends, volunteers, partners, and supporters who have impacted the lives of tens of thousands of families over the past year. A child's future begins at home. But for families facing homelessness, this critical foundation is missing. Together, we are putting that foundation in place for families in crisis so they can begin building for the future.

The future holds some exciting prospects for Family Promise, and I look forward to sharing these new developments with you in the months ahead. We're busy innovating sustainable ways to help families avoid the trauma of homelessness, find safe and affordable housing, and regain independence and hope for the future – and it all starts with you. Thank you for working with us to change the future!

It's a wonderful time of year filled with gratitude, holiday gatherings, and celebrations, and I wish you the best of the season. As we count our blessings and close the curtain on 2023, I'm most thankful for your support of the children and families we serve. Thank you for bringing them hope and investing in their future. We couldn't do this work without you!

With gratitude,

Cheryl Schuch  
CEO

## Building for the Future

When Darren was a teen, his family entered Family Promise's shelter program. Now in his 20s, he still recalls the shame he felt when he recognized a classmate who was volunteering at the shelter.

"We talked briefly, but ...that moment broke me," Darren recalls. "If our homelessness ever struck home for me, that was the time."

The classmate never mentioned the encounter again, even though the two young men saw each other every day at school and football practice. But Darren never forgot. It was a metaphor for his struggle with homelessness: though he was hiding his situation, it was always on his mind.

"It was stressful. Friends would ask to come over, but they were unaware I didn't have a house to come home to," he explains. "When we had a house, we had security, a place to relax, and privacy. [When we lost our home], we lost all that. I went into survival mode. I had to deal with these things when I should have focused on being a teenager."

The ripple effect of homelessness reaches into aspects of life people often take for granted. In addition to trying to comprehend the loss of a home, families must navigate everyday logistics that become almost impossible in a shelter environment. Where does a child do homework? Where can one find privacy and quiet? Where will a teenager's friends pick him up to go to a football game?

But at Family Promise, Darren began to believe in himself and think about his future. He was encouraged to apply to college, and Family Promise helped him apply for a scholarship and ensured he had the supplies he'd need for school. He thrived, and today, Darren is in law school.

As Darren's family worked with Family Promise to regain independence, Darren says he acquired practical skills like budgeting and planning. But he says Family Promise also helped him find the strength to succeed and begin building for his own future. He doesn't see himself as a victim, or even as a survivor.

*(Continued on page 3)*



## FAMILY PROMISE

FOUNDED IN 1988

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Cheryl Schuch

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

# Welcome to Our Newest Affiliate

## FAMILY PROMISE OF PIERCE COUNTY, WA

# Why I Give:

TIM GAMORY, *FAMILY PROMISE BOARD OF TRUSTEES*



Tim Gamory has seen firsthand how homelessness can affect children. "I taught second grade early in my

career and saw students who were housing-insecure," he says. "It clearly affected their whole lives. It hindered their ability to learn and focus in class."

Gamory is a member of the Family Promise board of trustees, a role he's well suited for thanks to his ability to view the issue of family homelessness from multiple angles. When he was young, he and his family lived in public housing. But, as he recalls, he never realized his family was considered low-income

because they had a home that offered him security and the freedom to focus on school, laying the foundation for his future.

That future eventually led him to become founder and CEO of a consulting firm focused on helping small businesses reach their potential. When he learned about Family Promise, Gamory was impressed by the organization's capacity to affect lives on a grassroots level through its Affiliate model. He joined the board in 2020.

"The greatest impact occurs when it is created locally," he says. "Having people who really care in the community is important."

Gamory believes such local, in-person engagement is necessary now more than ever.

"Family Promise is playing an important role as a community builder," he adds. "And I think strengthening communities is the key to solving family homelessness."

# Family Promise Appoints New Board Member



Mary Muliett, president and CEO of D.A. Blodgett-St. John's, a nonprofit focused on health and human services in Grand Rapids,

MI, has joined the board of trustees. Her passion for empowering those faced with overwhelming challenges aligns perfectly with Family Promise's work with families experiencing homelessness.

Muliett's work in family preservation, programming for individuals with disabilities, and other community services has always focused on creating maximum impact and reach. She has been in the field of health and human services for nearly 30 years and is a social worker with full clinical licensure in the state of Michigan.

"My passion is to see individuals reach their highest potential," says Muliett. "Family Promise embraces this philosophy, as well, and I look forward to the positive change we can create for families in crisis."

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

(Continued from page 1)

"I'm an overcomer," he says. "We all have a story to tell. Family Promise showed me that you decide what you allow to define you. When I was at Family Promise, I learned to look within myself, to have confidence and set goals, and that has made all the difference."

You can help families facing homelessness with a gift to Family Promise this holiday season. Scan the QR code to the right or go to [familypromise.org/FPFuture23](https://familypromise.org/FPFuture23) and help families like Darren's begin building for the future.



# Family Promise Union County Welcome Home Gala a Success

*Thank you to all who supported families in our Union County program on November 2!*

Nearly 150 guests gathered for Family Promise's Welcome Home gala to support New Jersey families experiencing homelessness. In addition, several community members were honored for their commitment to helping Family Promise Union County find affordable housing for local families.

Six landlords were presented with a Compassionate Housing Award for partnering with Family Promise Union County and providing temporary shelter apartments to families in need. These landlord partnerships have facilitated housing for Union County families at a time when affordable housing is in short supply.

Father Daniel Gunn and St. Andrews Episcopal Church in New Providence, NJ, also received an award for a commitment to creating low-income housing by repurposing a building on the church grounds into two low-income apartments for Family Promise Union County families.

"We were proud to present Compassionate Housing Awards to our landlord partners," says Family Promise Union County Executive Director Geleen Donovan. "When we prevent families from experiencing homelessness, we help them avoid unnecessary stress and trauma," Donovan said.



Landlord Sam Etienne (right) was one of the individuals honored by FPUC.



Landlords Paul and Jamie Lopes are working with Family Promise Union County to help families achieve lasting independence.



Family Promise Union County is partnering with area landlords to help families in need find affordable housing. L to R: Ziah and Thomas Petit, FPUC Executive Director Geleen Donovan, and Nola Petit. Other landlords (not pictured) who were recognized for their contributions included Stanley Neron, Stephanie and Tony Culpepper, and Ivo Santos.



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