

“If you are trying to help yourself; they will help you.”

–Monica, IHN Guest

Monica and Courtney are happily settled into their new home with their family, Shaquita, 15, Malcolm, 10, and Jaylen, 6. But life hasn't always been on the upswing as they are experiencing now. “I relocated from Grand Rapids to Laurel, Mississippi, for eight months in 2009. Upon returning to Grand Rapids, I couldn't find a landlord willing to rent to me due to my past history. I didn't know where to turn, so I called the Salvation Army. They referred me to Family Promise, and that's when our lives began to take a positive turn,” remembers Monica.



Monica, Courtney and the family will never forget the kindnesses and compassion they experienced while with Family Promise. “The Family Promise staff and volunteers from the host congregations really work together well. Volunteers from the first church treated our family to an outing of movies and bowling. It had been a long time since we had done anything like that. Members of the second host church took us to the mall for shopping since it was the holiday season. For Christmas, volunteers from *Margaret's Hope Chest* gave the kids handcrafted quilts and story books,” she remembers.

The resources available through Family Promise gave Monica, Courtney and their family a place to start working on the issues facing them. “Through the computer center, we were able to look for housing and employment. Through bus tickets, we were able to go on job interviews and visit apartments. Courtney was able to find a job with Happy Pizza, and within a few weeks, we were able to find our own apartment,” she adds.



“The churches worked hard to bring food for us, and then, the volunteers joined us in dinner, talked with us and joined us in activities and games. When we found housing, the churches helped us get started by providing beds and household items such as towels and kitchen utensils. The Interfaith Hospitality Network program is really good. The staff and church volunteers really care about people. If you are trying to help yourself, they will encourage and help you,” concludes Monica.

2009 Accomplishments!

Because of your generous donations and tireless efforts we have served over 500 people through our Family Promise programs in 2009!

IHN 2009 program information:

Number of families served	55
Number of single parent families served	49
Number of children served	105
Number of IHN families who found permanent/independent housing	85%

Thoughts from our Families....

“Homeless, I am, yes indeed Hopeless? That I will never be.”
– Kassondra, 15, IHN Guest

“You not only helped me find a place to live, but put me in a position I had always wanted...to attend college.”
– Courtney, RBI Participant

“You make me feel like somebody. I feel good about myself again.”
– Whitney & son, IHN Family

“When we didn't have a home, you all made yours ours.”
– Katelyn, Tim & Kayden, IHN Family

IHN Network Members

IHN Host Congregations

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

IHN Support Congregations

- Aldersgate United Methodist Church
- Grandville First Reformed Church
- Oakdale Park Christian Reformed Church
- Renaissance Church of God in Christ
- St. Stephen Parish

Family Promise Wish List

Family Promise relies on donations to assist families in our community. Please consider donating one of the much needed items below or make a financial contribution. All donations are tax deductible

There are so many ways you can help our families... everything from food and personal care items to crafts and cloths! Follow our web site for updates to our wish list below.

- Bus tickets/gas cards
- Personal hygiene products
- Gently used furniture
- Household items
- Gift cards (Wal-Mart, Family Dollar, Meijer)
- New underwear, t-shirts and socks (all sizes)
- Gently used beds
- Medicine and first-aid supplies
- Diapers/wipes
- Laundry soap



(616) 475-5220
www.familypromisegr.org

Home is Where Your Story Begins

How can families begin their stories if they have no place to call their own? Approximately 33% of homeless people live in households with minor children. (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2009). In our community, more than 13,000 people in the metro area are without a place to live. (*The Grand Rapids Press*, October 18, 2009). How are we to respond as homelessness increases during these tough times? Homelessness in our area jumped 11% from 2008 to 2009. (*The Grand Rapids Press*, October 18, 2009).

Family Promise*, founded in 1997 as Greater Grand Rapids Interfaith Hospitality Network, partners with local faith organizations, individuals, families, foundations and corporations to provide viable solutions for our families through five programs:

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) - an emergency shelter for children and their families who are facing a housing crisis. Local congregations provide evening meals, private rooms for each family and volunteers to create a home away from home in the evenings. Our Day Center is “home base” to our families during the day where they can conduct family business while looking for housing and employment.

Partners in Housing (PIH) – A permanent housing initiative that offers Rapid Rehousing and Prevention services to qualified families through the option of securing permanent housing through manufactured homes.

Re-Building Individuals (RBI) – A Rapid Rehousing and Prevention program that provides short-term rent subsidies with long-term case management available to families as they move into permanent housing.

Furniture Donation – Everything needed to make a house a home! Donated household items are collected from the community to assist families as they move into permanent housing.

Family Mentoring – A support initiative that builds mentoring relationships with families as they establish self sufficiency and long term sustainability.

*In 2009, the organization changed its name to Family Promise, reflecting its affiliation with the national organization of the same name, which has 165 affiliates across the United States.

