



Family Promise of Grand Rapids

Spring 2014

Ending homelessness...
one family at a time.

“Now I can focus on our future”

Liz Washington, PIH Future Homeowner



It was early December, 2013 and Liz Washington had just entered a beautiful, cozy home. It seemed perfect for her and her two youngest children, Jonathan and Jada, who had all been homeless.

Liz broke down in tears. “I don’t know if I can do this, what if I don’t make it?”

Life had been a roller coaster for Liz Washington, dealing with layoffs from multiple jobs and fighting a medical condition. To survive she and her children moved in with her eldest daughter but gradually it became more difficult for Liz’s family to help her and she was now faced with moving out and nowhere to go. The future seemed bleak and cold.

Calling on her faith for courage, Liz phoned Family Promise. Liz had worked with Family Promise six years ago as a board member at a partner organization. Her decision to call for help was providential. A new PIH home had just become available! During 2013, Cornerstone Church and Farmers Insurance had partnered to fund the property and volunteers had painstakingly refurbished it into the shining home that awaited Liz.

It took a little time for Liz to recognize that “grace happens.” She was scared to death, but Family Promise staff reassured her that this is what Family Promise is here for, to walk with Liz and others like her who need some support to find the path to self-sufficiency.

Liz and her family moved in on December 12. She loves their new home; 15-year-old Jonathan has become a talented young artist whose work adorns the walls, and 10-year-old Jada is enjoying friends and school and happy to have a place of her own.

“Having this home means we can forgive our past and set a new course for our future. Once I am financially stable enough, I want to purchase a new home and deed this house back to Family Promise so they can help another family like mine,” she vows.

As this issue went to press, Liz learned that her job search paid off and she has a new part-time job at a local nonprofit. A better future is in sight for Liz and her children.

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Thank You to our “Dreams” Dinner Sponsors

Our “Dreams” Dinner sponsors played a major role in making the event such a great success!!! Thank you for helping us keep our promise to families.

Sustainer – Zylstra Door

Caretaker – Ada Bible Church, Bank of America, Charity Motors, Mark and Heidi DeKorne, Ben and Allison Ferwerda, Mika Meyers Beckett & Jones PLC, Trinity Lutheran Church.

Nurturer – Amway, The Bank of Holland, DHE Plumbing & Mechanical, Founders Bank & Trust, Midwest Geothermal, Ben Muller Realty Company, Kathy and Maury Norman.

Companion – A Brand New Way, Cornerstone Church, CSM Services, Dickinson Wright PLLC, First United Methodist Church, IBS Financial Group, MotorMax of GR, Dann and Lisa Nixon, PEC Technologies, Rivertown Finance, Bill and Deb Walker.

Save the Date!

Changing the Course for Children
September 17, 2014



It’s not too early to mark September 17, 2014 on your calendar and plan to join us for Changing the Course for Children, our 12th annual golf outing. The event will be held at Thousand Oaks Golf Club this year. Watch for invitations in May. Hope to see you there!

(616) 475-5220
www.familypromisegr.org



Dreaming of a Place to Call Home

One of the greatest joys we have experienced is handing over the deed to a home to a family. There are always smiles and often tears. We particularly enjoy seeing the joy on the faces of the children. They are so happy to finally have a home. What does this mean for them? There will be no more changing schools and finding new friends. They can invite their friends to their home. They can safely play in the yard, have a pet, plant a garden or just play.

The dream of owning a home is possible through Family Promise's Partners in Housing Program, celebrating its 5th anniversary this year! To date, we have served 39 families by helping them to become independent home owners with a bright and beautiful future

For as little as \$6,600, Family Promise can purchase and transform a manufactured home into an affordable place where a family will be proud to live. When a family shows financial responsibility by consistently paying rent and utilities and completes the home ownership program they can receive the title to their home. The journey from homeless to homeowner can be accomplished in as little as six months! Wow – now that's a dream come true!

We are pleased to provide the wrap-around support services to help families succeed. Through support from our caseworkers, volunteers and mentors, families know they are not alone on their journey. Liz, whose story appears on page 1, is a great example of what a family can accomplish with a little structure and support. With the shortage of affordable housing in our community, we receive calls daily from desperate parents seeking housing.

Through our three emergency housing programs – IHN (Interfaith Hospitality Network), RBI (Reaching Beyond Initiative) and PIH (Partners in Housing), we are serving over 700 people every year. Thankfully, 90% of them find their way out of homelessness with a bright future in front of them!

Thank you for standing with us, as dreams become reality. All of our programs depend on your support, volunteer service, and advocacy in the community. On behalf of smiling, secure and thankful families, I express their deepest thanks and appreciation. . . . THANK YOU!

Warmly,

Cheryl Schuch
Executive Director

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

Gifts of Time and Talent

Students from **Grand Rapids Christian High School** volunteered in March for a special service day. They helped us prepare for our "Dreams" Dinner, packaged baked goods and cleaned our donation room. Great job, Eagles!



Roger Faber serves as an amazing volunteer with Family Promise! He makes sure that all of our kiddos have plenty to eat by doing our Feeding America grocery shopping once a week with a cheerful spirit. He and his wife, Judy, are also part of a Life Group at Thornapple Covenant Church that serves families meals 3-4 times a year as a Support Congregation for IHN. Roger has helped in rounding up groups of men from the church to help families move to their permanent homes, making sure that no one is sitting on the floor the first night in their new home! Our families are keeping this retired architect busy!

