



Family Promise of Grand Rapids

ending homelessness...one family at a time



2011 Annual Report



Executive Director's Report

Dear Friends,

“Homeless I am, yes indeed. Hopeless? That, I will never be!” - Former IHN Guest –age 15

I am constantly amazed at the strength and tenacity of our families as they strive to overcome their housing crisis and regain independence. This strength is even more amazing today considering the current economic climate they face.

Families are in crisis in our community. Families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. In a recent Detroit Free Press four part series (December 17-20, 2011), it was determined that 100,000 people in Michigan are homeless (the size of the city of Livonia) and the average age of a homeless child in Michigan is 7. The report continues by stating that the number of homeless children in Michigan schools continues to grow. More than 31,000 homeless children attended Michigan schools in the 2010-2011 school year, up 37% from the prior school year.

Furthermore, the report shows a more than 300% jump in the number of homeless students in Michigan over the past four years. Last school year, Kent County schools reported 2,010 homeless students. Officials do not expect the housing crisis to improve anytime soon. School officials who deal with homeless children say the numbers are likely to grow in the next few years because of the thousands of families who have lost jobless benefits and other cash assistance.

“You are going to see this tsunami of poverty hit us,” said Beth McCullough, who coordinates help for homeless students in the Adrian Public Schools.

The stress and lasting effects of homelessness and poverty have a permanent and lasting impact on the children we serve and ultimately on our community. Claas Ehlers, a Family Promise National Staff Member, said it best, “We can’t be satisfied with the lowest levels of success, allowing families to just exist, bouncing from one doubled-up situation to another. We have to be focused on transformation, not just housing, but also addressing the totality of the family. We don’t merely want them to go from homeless, poor and with limited options to housed, poor and with limited options.” A holistic change is needed for these children and that’s where Family Promise comes in!

Last year we served 777 people with more than 60% of them being children. The amazing fact is that 93% of them found a new home! And, among the families we have served since 2009, an average of 91% remained housed. That’s transformation! Through the amazing efforts of over 1,600 volunteers from the network of community and faith based organizations supporting Family Promise of Grand Rapids, our guests are reaching their goals and thriving. People are getting jobs, solving their transportation needs, finding daycare, connecting with resources at their schools, enrolling in college, and entering housing.

Much has been accomplished by our hard-working families, yet much remains to be done. Every week, we receive more calls for housing than we can provide. That’s why we are launching our “Reaching Beyond Initiative” to help these families with services even if we cannot house them for now. Thank you to our volunteers, supporters and congregations. When you rock a baby, you are part of the solution. When you provide a meal, you are part of the solution. When you write a check and tell a friend or neighbor about Family Promise, you are part of the solution.

It is a privilege to work with you and with the families we serve. Because you care, there is hope!

Sincerely,

Cheryl Schuch



Cheryl Schuch - Executive Director





Mission | History | Programs

The mission of Family Promise of Grand Rapids is to ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY and faith-based organizations in ENDING HOMELESSNESS...one family at a time.

Family Promise of Grand Rapids, founded in 1997 as the Greater Grand Rapids Interfaith Hospitality Network, partners with local congregations, individuals, families, foundations and corporations to provide emergency shelter, basic needs, and support for families with children who are homeless and/or facing a housing crisis. This is accomplished through five programs:

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) –Emergency shelter for children and their families. Families spend their days at our Day Center where they work with staff to find housing and employment and connect to important community resources. In the evening they are transported to a local congregation that (along with a support congregation) provides shelter, meals and volunteers who create a home away from home each evening.



Reaching Beyond Initiative (RBI) – Family Promise of Grand Rapids serves over 700 people every year through its various programs with over 180 of those receiving emergency shelter. The shelter program, IHN (Interfaith Hospitality Network) provides 50% of the shelter available in our community to families who wish to remain together during the crisis (lessening the emotional impact of the crisis on children). Still, we have found during the past two years that we are unable to provide emergency services for the increased number of families calling us. We can no longer stand by while these children are in crisis. Through our new Reaching Beyond Initiative (RBI), we will provide all the housing and support services we currently provide IHN shelter families to an additional 90 people a year. These services will include case management, assistance with job searches, resume writing, transportation to job and housing rental interviews, access to landlords, mentoring and access to our Emergency Needs items such as school uniforms, shoes/boots, coats, over-the-counter medicines, toiletries, diapers, and baby food. We will work in every way possible to help them find secure housing.



Partners in Housing (PIH) – a permanent housing initiative that offers the option of ownership to homeless families using manufactured homes.

Family Mentoring – Circles of Success help to engage volunteers who build mentoring relationships with families as they strive for independence.



Welcome Home – Donated items of furniture and household goods are collected from the community to assist families as they move into permanent housing.