Want to Help....Here's How:

Office /Administrative

- Help keep our office humming! Work a couple of hours a week to help with general office needs such as answering phones processing thank you notes and entering data into GiftWorks, our donor database.

Work with our Families:

- Does your family have an evening or Saturday to share? Evening volunteers are welcome at our host sites. Help provide dinner or enjoy activities with our guests! Saturdays are a great time to take a field trip or do craft projects with our families. Call Family Promise at 475-5220 for more information.
- We have many one-time projects that you or your group can do to help our families. Call the Daycenter at 475-5220 for details.

Furniture Donation:

- Wednesday volunteers needed to assist our staff with furniture pickups from donors and moving families into their homes. Call Edie at 916-5119 if you have furniture to donate or want to help with our program.
- Are you organizer and handy man? We need help building shelving and organizing our storage unit. Call Edie at 916-5119 if you can lend a hand!

Family Mentors

- Mentors help families define and meet goals to develop life skills, connect with community resources, improve housing and employment and nurture and support their children. Mentoring training is provided. For more information call Mary Brown at 581-1154.

Matching Grant Opportunity

- Family Promise is excited about the possible Grant/Gift from a local family foundation and a church. Family Promise is thrilled to announce a matching fund up to \$10,000! Every dollar you donate will be matched! These funds will be used to provide our IHN Program with a new van, essential in the transportation of families from the Day Center to our Host Congregations as well as other needs such as medical appointments, transportation to and from school and family outings. If you choose to donate to the match, please note “Matching Grant” on the notation line of your check. A heartfelt “Thank You” from all of our IHN children and their families!

Save the Date!

June – Ken Medema in concert for Family Promise, Ken hears with his heart and sings the stories back to audiences of all ages. He has written a song and produced a CD especially for Family Promise, which he will debut at the national conference in April. The song was recorded here with our own Family Promise volunteers, guests and staff at Grace Episcopal Church! Watch your church bulletin and our website for the exact date.

September 20 – Annual Golf Event at Blythefield Country Club, Belmont, MI. 7:30 a.m. continental breakfast and 8:00 a.m. shotgun start golf scramble. Join in the fun by contacting Sam Evans at sam.evans@sellner-behr.com or calling 616-540-2107 to find out more about this important event. All proceeds from this event are used to provide shelter for homeless families and assist them in securing permanent homes.



Meet our New Family Promise Executive Director



Family Promise began the New Year with a new Executive Director. On January 4, 2010, Cheryl Schuch took over the reigns from Mary Kay Baker, who faithfully served the organization for eight years. Prior to coming to Family Promise, Cheryl served as Manager of Volunteer Services and Kids Helping Kids Program Manager at Kids’ Food Basket of Grand Rapids. Earlier in her career, she spent many years working in the public sector in the computer industry. She is married to Dean, and they are parents to Andrew, 18, and Erica, 15.

FP: What drew you to Family Promise?

CS: I have always had a passion for helping children. Family Promise and its host congregations have done an amazing job of helping families in our community make permanent, positive and sustainable changes for success. Being a part of such a wonderful mission is a privilege I couldn’t turn down!

FP: What aspect of the organization has amazed you most in 90 days?

CS: The level of passion and commitment from everyone involved! Every person that I meet regardless of the way they volunteer and support our families are so passionate about our mission. Those who get involved with Family Promise stay involved. From host church volunteers to day center volunteers, event volunteers, board members, technology volunteers and staff, they might turn a job over to someone else but they always go on to assist in another capacity.

FP: Why is the program so effective?

CS: Eighty five percent of our families find permanent/independent housing. That’s almost double the average of 47%! I think our success can be attributed to the high level of commitment, care and encouragement our volunteers, mentors and staff provide. Families never face the future alone.

FP: What do you see in the future?

CS: I see exciting opportunities for community involvement in supportive ways to expand our programs and services. I love the creativity and unique resources that come with each individual volunteer that is a part of Family Promise. I look forward to greater awareness and participation by the community to help provide long-term, sustainable change for our families.

FP: What are your closing thoughts?

CS: *Thank you, thank you, thank you* to the network of people who support our families! I’ve been humbled by the compassion and respect we, along with our families, see and experience every day by our volunteers and donors. Together, we give new hope to the many families we serve.

Thank You...

Thank You...

Thank You!

Thank you retiring board members, Shelly Lemathieu Dunn and Rick DeVinney, for your dedication and years of service. Family Promise also thanks Mary Kay Baker for eight years of service as Executive Director.

Artist Ginny Keegan and her assistants, Mikayla Roush and Greg Roush, transformed our Day Center play room into a visual delight by painting a mural tribute to Dr. Seuss...who mastered the art of...imagination.

Ginny also involved children staying in our Day Center in the project when she wrapped them in plastic, offered paints of every color and gave them their own wall to paint. Smiles all around. She also presented Family Promise with two of her original paintings on glass windows. Thank you, Ginny!



Little Helpers!

