

## Bolstering the Bucket Brigade

by Lisa Staudinger, Executive Director

I recently read an interesting take on compassion fatigue, a phenomenon that even those outside of the professional “carers” community is learning about these days. The article compared our capacity for caring (and acting) to an electrical panel. Our “panels” were designed for caring for a community, but these days our circuits are being overloaded with worry for the whole world at once. As a result, our circuits are tripping.

The author presented a “razor”—a device for cutting through uncertainty—to help figure out where to put our emotional energy. Because there is only so much, and we have to steward it carefully.

The razor goes like this:

1. What is mine to do?
2. What is mine to say?
3. What is mine to *care about*?

That third one is much harder, and is something I’d never articulated to myself in that way.

The author quotes another writer who talks about “following your heartbreak.” This allows us each to prioritize and focus our energy in one place, so we can be both effective and fed. You have one bucket of water and the whole world is on fire. You must decide

where you can aim because if you try to spread your one bucket out across the entire complex, you will accomplish nothing but an empty bucket. And probably some bad burns. And maybe even death.

The great news is, each of us has a bucket, and each of us has a different “heartbreak.” So if each of us dumps our bucket on *our part of the fire, we can do a lot more good.*

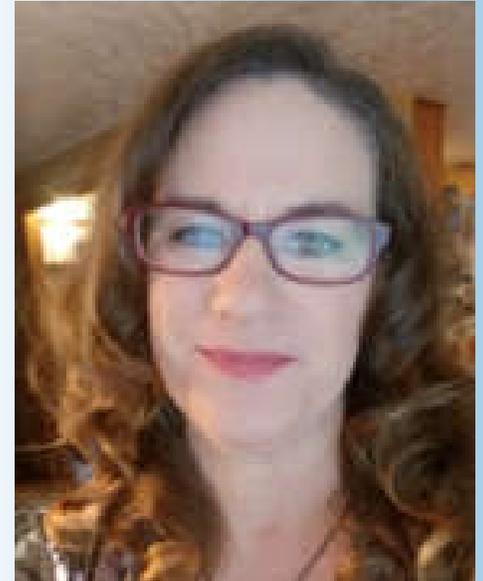
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*God builds into each of us the passion to do what we were made to do . . .*

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I guess I write this as a reminder to myself as much as anything else. It’s so easy to become emotionally in-

involved in too many things, because when you really think it through, we’re all affected by all of the things ultimately, even if not directly. But even those things that do affect you directly may not be what your bucket is intended for. We’re here to take care of each other, so maybe someone else’s bucket can cover that part of the fire, and in so doing, take care of me. Maybe that’s what Jesus meant when he said, “Love one another as I have loved you.” He loved with focus, and pushed away anything that distracted from that *even when it was something he cared deeply about.* (For example, we know Jesus cared deeply about (See “Bucket Brigade” page 2)



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# Volunteer Valentine



There's a whole lotta love going around Family Promise! All year long, our volunteers and Coordinators do so much to empower us to change families' lives and give children a chance for a stable home.

Now it's our turn.

Last December, we had planned to have the Festival of Thanks as in previous years, but unforeseen circumstances made that impossible. Our new plan is to create a video to show you what a difference you make and post it online. We'll send everyone the link when it's ready, expected to be the week of Valentine's Day.

**Watch for your Volunteer Valentine postcard or email for details!**

## Bucket Brigade (continued from page 1)

poverty, but he did say, "The poor you have always with you.") He remained focused on exemplifying loving relationships between people while he was still walking among us.

So marshal your resources, and then steward them wisely by focusing on your heartbreak. God builds into each of us the passion to do what we were made to do, what we will be best at. Not necessarily most powerful, or most technically perfect, but best humanly.

Our Annual Report came out just recently, and I think it shows that we are making a dent in the fire of family homelessness. We were able to help more families in 2021 in more ways than ever before. Our shelter program is "smoke-jumping" and that's great and important, but it's even more exciting to finally be getting into the business of "cutting fire lines"—preventing families from becoming homeless in the first place. Together we are starting to work on "containing the fire" one bucket at a time. Thank you for aiming your bucket this way!



A big and heartfelt THANK YOU to Gibbs and Olson Engineering working with Bicoastal Media for creating a radio ad fundraiser for Family Promise of Cowlitz County. Their initiative and hard work raised over \$7,500.00. We're glad you are part of our community.

Our thanks also goes to Panera Bread and all who participated in their community fundraiser for Family Promise of Cowlitz County.

**And last but not least, THANK YOU Andre Stepankowsky for your classical piano recital fundraiser and to all those who tuned in to enjoy Andre's performance and contribute to his fundraiser.**



## 2021 End of Year Financial Update

2021 Annual budget:

**\$167,976.00**

2021 Contributions:

**\$154,495.28**

2021 Average monthly contributions:

**\$ 12,874.81**

2021 Volunteer hours reported:

**951 hours\***

*\*Estimated; not all hours were reported.*

**Thank you for your support of our work with families enduring homelessness. Their path home is paved by your kindness.**



# Homelessness

## Beyond the Surface

by Karen Hardecker  
and  
Lisa Staudinger

Recently Karen went to her hair salon and while there asked several women how they thought homelessness affects our community.