Good friends are for caring and playing



NEED: 2,010 homeless kids in Kent County schools

Families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population in our country. Kent County is no exception. Last school year, over 2,000 kids were reported as homeless. Where are these homeless children and their parents? Some are doubling up with family in crowded, unhealthy living arrangements. Some are living out of cars or inexpensive motels. One mother walked around a large store for an entire evening with her two young children sleeping in a grocery cart.

Children bear the brunt of homelessness. In a study by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, it was reported:

- Homeless children are sick at twice the rate of other children. They suffer twice as many ear infections, have four times the rate of asthma, and have five times more diarrhea and stomach problems.
- Homeless children go hungry twice as often as non-homeless children.
- More than one-fifth of homeless preschoolers have emotional problems serious enough to require professional care, but less than one-third receive any treatment.
- Homeless children are twice as likely to repeat a grade compared to non-homeless children.
- Homeless children have twice the rate of learning disabilities and three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems of non-homeless children.
- Half of school-age homeless children experience anxiety, depression, or withdrawal compared to 18 percent of non-homeless children.
- By the time homeless children are eight years old, one in three has a major mental disorder.

It is important that these children and their parents quickly receive emergency services and find permanent housing which they can sustain. The good news is that with intervention, children can overcome many of the effects of homelessness. Fortunately, 93% of the families we served last year found permanent housing. And, among those families we have served since 2010, over 90% were still housed one year later!

Amy Collea - First in Her Class

Served by the Interfaith Hospitality Network



RESPONSE

“First in the Class,” - that is the designation enjoyed by Amy Collea, who graduated in 2009 from the Ross Medical Education Center. After completing an internship at Renal Associates of West Michigan, she secured a job in the medical field. It’s hard to imagine the fear that must have gripped the heart of this mother of four when her mother decided to sell the family home and move to another state. She and her children, who were at the time 15, 5 and 2 (twins) were without a home.



“I was in school and without a job or any money,” remembers Amy. That’s when Family Promise stepped in and helped her so that she could complete her education and secure a job and home. “When I thought of taking the kids to a homeless shelter, I was terrified. I envisioned a big gym-type setting with cots and no privacy and even dangerous situations. Wow, was I wrong. Through Family Promise, at every church, we found our own private room and friendly people to encourage us. The staff at the Day Center helped me expedite paper work and find a landlord who was willing to give me a chance.

Today, Amy works as a Certified Medical Assistant at Foot and Ankle Specialist of West Michigan where she assists with x-rays, obtains medical histories and checks vital signs. Her son, Colin, recently completed his freshman year at Grand Rapids Community College. In the fall, her daughter, Paige, will enter third grade and her twins, Ava and Braeden, will begin kindergarten. Amy credits Family Promise with helping her family get through a difficult period. “The staff and volunteers work with what you have, try to understand your situation and never let you forget your value as a person and family. I was able to pick myself up and make myself valuable to accomplish what was needed for my family.”



NEW PROGRAMS

Circles of Success – This community based mentoring program brings families together with others in the community. By socializing, sharing meals and learning together at a monthly meeting, we all begin to see what we have in common and the things we can learn from each other. Outcomes are incredible as families acquire the resiliency and competence they need to break the detrimental cycle of poverty and homelessness.

Reaching Beyond Initiative (RBI) – Reaching beyond shelter, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, AND MUCH MORE! Through this new initiative, we plan to double the number of homeless families we will be able to assist through our housing programs, thereby increasing our programming capacity. In deference to our city's Homeless Coalition's decision to not increase shelter capacity, we will not add "beds" for shelter. However, through this program, we will provide families with every emergency and stabilization service we have to offer except shelter, including case management to begin working on critical needs and connections to community resources, assistance with job searching, resume writing, transportation to access interview opportunities, and meetings with landlords and healthcare providers for the children. They will also have access to basic resources like phones, laundry, showers, clothing, medicines, toiletries, etc. Each family will have the option of being teamed with mentors who will walk with them until they secure permanent housing and hopefully a job.

Kids Care – This new program helps provide opportunities for youth in our community to become civically engaged. Kids Care helps educate young people through observation, hands-on experience and discussions centered on the reality of childhood homelessness. Youth will have a voice through participation on a Youth Advisory Board. They will learn leadership skills as they plan and execute programs that assist children and their families who seek housing solutions.

