



A Message from Our CEO

Dear Friends,

At Family Promise, we are committed to supporting families facing homelessness at every stage of their journey. This mission has never been more urgent – according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, family homelessness has increased by nearly 40 percent since 2023.

Our Annual Impact Report, released earlier this year, highlights the vital role Family Promise plays in meeting this growing need and just how crucial your support is in making that possible. In this newsletter, you'll find a link to the report. I encourage you to take a moment to read it.

As we respond to the housing crisis, we do so with intention. We're expanding services to reach more families, but always in a thoughtful and strategic way. That same intentionality shapes how we talk about family homelessness. While every person has the right to describe their own experience, we take care to speak about these issues with respect, accuracy, and empathy. You can read more in this issue about why language matters and how we approach these conversations.

Thank you for standing with children and families during their most challenging times. Your compassion truly makes a difference.

With gratitude,

Cheryl Schuch
CEO



Experiencing Homelessness

The language we use when talking about family homelessness has a profound impact on how the issue is perceived and policies are shaped. At Family Promise, we use the phrase "experiencing homelessness" to describe families who have lost their homes, not to define them, but to reflect that homelessness is a situation, not an identity.

This language humanizes families, reduces stigma, and promotes policies focused not just on temporary shelter, but on long-term stability. It encourages us to see each family's experience as unique and solvable with the right support in place.

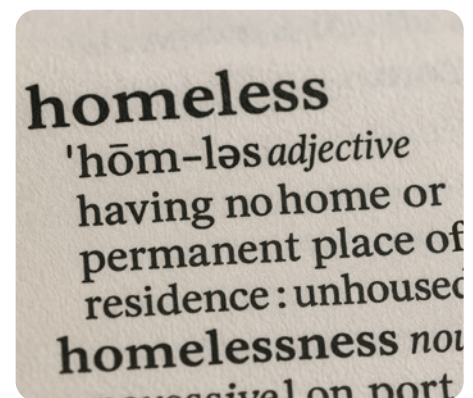
Family homelessness is often called an "invisible crisis." Many families conceal their situation out of fear, shame, or distrust of institutional systems. Instead of seeking help through shelters, they may double up in unsafe homes, stay in motels, or live in their cars, solutions that are unstable, unsafe, and largely hidden.

The leading cause of family homelessness in the U.S. is the lack of affordable housing. But that's only part of the story. A single event, like a job loss, medical emergency, or family break up, can send a family into a housing crisis. Addressing the issue requires looking at the broader systemic barriers families face, from poverty to racial discrimination in housing.

Language Shapes Perception and Policy

Referring to someone as "experiencing homelessness" rather than "homeless" emphasizes that the situation is temporary and doesn't define who they are. This subtle shift encourages empathy and a more compassionate public response. It also helps counter the misconception that any roof over one's head is adequate. Many of the families we serve move between shelters, temporary housing, or unsafe environments before finding stability.

Continued on page 3



Chief Executive Officer

Cheryl Schuch

Board of Trustees

Michael Moody, *Chair*

Christopher King, *Vice Chair*

Stacey Slater, *Secretary*

Linda Henry, *Treasurer*

Joshua Barer

Tim Gamory

Kevin Barrett

Leah Griffith

Betsy Bernard

Robert J. Hugin

Sarah Bird

Mary Mullett

James Block

Priscilla Sanches Salles

Alex English

Stephen Wallace

John Ferrie

Rev. Vernon Williams

David Fleck

Lori Winkler

Editor

Melissa Biggar

Layout

DK Creative

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

YOU Make a Difference!

11/7/25 "Letter To Family Promise"

First off, we would like to say, thank you for everything. You guys have helped us in ways that we've never imagined. It all started when I lost my job due to car problems. Shortly after, we ended up being in a homeless situation. I wasn't alone, together it was my wife, our two children and I. For the first time in our life we hit rock bottom. My wife is a strong woman who stands and ~~is~~ firmly walks on faith, ended up finding out about the "family promise" and still to this day I don't know how. But, long story short, it was the best thing for our family. Family Promise welcomed us in with lots of joy and love. They gave us shelter, provided us food, transportation, clothes, and etc. They even helped us with things we needed for school and gave us gifts on holidays and things of that nature. And, now we are at the end of this roller coaster its time to say our goodbyes. Once again, we appreciate you guys. I can say, this was a big blessing. I ended up graduating from my school, the children didn't miss school, my wife has what she needs for school, and I'm back in a position to provide again.

A family who recently worked with Family Promise of Jacksonville in Florida successfully moved into permanent housing. Once they were settled in, the father sent this letter to Family Promise. You give hope to thousands of families like this one.

Check out our 2024 annual impact report to see how you help change lives.



Experiencing Homelessness *(continued from page 1)*

This framing has real implications:

It humanizes the issue.

Describing families as experiencing homelessness highlights their resilience and reminds us that their current crisis is not their identity.

It shifts public perception.

The language we use influences whether homelessness is seen as a personal failure or a systemic one. Understanding it as the latter helps drive broader awareness and more inclusive, effective responses.

It drives better policy.

When homelessness is viewed as a solvable, temporary crisis, it leads to policies that support emergency services and long-term solutions, like housing vouchers, transitional housing, mental health care, and family support services.

The Impact on Children and Families

For children, experiencing homelessness can have lasting effects on health, education, and emotional well-being. The toxic stress of housing instability can disrupt development and have lifelong consequences. That's why our language and actions must prioritize stability and support.

Changing how we talk about homelessness is more than semantics. It's a pathway to understanding, compassion, and most important, solutions. While individuals should always use the language that feels authentic to them, at Family Promise, we believe that viewing homelessness as an experience opens doors to empathy, dignity, and opportunity.

What Counts as Homeless?

According to HUD, a person or family must meet one of the following to qualify for federal assistance:

- **Unsheltered**
Sleeping in place not meant for living (abandoned building, parking lot)
- **Sheltered**
Staying in a shelter
- **At Risk**
Will lose housing within 14 days, with no options or resources
- **Fleeing Violence**
Escaping abuse, with no safe place or housing support

Make Tomorrow Count

Every day matters for a family facing homelessness. By including Family Promise in your estate plan, you create a legacy of hope that helps thousands of families in crisis — not just today, but for generations to come.

Your planned gift ensures that every child has the stability and opportunity they deserve. Change the future. Start your legacy today.

Visit familypromise.mygiftlegacy.org, scan the QR code, or contact Melissa Biggar at mbiggarr@familypromise.org.



Family Promise Week October 6 – 10, 2025

2.5 million children in the U.S. will experience homelessness this year. Mark your calendar for Family Promise Week, October 6-10, when we'll be raising awareness about the crisis of family homelessness. Follow us on social media for stories about our work and learn how you can make a difference in your community and beyond!





71 Summit Avenue • Summit, NJ 07901

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

Stay Connected

-  908-273-1100
-  info@familypromise.org
-  www.familypromise.org
-  FamilyPromise
-  family.promise
-  Family Promise, Inc.

News from Family Promise



When we had our own house, we had security, a place to relax, and privacy. I'd come home knowing I was in my own place. When we lost our house, we lost all that. But as long as I was with my family, I felt like I still had a home. The word 'homeless' didn't define us."

—Family Promise teen

