


# THE Journey

THE NEWSLETTER OF  Family Promise  
of Cowlitz County

Creating Hope, Nurturing Strength, Transforming Lives

August 2022 Vol 3, Issue 4



## For the Times They Are A-Changing

by Pastor Vonda McFadden, Board President

Happy August! It is hard to believe 2022 is more than half over. Where has the time gone? There is many a day I feel like we skipped over the years 2020 and 2021. I will think something happened last year and it was 2019 or even earlier. I'm not wishing time away, especially at my age, but I am thankful we are further along the road in this pandemic. Not to say, we are at the end, but definitely not where we were two years ago.

As I think about 2019 though, I am reminded that we opened our doors as an affiliate that year and this Family Promise of Cowlitz County journey began. As most, if not all of you know, Lisa, our first Executive Director has left the affiliate as of July 31. We have been honored to share in ministry with Lisa these past three years and we wish her well in her new adventures. But the show must go on, as they say! To that end, we have officially hired Dawn

Morgan as our new ED. Dawn comes to us from The Children's Museum where she served as Executive Director. We are excited for this new beginning. We know that change can be difficult, but we believe this is a positive change for the affiliate. Dawn will officially be joining us September 1. I know she will be reaching out to you as soon as she possibly can. I also know you will support her as well as you have supported Lisa. But more importantly you continue to support the affiliate and our guests with your time, talent, giving and prayers.

***"We are so honored to have each and every one of you as partners in this journey of Family Promise."***

While we wait for our new ED, we are still helping children and families. Sarah and Jamie are "holding down the fort." I will be working closely with them to assist in any way I can, and I know all of you are continuing to do your part to help our families as we seek to help them find stable housing.

It feels like every month I write an article I am thanking you. The reason is that I don't believe you can be thanked enough. There are so many wonderful stories of your kindness, thoughtfulness and meaningful interactions with our guests and our staff. We are so honored to have each and every one of you as partners in this journey of Family Promise.

Have a wonderful August and don't hesitate to reach out to me or any board member if you have questions, concerns, joys, or just want to chat.

Blessings, Vonda

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# What's Up with the Homeless Student Numbers Being Down?

by Lisa Staudinger



If you track homeless student numbers in our area, you may be scratching your head these days—or celebrating. The numbers are down—in fact, the most recent count is less than half the 2019 numbers.

However, Nancy Baldwin, Family Resource Coordinator for the Kelso School District, believes these numbers don't reflect reality. Her experience suggests that at least 40% more students are homeless than the 2020-21 numbers show. The reasons for the undercount?

- Teachers identify students experiencing homelessness in the classroom, using the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness\*. During remote schooling, most homeless students disappeared completely. How do you attend school online when you are homeless? (\*See the sidebar for an explanation of how the homeless are counted, using two widely differing US government methods.)
- A parent must consent to being identified as homeless. Many families refuse this.

## Some reasons are:

- Custody issues with an abusive ex or other problematic family members—they're afraid they'll lose the kids.
- Unaccompanied minors are afraid they'll go into the foster system—almost certainly far away, because Cowlitz County has few foster homes.
- Single fathers are especially resistant to being considered homeless.
- High school students want to avoid being identified as homeless at all costs.

- Families from cultures of extended-family living or where crowded living conditions are not unusual often don't agree with the identity of "homeless"—even when they know they have no legal security and could be kicked out at any moment.

**"So, the truth is that many more families and children are homeless than were counted..."**

- Up to 70% of children experiencing homelessness are staying with a friend or relative or at a motel. It means they stay at the consent of their host or are out when the money runs out to pay for the motel room. These conditions are not stable. (It also means they would not be counted as homeless under the HUD method.)
- If a family's address is the same on the first day of a new school year as the last day of the previous school year, they are not considered homeless, unless that address is a motel or shelter.

So, the truth is that many more families and children are homeless than were counted, particularly during the pandemic. Our fight is not over, and Family Promise continues working to serve as many families as possible. To do so, we need your help!

To date, we've sheltered 55 children in 26 families, and prevented an additional 49 children in 28 families from needing shelter services with our Promise of Home program.

