



Family Promise of Grand Rapids

Winter 2013

Ending homelessness . . .
one family at a time.

“I Couldn’t Ask for Anything More” – Scott & Nathaniel Quick

Scott and his son Nate, 12, spent most of October, 2012 with Family Promise. Originally from Marshall, Michigan, Scott graduated from Marshall High School, where he played football. From high school he moved into construction jobs. He was able to work in that field for 12 years until construction ceased and jobs were hard to find. At that time, he moved to Battle Creek where he worked for Denso, a tier 1 auto parts manufacturer. He worked a repetitive job for eight years until he began to suffer back pain.

Scott learned that he was suffering from arthritis and degenerative discs in his back. After surgery, he was unable to return to that type of work. He decided to come to Grand Rapids where he began working as a grocery manager. Scott, the father of four sons, had been awarded custody of the youngest Nate. Because Nate missed his mother, they moved to Kentucky for 18 months.

During this time, he waited for the economy to improve in Michigan. “I wanted to return to Michigan because my family is here and my parents were aging.” The only jobs he has been able to find are through temporary employment agencies. He was working steadily at Amway but again a health concern led to instability when he required knee surgery. “At that point, Nate and I were living check to check. In that kind of situation, it only takes a health crisis and loss of job for things to go into the tank,” he recalls.

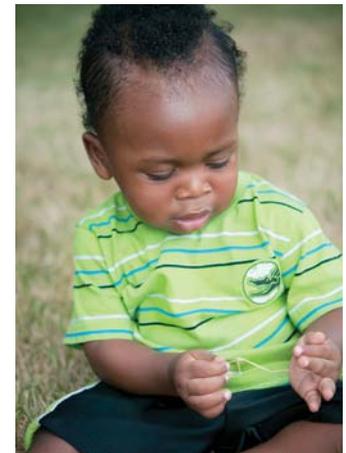
Scott and Nate began living with his brother for a limited time. “I called Booth Family Services and was referred to Family Promise,” he remembers. “Family Promise was a great help to us. When you are faced with a homeless situation, especially with a child, you can’t ask for anything more in an emergency. Family Promise provides an excellent fall-back situation until you can begin to get back on your feet.”

Today, Scott and Nate live in an apartment in Wyoming. Nate attends Godwin Middle School. He enjoys playing video games and working on the I-Pad given him when he participated in the photography event at Family Promise. “He hasn’t put the I-Pad down and now he wants a camera,” laughs Scott. “I’ll always remember when, in a time of need, the people of Family Promise made us comfortable and were extremely helpful.”



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2012 Accomplishments:

Because of your generous donations and tireless efforts, we served over 700 people through our Family Promise Programs in 2012.

IHN 2013 Program Information

- Number of families served -63
- Total number of people served - 190
- Number of children served -116
- Percentage of IHN families who found permanent housing – 89%
- Average Percentage of IHN families who have remained housed for two years or longer – 90%
- Average stay with Family Promise prior to finding a permanent home – 23 days

Combined Program Information

- Number of Families Served - 165
- Number of People Served - 743
- Number of children served - 455

(616) 475-5220
www.familypromisegr.org

Dreams

Save the Dates!

April 18, 2013

Help make our Dreams come True by joining us for an amazing dinner and evening of fun honoring the extraordinary accomplishments of the families we serve. Mark your calendars for April 18 and plan to join us for a very special evening as we celebrate! Watch your mail for further information or call the office at 475-5220.



September 16, 2013 - Change the Course for Children

This is the date of our Family Promise Golf Outing at Blythe Field Country Club in Belmont, Michigan. A day of amazing golf on a beautiful course is planned with a shotgun start golf scramble. Join in the fun by contacting Rachel Erkel (295-2048) or Erika Hanson (291-0380) to find out more about this important event. All proceeds from this event are used to provide shelter for homeless families as we assist them in securing permanent homes and secure futures.



Childhood Challenges

On Sunday, February 3, 2013, The Grand Rapids Press, the lead story's headline read: Childhood challenges... CHILD POVERTY SPIKES IN WEST MICHIGAN DURING RECESSION. Were you surprised? Do you think the economy is improving? According to the article, in Kent County, the child poverty rate grew from 16.3 percent in 2005-2006 to 23.1 percent in 2010-2011. And, from the desperate calls we receive daily, I can tell you that (through our experience), it did not improve in 2012.

Families remain homeless. Many more are on the verge of homelessness every day. That's why groups like Family Promise are so important in our community. Every night this cold and snowy winter when I lay my head on my pillow, I think of the 2,000 kids (and their families) reported by our school districts (WZZM, May 9, 2012) as homeless and I say a prayer. Along with prayer, we need to be God's hands and heart in service to families.

What are we doing to help?

We are loving these families! Christina wrote, "I was nervous for myself and my daughter, but I found everyone (staff and volunteers) to be welcoming and very respectful." Our network of 1,600 volunteers wraps their arms around each family lifting them up and helping them to feel the safety of community.

We are seeing results. Christina also wrote, "I am overwhelmed at how quickly we were able to find a home." Over 90% of our families find housing in an average of 26 days!

We are helping our families to sustain their independence. Through mentoring, support services and amazing community partnerships, we are preparing families for long-term stability. How is this happening? Here's the AMAZING answer – through the 1,600 volunteers who freely give of their time (over 25,000 hours last year)! They cook, serve, pick up donated furniture, deliver furniture to our families in their new homes, counsel, mentor, play with children, provide "homework help" for older children and youth, make families comfortable in their congregations when they shelter them, laugh with them, listen to them, and sometimes cry with them. They treat their neighbors as themselves.