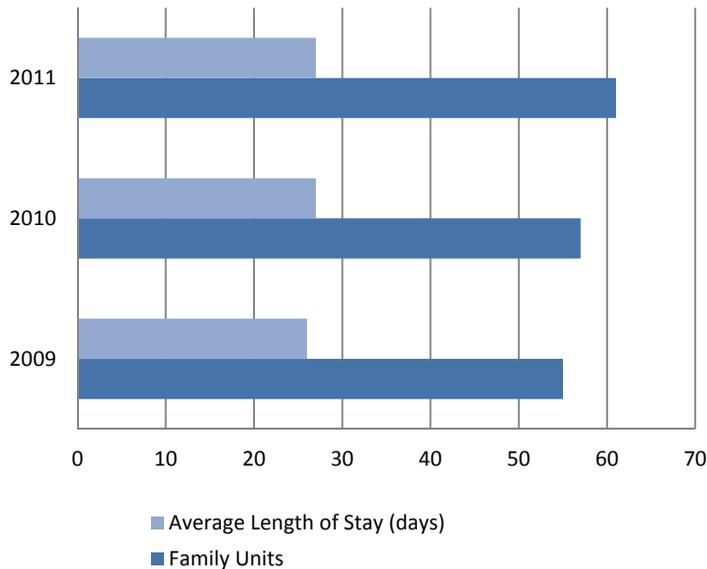
Habitat for Humanity Partnership – Furniture donated to Family Promise is now picked up by Habitat for Humanity for use by our families when they secure permanent housing. Extra items not used by our families are given to Habitat ReStore to support its programs. This is a wonderful partnership and example of collaboration for two organizations committed to helping families secure permanent, secure housing.



Dedicated to assisting
homeless families
in Kent County



OUTCOMES



In 2011, Family Promise of Grand Rapids served 777 people through its comprehensive programs. Housing, independence, and strengthening overall family self-sufficiency are the goals each program strives to achieve.

Through our IHN program, shelter and emergency services were provided to 61 families including 52 single parent families, 9 two-parent families and 107 children. Ninety three percent of the families were able to find permanent housing. The families successfully found housing in an average of only 26 days. Over 90% of the families who found housing in 2010 are still housed over one year later!

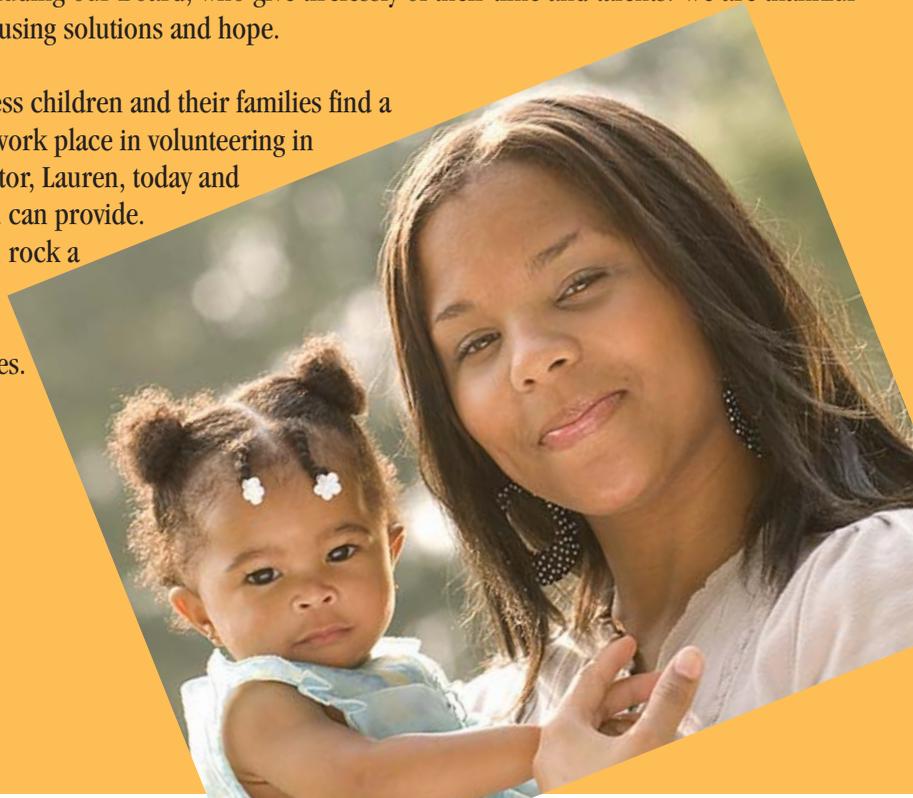


YOU ARE THE STAR: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Families in our community are in crisis. Since our founding in 1997, we have never had as many families calling every day for entry into our programs. The majority of homeless parents are single women with small children. They and their children have wonderful futures ahead of them. Fortunately, the effects of homelessness can be minimized, and that's where you are making a difference!

