



# Family Promise of Grand Rapids

Fall 2012

Ending homelessness...  
one family at a time.

## “A New Home and a New Start”

~Bobbi, IHN Guest

Bobbi Rosa and her twelve year old twin daughters, Te’Asion and T’Asia, came to Family Promise’s Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) program on August 12, 2012. Within 30 days, the single mother and her two daughters had moved into a beautiful home in Grand Rapids. “We’re so very happy to be here,” Bobbi said. “I’m not one to move around much, so I’m thankful to find a home where we can live for a good, long while.”

The two years preceding her brief stay with Family Promise had been a long and difficult journey for Bobbi Rosa’s family. Starting with the unexpected death of her seventeen year old son in 2010, what had seemed like a very stable life began to unravel before her eyes. In August of 2012, Bobbi made the difficult decision to leave a verbally abusive relationship and start a better life for herself and her daughters. This is when Bobbi turned to Family Promise.

“When I came into the program, it was a big change. But thankfully, it was not at all what I expected,” Bobbi said. “At first I didn’t know if I could do it, but all the staff and volunteers made me feel cared for, loved, and wanted, and it really helped me tremendously.”

That compassionate hospitality was mirrored by the volunteers in the church congregations. “We went to Princeton Church our first week,” Bobbi recalls. “There were some days during that week when I felt so helpless. I would go to my room, get down on my hands and knees, and just cry. My children mean the world to me, and it broke my heart to see my daughters go through this experience. But, I specifically remember a couple of church volunteers who were so loving and caring. They really gave me that push to keep going.”

And keep going she did. “I’m so thankful for the Family Promise staff and church volunteers for giving us a roof over our heads, beds, and meals,” she said. “From my experience, Family Promise is an awesome program, and I just want to thank everyone for all their support, time, and effort.”



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## THANK YOU -

*To all who voted in the Toyota Truck Giveaway. Wow - because you cared, because you voted - we won a new truck. The new truck will be so helpful in many ways, particularly in moving families into permanent housing and picking up furniture donations. We are so excited about this wonderful gift!*

## Welcome Lisa!

Lisa Cruden came on board as our new Case Manager in May, 2012, and she is a great addition to our staff! Prior to her work at Family Promise, Lisa was a Children’s Ministry Director for 11 years and Kid’s Hope USA Director for 4 years. She brings a real passion for helping kids and families to her work. She is a recent graduate of GVSU’s Masters of Social Work program. “I’ve always had a passion for helping kids and families, and I’m excited to help empower families to better support their children. The more we can help the parents, the better off their kids will be, and this makes a huge difference,” she says. When Lisa is not at work, she enjoys spending time with her three children and husband, John. She also enjoys running and reading.



(616) 475-5220  
www.familypromisegr.org

## Congregation Feature: Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church

We are pleased to welcome Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church to our roster of Host Congregations. The congregation, under the leadership of Pastor Steve DeVries and his wife, Lori, along with Lisa Brouwer and Tom Wingerden, hosted its first IHN week in August.

“It was a really good experience for our church. The week brought a few challenges but overall it was beneficial for both our volunteers and the families who were with us that week. The experience attaches faces to homelessness as we enter into their world and begin to understand the challenges and frustrations,” recalls Pastor Steve.

Located on the corner of Plymouth and Boston, Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church was founded in 1951. Pastor Steve and his family have been with the congregation for four years, having previously served as missionaries in the Dominican Republic. Pastor Steve describes the congregation as a “welcoming community with a long standing commitment to serving as best we can in this place.” He adds, “We are always looking for ways to connect with people.”



### Golf Event is Great Success

Blythefield County Club was the site of Changing the Course for Children on September 17, 2012. The 10th Annual Family Promise Golf Outing proved to be lots of fun for the 80 participants who enjoyed a day of golf for a great cause – support for the programs provided by Family Promise to families facing a housing crisis. Thanks to their efforts over \$70,000 was raised to support our families! Thank you to all who participated, volunteered, and sponsored the Family Promise “2012 Changing the Course for Children.”

#### Thank You to our Sponsors

##### Zylstra Door

National Nail

Valleau & VanDeven DDS

Founders Bank

Varnum

DHE Plumbing

PEC Technologies

Miller Canfield

Mindscape

Supreme Great Lakes

Foot & Ankle Specialist

Thank You...  
Thank You...  
Thank You!

### Gifts of Time and Talent



Lauren Hodson  
Volunteer/Kids Care Coordinator  
(Americorps Member)

Thank you to Bank of America and Trinity Lutheran Church who both held donation drives to collect much needed backpacks and school supplies for our kids as they headed “back to school” this fall!

Thank you to the amazing Family Promise PR Team! Four members of the PR Association of West Michigan, Rick Jensen, Terri Howe, Allison Root, and Christine Hoek, are donating their time over the next two years to aid in Family Promise’s PR efforts. Without their time, effort, and expertise, we would not have won our new truck from Toyota’s 100 Cars for Good contest!