If you can send a gift to help us continue serving children experiencing homelessness today, please do! If you are already a monthly donor, could you send an extra gift this month?

To donate, you can go to our website at [www.fpcowlitz.org](http://www.fpcowlitz.org). Your help today means a brighter future for children tomorrow! And every family served is a family strengthened—making a strong Cowlitz County, one family at a time.

# \* So, Who's Homeless Anyway?

Did you know the federal government has two different definitions of homelessness? (I know. Some of you are trying to find your shocked face.)

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has one definition, and the US Department of Education has another. We call them "HUD homelessness" and "McKinney Vento homelessness".

The McKinney Vento Act of 1987 requires the US Department of Education to try to learn how many students in public schools are homeless. Its definition of homelessness includes those living in motels, couch-surfing or being doubled up with another family—HUD does not.

HUD counts people as homeless if on one night in January each year their counters find you and you are: 1) in shelter, 2) in your car or another place not appropriate for human habitation, such as an abandoned building, or 3) on the street (in a tent, under a bridge, etc.).

But if, for that one night in January (when it's coldest, yes?), you managed to scrape up the funds to stay at a motel or convince someone to let you sleep on their couch for the night, HUD says you are not homeless.

**All of these children are vulnerable.**  
But according to HUD, not all of them are homeless.

<b>Couchsurfing</b>  With no control over their housing, families double up in order to avoid shelter. <b>NOT HOMELESS</b>	<b>Living in the car</b>  Lack of affordable housing forces families to sleep in their cars. <b>HOMELESS</b>
<b>Staying in a shelter</b>  Traditional shelters often separate families based on age and gender. <b>HOMELESS</b>	<b>Paying for a motel room</b>  Motels are expensive & unsafe options for families with children. <b>NOT HOMELESS</b>

## Why It Matters

So, depending on who is counting, you may or may not be homeless and therefore eligible for assistance. Since about 70% of McKinney Vento homelessness is people who are doubled up with another family(ies), we know HUD's definition misses the majority of those suffering homelessness. The 2019 HUD estimate was 567,715. Using the McKinney Vento count, the average family size, and the fact that families are about 35% of the total homeless population, the true number for 2019 was between 12 and 15 million. And that is a horse of a different color.



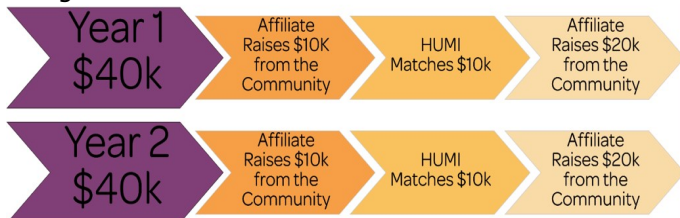
## Keeping Our Promise of Home



It's almost the end of Year 1 of our two-year Challenge Grant to fund Promise of Home and we are within "spittin' distance" of our \$40,000 goal! So far in Year 1, we have raised \$35,120, including the \$10,000 from

Help Us Move In (HUMI). **So we have only \$4880.00 to go!**

To remind you of how the grant works, check out the graphic below. In each grant year, we raise the first \$10K, then HUMI matches that with another \$10K. Then we ask the community to match that \$20K through their own fundraising on our behalf. That's where we are now! Promise of Home has already had a huge impact. Since starting in December, we have kept **28 families with 49 children** from losing their housing. These families are among the 40% of Americans living on the edge, and then that one unexpected thing happens—a car breakdown, an illness or accident that keeps someone from working for a couple of weeks—and everything starts to snowball from there.



One of the best things about preventing homelessness is the low price tag: \$326/child! That is a small fraction of the cost to shelter and rehouse a family who has lost everything (not to mention the mental, emotional, and health tolls of losing your housing).

Promise of Home not only helps financially, but also connects the family with stabilizing resources throughout the community, and offers life skills training such as Keys to Good Tenancy and the New Beginnings family finance management course so families can remain stable going forward.