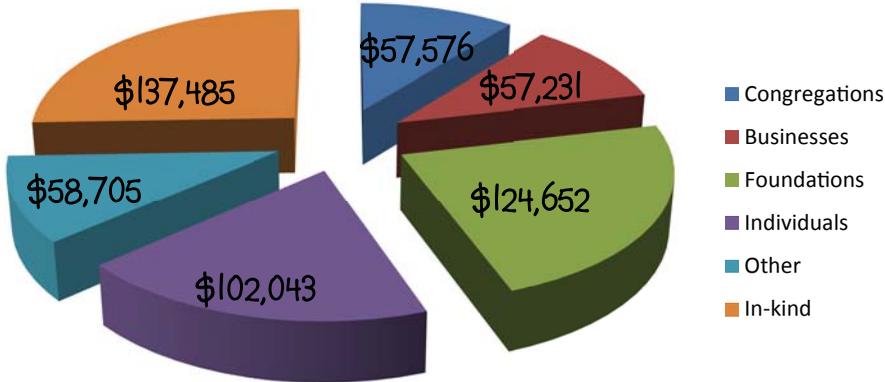
We are grateful for the amazing work of our Congregational Network that provides loving compassion, encouragement and hope to the many families we serve. We are thankful to our 1,600 volunteers, including our Board, who give tirelessly of their time and talents. We are thankful to our financial supporters who partner with us in providing housing solutions and hope.

You can share in the Family Promise mission by helping homeless children and their families find a home by engaging your family, organization, congregation and work place in volunteering in one of our many programs. Please call our Volunteer Coordinator, Lauren, today and she'll work with you to engage you in as little or as much as you can provide. There are hundreds of ways you can help – bake some cookies, rock a child, read to a toddler, provide cleaning supplies for new homeowners, provide a meal...and, write a check so that we might continue to provide these important programs and services.



★ 2011 NUMBERS

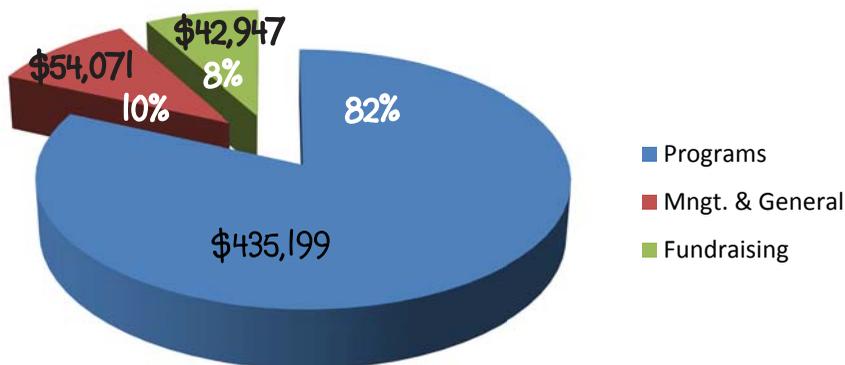
2011 Revenues



*accounting method changed from cash in 2010 to accrual in 2011. Revenue numbers included \$37,169 in foundation grants not reflected in the 2011 financial statements.



2011 Expenses





2011 TEAM



Host Congregations

- Calvin Christian Reformed Church
- Cornerstone United Methodist Church
- East Congregational Church
- Fifth Reformed Church
- First United Methodist Church
- Grace Episcopal Church
- Ivanrest Christian Reformed Church
- Mayflower Congregational Church
- Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church
- Plymouth Congregational Church
- Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church
- Princeton Christian Reformed Church
- St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
- Trinity Lutheran Church

Support Congregations

- Aldersgate United Methodist Church
- Brookside Christian Reformed Church
- Eastminster Presbyterian Church
- First Reformed Church - Grandville
- Fountain Street Church
- Hilliard Chapel
- Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
- Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish
- Kentwood Community Church
- Living Word Christian Center
- Renaissance Church of God in Christ
- St. Paul's United Methodist Church
- St. Stephen Parish
- Thornapple Covenant Church

Family Promise of Grand Rapids always welcomes new Host and Support Congregations to our Network. Contact us at www.familypromisegr.org for further information.

Board of Directors

- Jerry Broersma - President
- Michael Sytsma - Vice President
- Boyd Griswold - Treasurer
- Christina McDonald - Secretary

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| Louis Bourassa | Becky Heath |
| Pete Brand | Lindsey Heyboer |
| Pat Clifford | Randy Locke |
| Amy Collea | Cheryl Schuch |
| Rev. Mike Fedewa | Lisa Valk |

Family Promise Staff

- Cheryl Schuch - Executive Director
- Barbara Zylstra - Assistant Director
- Kristie Baker - Director of Operations
- Donna Evans - Housing Resource Specialist
- Eddie James - Transportation Coordinator
- Lauren Hodson (Americorps Member) - Mentoring Coordinator/Volunteer Manager

Donations are vital in enabling Family Promise of Grand Rapids to continue to help hurting families. We are a 501(c)(3) organization so your contribution is tax deductible. Please consider what you can do to help Family Promise of Grand Rapids financially. Donate online at www.familypromisegr.org



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