Also in March we welcomed students from **Plymouth Christian School** as volunteers to our Day Center. They arrived bearing "Wish List" gifts for our families such as socks, pillows, Meijer gift cards and baby items. They also helped with donor thank you projects and filled bags with baby wipes and other personal care items. Thanks to a great group of students making a difference!



Representatives from the **GRCC Dental Hygiene Program** collected and delivered toothpaste and toothbrushes to distribute to our families. They shared their skills and education with our families by creating an instructional poster about healthy dental care. The poster which hangs in our Day Center is a healthy reminder to all of us.

Our staff gratefully received quilts from the "**Second Stitchers**" group of **Second Congregational United Church of Christ**. They work tirelessly throughout the year to sew special quilts for every family member coming through our IHN Shelter! They consider quilt making as therapy for them, but it is not just therapy for them, it's love our families receive with the comfort and warmth of these beautiful gifts. Bless you Second Stitchers!

Congregational Feature: Genesis United Methodist Church

The vision of Genesis United Methodist Church began in 1995 when husband and wife team Pastor Chris Lane and Pastor Jane Lippert gathered in their living room with a core group of 20 to pray, plan and launch a ministry in the Ada/Forest Hills area.

Today, that ministry, headed by Senior Pastor Sue Petro, is housed at 1601 Galbraith, S.E. The congregation began serving Family Promise as a Host Congregation the week of Sunday, March 23. "We are always looking for ways to better serve the community. Serving as a Host Congregation gives us an opportunity for hands on and relational opportunities all week to serve on multiple levels. The gift of hospitality is so central to the message of Jesus," said Pastor Sue.

Headed by Ashley Capps with co-coordinators Carol Rich and Kris Fox, a team of more than 30 people (and a golden retriever) leads the congregation in providing a welcoming experience to Family Promise families. "We are pleased to be a part of this circle of care. We are humbled that God is trusting us with these families," adds Pastor Sue.



New Board Members Named for 2014

The following volunteers have joined our Board of Directors in recently months and we are thankful for their amazing leadership and passion for our mission.

Christopher (Chris) Boike, works as Vice President at Corporate Funding, Inc. He brings over 24 years of lending, corporate finance and marketing experience to our Board.



Jeff Clark serves as Director of Adult Ministries at the Cascade Campus of Ada Bible Church. Prior to joining Ada Bible Church in 2008, he worked at Gordon Food Service as Director of Corporate Development.



Wayne Randall is Senior Vice President and Consumer Market Manager with Bank of America. Wayne has been in multi-market management for over 10 years serving in various roles. Prior to joining banking, he served in the United States Marine Corps.

Welcome Todd!

We are pleased to welcome Todd Buchta to our staff as our first Director of Development and Communications. Todd brings more than 20 years of experience to the position having worked most recently for GVSU, serving three of the four presidents of the University since its founding.



"Dreams" Event Keeps the "Promise" Alive

Thanks to the more than 300 people who attended our "Dreams" Dinner on March 13. Your support - through ticket sales, the first-ever Fund the Mission Auction and sponsorships - sends an amazing message of love to those we serve.

Your wave of generosity will keep the dream of a home alive for over 700 people this year! You help families become homeowners. You provide shelter and basic needs while families find permanent homes. You keep hope alive!

As Chantel Smith, whose family received the "2014 Shining Star Award" said at the banquet, "Imagine it... Believe it... Dream it!" Everyone who shared in the celebration could feel the love our amazing community dedicates to making a difference in the lives of homeless families. Thank you!



Chantel Smith and her family, recipients of the 2014 Shining Star Award.





Painted by Reyna - former guest

Family Promise Congregational Partners

Host Congregations

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

Support Congregations

12th Avenue Christian Reformed Church
Aldersgate United Methodist Church
All Souls Community Church
Bread of Life Lutheran Church
Brookside Christian Reformed Church
Congregation Ahavas Israel
Eastminster Presbyterian Church
First Reformed Church (Grandville)
Fountain Street Church
Hager Park Church
Hilliard Chapel AME Zion
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
Immaculate Heart of Mary
Kentwood Community Church
Living Word Christian Center
Renaissance C.O.G.I.C.
St. Paul's United Methodist Church
St. Stephen Parish
Second Congregational United Church of Christ
Thornapple Covenant Church
Westminster Presbyterian Church

Your Gift this Spring

In honor of the 5th anniversary of Partners in Housing, a portion of your gift this spring will allow us to provide refurbished manufactured homes and support services to families through the PIH Program. Your generous gift will allow families to have a "forever" home.

You can contribute through our website, www.familypromisegr.org. If you prefer to donate by mail (envelope enclosed), please make your check payable to Family Promise of Grand Rapids and mail it to 906 Division Avenue South, Suite 205, Grand Rapids, MI 49507. All gifts are tax deductible and greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Wish List

Clothing

- Socks for all ages (baby through adult)
- Short sleeved, white undershirts for all sizes (baby through XXL, including Men's)
- Women's and Girls' Underwear
- Umbrellas

Not sure what to give?

- Bus tickets
- Gas cards
- Gift cards (Meijer, Family Dollar, Walmart...)

Household Goods

- Strollers (New and/or used...any type)
- Bath Towels
- Shower curtains with hooks
- Brooms/dustpans (sets or singles)
- Mops

See our full wish list on the web at
www.familypromisegr.org.

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