If you have been among the donors supporting Promise of Home, **thank you!** Special thanks to Jerry and Nancy Higgins for their extremely generous donation of \$18,000 to help prevent family homelessness!

If you have not yet, we need your support to get across the finish line for Year 1! Please help us guarantee we can continue to help families on the edge remain stable and avoid the worst: losing everything and becoming homeless. You can donate at [fpcowlitz.org](http://fpcowlitz.org) (be sure to select Promise of Home by clicking the little arrow next to General Fund), or send a check to P.O. Box 1152, Kelso, WA 98626 (please write "POH" in the memo).



Karl Salzsieder was born in Bismark, ND, and was an orphan for the first year of his life. His adoptive parents moved to Aberdeen, SD, where he lived and worked on the family dairy. While Karl was in the 5th grade, the family moved to Kent, WA, where his father worked for Boeing.

Karl is both a veterinarian and a lawyer, in addition to holding a BA in Economics. He currently owns two veterinary clinics in Tumwater and Yelm and owns and operates a law firm in Longview. He also consults with veterinary clinics to provide business advice and to manage their practices. He married his high school sweetheart, Derene, and they have three children. They currently live in Longview and have attended Emmanuel Lutheran Church since 1975.

He is Vice President of the FPCC board, among other volunteer and service positions he has held over the years. He was on the FPCC organizing committee from the beginning.

Karl has a first-hand appreciation for those who help others in need. During his senior year of high school, upon returning from a weekend trip with schoolmates to the beach, he discovered that the family house had burned to the ground, with no insurance. Hearing of their plight, community leaders pitched in and gave the Salzsieders a temporary home where they lived for about 6 months, long enough to get back on their feet.

He appreciates FPCC as a way to help families with children in a drug-free environment and to be able to impart some hope to our guest families. He says it is refreshing to see progress towards independence and self-sufficiency. Having been an orphan and also the recipient of community help when their house burned down, he says the FPCC cause is wonderful and that it is great to see families benefit from community support.

Thank you, Karl, for all you do, behind the scenes and up front with the guests. Your selfless serving is an inspiration.

# Our Local Impact

93

People Served in Interfaith Hospitality Network (shelter program)

55

Children Served in Interfaith Hospitality Network (shelter program)

6,912

Nights of Shelter

20,736

Meals Served

28

Families served in Promise of Home (homelessness prevention program)

49

Children served in Promise of Home (homelessness prevention program)

\$326

Promise of Home cost per child (average)

307

Families Served in Resource Navigation



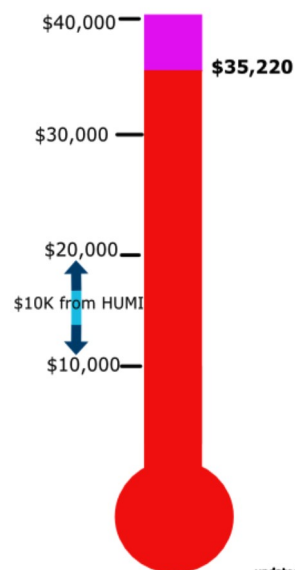
## In Their Own Words

"Family Promise was the only organization willing to help us when we needed help with our rent. It was easy and they were so helpful. We are forever grateful for the help we received."

— *Promise of Home Recipient*



2021-2023 Progress



## Our Awesome Partner Congregations

Bethany Lutheran Church  
 East Hills Alliance Church  
 Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
 Evangel Christian Fellowship  
 Exodus Christian Fellowship  
 First Baptist Church of Longview  
 First Christian Church of Longview  
 Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
 Grace Bible Fellowship  
 Immaculate Heart & St. Rose Roman Catholic Churches  
 Kalama Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints  
 Kelso First Baptist Church  
 Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian Church  
 Kelso Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Lake Sacajawea Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints  
 Longview Church of Christ  
 Longview Presbyterian Church  
 Longview United Methodist Church  
 New Song Worship Center  
 Northlake Church  
 Renewal City Church  
 Trinity Lutheran Church



## Financial Update

2022 Annual Budget: **\$207,994**

2022 Contributions to date: **\$63,913.03**

2022 Avg. monthly contributions: **\$11,004**

2022 Volunteer hours reported: **872 hours**

*Thank you for your support of families enduring homelessness.*

# Gifts & Gratitude

**Your prayers and donations are like oxygen and blood to us.**

We operate almost entirely on your donations. A very special thanks to our very special supporters. Your support makes everything possible for our guests and clients!