Thank you to the Men’s Group from Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church! As our families are ready to move out of shelter and into their new homes, this faithful group provides the man power to help them furnish their home and make a smooth transition!

Thank you to Sarah Mansell for donating her professional photography services each month to take family portraits of our families! Not only does she take beautiful photographs, but she also provides each family with free copies of her professional, edited prints to display in their new homes.

Dear Friends,

A few weeks back my wife's sister visited us from Phoenix. Jonie was coming with her friend Kim. Kim had never been to Michigan and was looking forward to seeing some of the sites that Jonie had told her about. It was a delight to have them spend time with us in our home. Their presence reminded us that as hot as our summer was in Michigan, compared to life in the Arizona desert, Michigan was refreshing.

As we prepared for their arrival, we did our best to make our home as welcoming as we could. We cleared clutter off the dining room table, we bought extra food, beds were made, sheets were changed, bathrooms were cleaned, fresh towels laid out. Sure it was a little bit of extra work, but, we wanted our guests to feel welcome and at home.

The week they were with us was filled with fun, travel and excitement. On the day they left there were sad goodbyes. The week had flown by. Our home had become their home for the week. Jonie and Kim had accomplished what they hoped. They saw many of the sites they had wanted to see. Linda and I were blessed to have them in our home. There is no doubt that the gifts they brought into our life for that week made all of our work worthwhile!!!! Already plans were taking shape for their return to Michigan in summer of 2013.

Hospitality is a central theme in our scriptures. The Old and Testaments are filled with stories of blessings to a home and family when doors are opened for guests and strangers. The scriptures have many stories of guests being welcomed as holy messengers from God. The scriptures remind us, that in Jesus, God came to earth and lived as a guest among us.

St. Andrew's has been a host congregation for IHN from its beginning in Grand Rapids. Three or four times per year for nearly 15 years now we have welcomed families into our church and into our congregational life. That is over 60 times!!!! Every time we prepare our church "home" for our guests, we do our best to make it as welcoming as we can. We clean up some of the clutter, buy extra food, freshen the rooms, make the beds, set out fresh towels to prepare for our guests. Our guests come with some expectations, some hopes, some fear, and some excitement. We do our best to make them feel at home.

Every week of IHN hosting has been different. Each week has its moments of excitement and delight. Yes, some of our guests have special needs and different personalities. Yes, some of our guests bring special challenges. But, each of our guests also brings different gifts. They bring us stories of amazing strength and perseverance. They bring us their vision of life and the world. They bring us stories of incredible faith. They bring us stories of miracles that are as real today as the miracles were in the scriptures and the life of Jesus.

Whenever guests come into our home, it means some work and preparation. When IHN guests come into our church it is work. But, the weeks they are with us are the holiest weeks of our year. These weeks are holy because it is during these weeks that God is sending us holy messengers. Indeed, it is during these weeks that Jesus is living among us.

Yes, we are tired when our guests leave. But, we are also looking forward to the next time they visit.

The Rev. Michael C. Fedewa  
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church



## Thank You Brookside SERVE!

This summer, a team of youth and their leaders from Brookside CRC SERVE generously committed their time and all of the needed supplies to paint and landscape one of our Partners in Housing (PIH) homes! Through this program, we purchase and refurbish manufactured homes so they can become affordable places in which families can live. These Brookside SERVE student volunteers spent three full days transforming the exterior of this home through power washing, painting, and landscaping. Their donation of time and talent was a huge blessing for the family living there! Thank you Brookside SERVE!





906 S. Division Ave., Suite 205  
Grand Rapids, MI 49507



Painted by Reyna - former guest

## IHN Network Members

### **IHN 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

### **IHN Support Congregations**

Aldersgate United Methodist Church  
Brookside Christian Reformed Church  
Eastminster Presbyterian Church  
First Reformed Church - Grandville  
Fountain Street Church  
Hillard 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

## Your Gift this Fall

Your gift this fall will allow us to expand our program to include the Reaching Beyond Initiative (doubling our capacity to help families in crisis). It will also allow us to continue our Emergency Needs Fund that provides life necessities to families such as diapers, baby food, school uniforms, youth winter coats and shoes, school supplies, over the counter medicines, bus tickets, to name a few. Every gift you provide (up to \$5,000) will be matched by a generous foundation grant. (In essence, doubling your gift)!

You can contribute through our website, [www.familypromisegr.org](http://www.familypromisegr.org) or, if you prefer to donate by mail (envelope enclosed), please make your check payable to Family Promise of Grand Rapids and mail to 906 South Division, Suite 205, Grand Rapids, MI 49507. All gifts are tax deductible.

Thank you for your support!

## Wish List

- Pots/Pans
- Baking pans
- Plates
- Silverware
- Queen sized sheets
- Towels
- Toaster
- Kids socks and underwear
- Adult socks, t-shirts, and underwear
- Vacuums
- Large area rug for day center
- Umbrella strollers
- Umbrellas