



Family Promise of Grand Rapids

Winter - 2010

Ending homelessness...
one family at a time.

Hope for a "Home" for the Holidays

When Cassandra and Kintea lost their source of their income due to Kintea's job loss, the domino effect resulted in inability to pay rent, an eviction and homelessness. "My husband and I were blessed to be referred to Family Promise," remembers Cassandra. Homeless also were their children, Allante', six months, Jayden, 2, Amaya, 4, and Kaylay, 6.



Because Family Promise is one of only two agencies in the city that serves homeless families by allowing families to remain intact so that children can remain with their parents, the family's placement in Family Promise's Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) Program was crucial. "Homelessness is hard enough on a family without the added stress of separation. They need to feel secure so that they can effectively work on life issues such as unemployment and homelessness," said Cheryl Schuch, Executive Director of Family Promise of Grand Rapids.

Since their arrival in October, both parents have secured employment. Kintea works full time at River City Metals and Cassandra works part time at the J.C. Penney Catalog Center and also at ABC Senior Services. Family Promise seeks, through its wrap-around support programs and mentors, to work with families like Cassandra and Kintea, with support in finding permanent housing, employment and independence. The family, with the encouragement of their mentor Denise, is making progress. "Denise has helped secure child care so that we can work, and she helps us look for permanent housing," adds Cassandra. "She's also a great encouragement when times become difficult."

Kassandra and Kintea are both Grand Rapids natives who met seven years ago. Kassandra is thankful for Family Promise and its staff, "The staff has been helpful in sharing many resources we would never have known. We work with them daily toward our goal of self sufficiency and permanent housing."

Program Highlight: Mentors Make All the Difference

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." - Anne Frank

Would you like to improve your world? Family Promise has an opportunity for you! Currently 15 mentors or mentor groups are working with 15 families served by Family Promise. We are currently recruiting another 15 mentors or mentor groups to work with individuals and families currently awaiting mentors. Economically vulnerable families are matched with trained volunteer mentors who work with them, one-on-one, over an extended period of time (generally six months to a year). Mentors help families define and meet goals to develop life skills, connect with community resources, improve their housing situation, secure employment or improve employment situations, and nurture and support their children.

Mentors receive six hours of excellent training and attend a once-a-month mentor meeting and once-a-month mentor/mentee meeting. Generally mentors and mentees talk weekly and meet every two weeks to once a month. Mentors can be an individual, family or small group from church or work.

Please contact Mary at mary@familypromise.org or call 581-1154 for mentor information.

Happy Holidays

"We wish you warm greeting of the season and thank you for caring."

From the Staff, Board of Directors
and Families served by Family Promise.



Thoughts from our friends...

From Kintea -- "Homelessness isn't who you are, it's something that happens to you."

From Denise -- "The volunteers don't have any idea how they are truly touching peoples lives. Everything was so nice - private rooms, nice beds, great meals, and friendship so we weren't alone. They opened up a new world that we didn't know existed."

From Renata -- "The most important part of the Family Promise program is that I can keep my family together because they are my babies, my heart, my everything! Being together is what family is all about. My boys are what keep me going, even when times are tough I have a reason to succeed."

(616) 475-5220
www.familypromisegr.org



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

Locked with Love!

What if you gathered your most important possessions? What would they be? If you lost your home where would you put them? Because of the efforts of an amazing volunteer the guests served by Family Promise have an answer to this question. Mike Webster, along with his friend Mort Hoffman, have worked hard over the last month to build beautiful new family lockers for our daycenter! Mike has given our families a large and secure place to store their belongings until they are able to move into their new homes. Thank you Mike for all the work you have done on behalf of our families!

Cornerstone Christmas for the Children

Cornerstone United Methodist Church is generously taking our adult guests shopping just before Christmas so the parents can provide gifts from themselves to their children. This is just one of the ways we assist parents during their housing crises as they celebrate the Holidays with their children. We are thankful to Cornerstone and all our hosts and support congregations for donating towards these purchases.

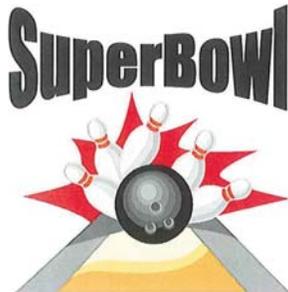


Lynne Martin and friend Amaya

Your Chance to PLAY in the SuperBowl!



Bowling to end homelessness in West Michigan



Sunday February 6, 2011
11:30 AM — 4:30 PM
Wengers Bowl
629 Leonard NW, Grand Rapids

SIGN UP NOW!

Each team consists of 5 bowlers, and each team will bowl one shift
(Shift 1 = 11:30 AM-2:00 PM; Shift 2 = 2:00-4:30 PM)

\$10 registration fee per bowler* (includes 2 games, shoes, pizza, & soda)
Contact Rachel Erkel @ 616-295-2048 or raerke@yahoo.com to sign up

*All teams signed up (registration form & fee paid) by January 15th will receive a prize at the event

REMEMBER: This event is a **FUNDRAISER**—**ALL** bowlers are asked to have a goal of raising \$25 each (or more)

Direct all questions to Erika Hansen (291-0380) / Rachel Erkel (295-2048)

Family Promise of Grand Rapids, 906 S. Division Ave, Ste 205, Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Ph. 616.475.5220 Fax 616.475.5286 www.familypromisegr.org

Kids make Dreams Come True!