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all who volunteer, advocate for, and give to Family Promise. Your love makes all the difference...one family at a time!

Warmly,

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



Gifts of Time and Talent

Employees from Spectrum Health also did a holiday drive for Family Promise, where they collected cleaning items and household items for our families! When we told them our need for children's medication, they were able to help with that too! Thanks Spectrum Health, for hearing a call and answering the need!

Alward Elementary in Hudsonville took on a 'winter wear' drive for Family Promise during the holiday season! Each class had a specific item to bring in, such as hats, mittens and gloves, scarves, or slippers. The class who brought in the most of their item was able to have a pizza party at the end of the drive! Alward was able to bring in over 500 winter wear items to Family Promise to help our families stay warm and cozy over these winter months! Thanks Alward Elementary

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers, Gary and Pat Timmermans! They have helped with many of our donation pick-ups and deliveries, completed handyman work around our Day center, shop for essentials like groceries for the Day Center, and have given clients rides to important appointments and to search for housing! They have been driving the Toyota Tundra we won through the '100 Cars for Good' online competition for many of these needed volunteer tasks! Gary and Pat also volunteer their time with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.



Thank you to the Grand Valley State University Alternative Breaks group who took time on a snowy January Saturday to come to our day center and do a major deep cleaning! With so many families and kids spending time in a small space, things quickly get messy, but these Grand Valley Students made our Day Center sparkle and shine!

Congregational Feature: Cornerstone Church

The congregation at Cornerstone Church, located on 84th St., in Caledonia, Michigan, believes it can impact the world for Jesus Christ through outreach. This commitment is based on The Great Commission to make Christ followers and The Great Commandment to love God and to “love your neighbor as yourself.” As part of this Outreach, the congregation chose to become an IHN Host Congregation in 1997 when Family Promise of Grand Rapids was founded. Director of Outreach Tracy Bowers explains, “We love our involvement with IHN because it helps raise awareness of the need to keep families together as they experience the crisis of homelessness. It also gives the members of our congregation a chance to participate in hands-on ministry as we participate in four rotations every year.”



Lead Pastor, Brad Kalajainen, had been a great advocate for Family Promise since the beginning. Recently he spoke at the Annual Family Promise Pastors Lunch and inspired others to engage in this important ministry. An important team of coordinators makes sure that every rotation is fully staffed and running smoothly. (Each rotation requires approximately 40 volunteers). Coordinator team members include Denise Babcock, Becky Bailey, Kristie Baker, Judy Doran, Teresa Fitzgerald, Lisa Mulnix and Laurie Tindle. Thank you, Cornerstone Church for your faithfulness in serving homeless families for 16 years!

Photo caption: Judy Doran, left, and Denise Babcock, are two members of the seven member team of IHN Coordinators serving through Cornerstone Church.

New Support Congregations

We are pleased to welcome the following congregations to our Support Congregations Roster:

Bread of Life Lutheran Church
Hager Park Reformed Church

Support Congregations assist the Host Congregations by providing meals, evening and overnight hosts. These volunteers might also be involved in helping with homework, playing board games, engaging in conversations with moms/dads or playing with children so mom and dad can have a break or discuss important family issues.

Welcome !

Kelsey Vining (Americorps Member) – Kelsey joined our team in October as a very valued Americorps Member. A great addition to staff, she brings energy and resources to our volunteer program, furniture donation program, and Kids Care program. As a graduate of Calvin College, Kelsey has served in our community for many years. Welcome Kelsey!



Our Board Provides - Excellent Leadership!

Through this newsletter, we formally thank our Board of Directors for the gifts of their time, talent and treasure. They work tirelessly each day to plan, advocate, engage, educate and provide for the families we serve. Thank you, to this very special group who work diligently to end homelessness in our community:

Jerry Broersma – President
PEC Technologies

Lisa Valk – Treasurer
Founders Bank & Trust

Christina McDonald - Secretary
Dickenson Wright, PLLC

Cheryl Schuch - Executive Director
Family Promise of Grand Rapids

Pete Brand
Mindscape

Michael Bennett
The Bank of Holland

April Bisonet
IBS Financial Group

Steve Smith
Grand Valley State University

Amy Meeuwenberg
Fifth Third Bank

Nikole Canute
Mika, Meyers, Beckett & Jones, PLC

Amy Collea
Foot and Ankle Specialist of West Michigan

Father Mike Fedewa
St. Andrews Episcopal Church

Becky Heath
Community Volunteer

Lindsey Heyboer
YMCA

Randy Locke
Amway





Family Promise

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

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
Bread of Life Lutheran Church
Brookside Christian Reformed Church
Congregation Ahavas Israel
Eastminster Presbyterian Church
First Reformed Church - Grandville
Fountain Street Church
Hager Park Reformed 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 Winter

Your gift this winter will support our IHN (Interfaith Hospitality Network) shelter work and our Reaching Beyond Initiative (doubling our capacity to help families in crisis). Through RBI, families benefit from all emergency services provided through IHN except a place to sleep. This program has assisted many families who are homeless but aren't able to receive help through our community's safety net because of a lack of shelter capacity for families. Your gift will allow us to continue our Emergency Needs Fund that provides basic necessities to families such as diapers, baby food, school supplies, over the counter medicines, and bus tickets, to name a few.

You can contribute through our website, 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 amazing support!

START THE YEAR OUT RIGHT – JOIN CLUB 365

WANTED! Twenty five individuals, families, corporations... who are willing to commit to \$365 in support of Family Promise in 2013. Through the Club 365, your monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual gift (totaling \$365 by year end) will make a lasting impact on eliminating homelessness in our community. Call or email Cheryl and say, "I'll be one of the 25." Cheryl@familypromisegr.org

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