## Financial Donors

*These donors' gifts in May and June offer families facing homelessness a hand up on the road to home.*

Patricia Baker  
Karla Bean  
Daryl Berg  
Mary Brennan  
Frances Crosby  
Donovan Doerr  
Ruth Earnest  
East Hills Alliance Church  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
Bob Erickson  
First Baptist Church of Longview  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Joanne Gotshall  
Grace Bible Fellowship  
Trudi Gross  
Amy Hamilton  
Howard Hammond  
Dorothy Hanson  
Richard Hardecker  
Chuck Henderson  
Sarah Hines  
Stephanie Hurless  
Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church  
Janet Jacobs  
Glenda Johnson  
Dayne Johnston  
Kelso First Baptist  
Ruth Kimmel  
Carol Kirwan  
Dave Knoyle  
Richard Loewen  
Longview Rotary Foundation  
Donna MacKenzie  
Jim MacLeod  
Roy Maier

Louise McAuliffe  
Rev. Vonda McFadden  
Ron Naff  
New Song Worship Center  
Northlake Church  
Irene Olason  
Eugene Pistorese  
Renewal City Church  
Colin Robertson  
Karl Salzsieder  
Steve Sheridan  
Claudia Sobczuk  
St. Rose Catholic Church  
Annie Tietze  
Danielle Trimble  
Melissa Wilkie Living Trust  
Mary Wingate

## In-Kind Donors

*By donating everyday items to Family Promise, these donors made a difference in the lives of families experiencing homelessness who are working hard to regain sustainable independence.*

Ron Naff  
Jason Register  
Patty Sheridan

## Business and Organization Donors

*These businesses and organizations have supported us through their donations. Please support them and thank them for their support.*

Bicoastal Media  
Cole's Appliance Repair  
Community Foundation for SW WA  
Davis & Associates, CPAs, PS  
Gibbs and Olson Engineering  
High Cascades Agency  
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the NW  
Community Giving Campaign  
Keys Plus  
Kroger  
LOCAR (Lower Columbia Association of Realtors)  
Longview Century Club  
Longview Rotary  
Luggage of Love  
Mike Burchett Media Consultation  
Minuteman Press  
Network for Good  
Pacific Door and Window  
PEO Sisterhood Chapter IL  
Performance Sheet Metal, Inc.  
RealtyONEGroup Pacifica  
Redwood Toxicology, Inc  
Sign Masters Awards n' More  
Solid Rock Cruisers  
Wilcox and Flegel Fuel Oil Co





# At Your Service

## Board of Directors

Pr. Vonda McFadden	President
Karl Salzsieder	Vice President
Dan Frei	Secretary
Linda Davis	Treasurer
Ken Botero	At-Large
Leticia Casarez	At-Large
Bob Erickson	At-Large
Randy Hall	At-Large
Hollie Kero	At-Large
Ron Naff	At-Large

## Family Center Staff

Open Position	Executive Director
<u><a href="#">Sarah Wallace</a></u>	Case Manager
Open Position	Administrative Assistant

**Email Newsletter Editor:** [Steve Sheridan](#)  
**Print Newsletter Editor:** [Richard Shuren](#)

## Family Center Address

215 Academy Street, Kelso, WA 98626

## Mailing Address

P.O. Box 1152, Kelso, WA 98626

## Family Center Hours

9 a.m. — 6 p.m. Monday through Friday

## Family Center Office Phone

360-703-3131

Visit our website at:

[www.fpcowlitz.org](http://www.fpcowlitz.org) (Cowlitz County)

[www.familypromise.org](http://www.familypromise.org) (National Organization)

Find us on Facebook at:

[www.facebook.com/FamilyPromiseCowlitzCounty](https://www.facebook.com/FamilyPromiseCowlitzCounty)

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