Thanks to the Forest Hills Central Student Council, the dreams of many are coming true this holiday season. In October they held a mattress sale and provided the opportunity for people to donate their used mattresses to Family Promise families in need. This month the entire student body of FHC will collect funds to adopt families for the holidays. Over 20 families will receive basic necessities like pots and pans, blankets, coats, and a few fun gifts for the children. Kids really can make a difference!





Cheryl Schuch
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

A Message of Thanks!

"Thankful for the food"
"Thankful for the friendship"
"Thankful for the coat"
"Thankful for showing love to my children"
"Thankful for a safe place to be"
"Thankful for the black shoes to wear to my new job",
"Thankful for sharing a puzzle with me during the darkest of times for my family"

These are just some of the thoughts from our guests as we celebrate the holiday season. You make these gifts of compassion possible. "Thankful for you" are we for the faithful support each of you has provided to the children and families that Family Promise has served this year.

Through November for 2010, 98 children, and 52 families found new homes because of your support! Additionally, almost 30% of the parents found new jobs with a bright new future. The sense of community provided by Family Promise volunteers is the hope that helps our families begin their journeys. We know that this support is what helps our families remain independent. They are not alone and that makes all the difference.

We also know that, unfortunately, many more families will need our help in the year ahead. We are proud of our incredible network of volunteers and congregations willing to make the commitment to be here for families in need. We thank you for your support and dedication to ending homelessness...one family at a time!

Gifts of Time and Talents

Hi! My name is Kristie Baker and I am the new Director of Volunteer Services at Family Promise. I am a coordinator for Family Promise/IHN at my church and have volunteered at the Day Center on Division for the last year. I am so excited about this new opportunity to assist Family Promise. I am eager to meet the needs of our families and support our current volunteers while recruiting new volunteers for all of our great programs. So, if you would like to volunteer for a one-time project or something you could do every week, please give me a call at 475-5220 or 822-3377 (cell) or email me at kristie@familypromise.org.



Kristie Baker
Director of Volunteer Services

Wish list for our Day Center:

- ~ Buckets of Love-cleaning buckets filled with cleaning supplies
- ~ Outside gloves for the kids to play in
- ~ Baby swings and pack -n plays
- ~ Plastic Storage Containers
- ~ Laundry Soap



Current Volunteer Opportunities:

- Shop for supplies on Wednesdays
- The children in our program always need lots of love and attention, so at your convenience, you could come to the Day Center to hold, read to, and do crafts with kids.
- Volunteer appreciation projects on Tuesday, Wednesdays or Fridays between 10 and 12.
- Data entry/clerical (2 hour blocks of time)
- Process donations we receive (1-2 hours a week)
- Help pick up furniture donations and move families into their new homes on Wednesdays.
- Help refresh a client's new home (apartment) -various times, one time projects
- Work with our guests as they participate in our Family Mentoring program Tuesdays from 6:30-8:00 p.m.
- Work with our guests while they participate in a budgeting workshop every other Wednesdays from 6:30-8:00 p.m.



Eddie, IHN Guest, & Mort

Thanksgiving Food Boxes Delight Families

Thank you to Congregation Ahavas Israel - Operation Isaiah, Forest Hills Foods and Top Distributing for making Thanksgiving Food Boxes possible for 16 needy families served by Family Promise. Through the leadership of Mort and Gerry Hoffman, Top Distributing (Phil and John Wiltzer and Roger Kuipers) donated fresh pineapples and bananas and Forest Hills Foods (Jeff VandenBerge family) donated all the food for a complete holiday meal. Families enjoyed turkey, stuffing, fresh fruits, vegetables, dressing, rolls, margarine, and pumpkin pie.



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
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
Brookside Christian Reformed Church
Eastminster Presbyterian Church
First Reformed Church (Grandville)
Fountain Street Church
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
Oakdale Park Christian Reformed Church
Plymouth Christian Reformed Church
Renaissance Church of God in Christ
St. Stephen Catholic Church

My Holiday Gift to Family Promise

Make a donation to help us buy a new passenger van to transport our families to the wonderful host congregations that provide the basic necessities along with hope and compassion to our families while they are in shelter. This transportation not only serves to connect families with the Host sites but also assists them in searching for housing, employment, and access to medical appointments. Because of a wonderful foundation gift your dollars, up to \$5,000, will be matched to make a difference!

Did You Know...

- That Family Promise is one of only two shelters in our community that allows families to remain together while in shelter. (women and girls are usually separated from men and boys over the age of 10).
- That the number of homeless children has increased by 22% in Michigan within the past two years (Source: Michigan State Housing Development Authority).
- Approximately 33% of homeless people are households with minor children (Source: National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty).
- That 85% of the families Family Promise served last year found permanent housing !
- That over 90% have remained in their homes for one year or longer!

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