One woman said she has stopped walking in Sacajawea Park because she doesn't feel safe. Another said it negatively impacts property values and business, while another said trashy and unsanitary homeless encampments are a public health threat. A final point was that homelessness creates additional demands on police, health providers and city and county resources.

A community is a group of people whose identity is not just defined by geography but also by common customs and shared beliefs. People who are homeless can severely stretch those beliefs by making individuals uneasy or fearful. This ranges from guilt about not giving to a panhandler to outright fear of those perceived to be unemployed, mentally ill or drug addicted (a common view of those who are experiencing home-

lessness). Saying "just get a job" or "they choose to be homeless" doesn't address the reality that only 20% to 30% of the homeless population fall into these categories.

In reality, 80% of those experiencing homelessness have just gone through a sudden change in their lives and will only temporarily be homeless. At least 35% are families with children and half the women and children are fleeing domestic violence. Over 50% of the homeless are employed; however, they don't make enough to cover typical two-bedroom apartment rent, even if they could find a place to rent, with local vacancy rates now at 0.3%, down from 0.5%.

Our challenge is to refrain from applying our misconceptions and perceptions of a few to the entire population of those experiencing homelessness. While it may be viewed as mere semantics,

*Our challenge is to refrain from applying our misconceptions and perceptions of a few to the entire population of those experiencing homelessness.*

there is a huge difference between thinking and saying "homeless people" versus "people who are homeless". Placing the emphasis

on people puts us in the right frame of mind to begin to help. Desmond Tutu once said, "There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in." There are no simple solutions for addressing homelessness, but there are many organizations throughout southwest Washington that are working to improve the lives of those impacted.

Working on the solutions *together* shows our values as a community. You don't have to fight alone, and you don't have to be afraid. We at Family Promise of Cowlitz County would love for you to join us in this effort.



*When we were apart and on the streets or on friends' couches it was hard to manage the kids and responsibilities. We succeeded with the support of Sara, Lisa, and Family Promise volunteers. Being connected to the resources like learning to budget our money and save, we also felt like equals there. We didn't feel like "homeless people," but like family. They trusted us and that helped with our confidence.*

*Thank you so much from our family!*  
— Karrie and Danny, FPCC graduates, summer 2021



This month’s “Volunteer Spotlight” shines on the dedicated volunteer coordinators at our various partner congregations. Coordinators organize the Family Promise volunteers of their congregations to provide all the meals and supplies for the guest families. They are key to hosting our guests and without them, this ministry would not be possible. We touched base with several of them to see what the role involves.

Rick Stonex has been the coordinator at Evangel Christian Fellowship for almost two years. He said Family Promise closely aligns with Evangel’s mission statement, which made it an easy decision for the leaders to support FPCC. He identified his role during their assigned host week as directly contacting members of his congregation to provide meals. He and his wife, Cindy, usually prepare one evening meal themselves, then delegate the remaining evenings.

Debra Shuren has been coordinator for Grace Bible Fellowship since FPCC opened. Grace Bible Fellowship is partnered with Kelso First Baptist Church—back when guests were staying at partner congregations’ buildings, KFBC would host the guests, and Grace would support them with more volunteers and food.

Debra views communication as the key to success. This starts with Lisa, the executive director, and Sara, the case manager, who provide basics on the timing, number and needs of the guests. Debra often does the breakfast and lunch shopping for the guest families, then recruits other Grace Bible members to provide evening meals. She is looking forward to the possibility of sharing meals with the guests in person again, hopefully later this year.

Ann Williamson says Emmanuel Lutheran Church was among the first to sign the FPCC charter and hosted families until the COVID shutdown. She works with Marlys Erickson to ensure the needs of the guests are met. She very much appreciates the network of people involved from so many different churches and enjoys meeting and interacting with them.

These are our **dedicated and awesome** coordinators (listed alphabetically by congregation):

East Hills Alliance Church	<i>Josh Droke</i>	Lv Church of the Nazarene	<i>Renelle Treat, Patsy Hite, &amp; Sharon Fix</i>
Emmanuel Lutheran Church	<i>Ann Williamson</i>	Longview Presbyterian Church	<i>Daryl Berg &amp; Ron Naff</i>
Evangel Christian Fellowship	<i>Rick Stonex</i>	New Song Worship Center	<i>Cindy Stephens, Connie Lafady, &amp; Leah Bertsch</i>
Exodus Christian Fellowship	<i>Nancy Olea</i>	Northlake Church	<i>Kathy Troupe &amp; Sue Megenity</i>
First Christian Church of Longview	<i>Brenda Strite</i>	Renewal City Church	<i>Travis Nelson</i>
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	<i>Dana Libby</i>	St. Paul Lutheran Church	<i>Steve Allen</i>
Grace Bible Fellowship	<i>Debra Shuren</i>	St. Rose/ Immaculate Heart of Mary	<i>Toni Miner</i>
Kalama Ward of the LDS	<i>Georgia Green &amp; Chris Shaw</i>	Trinity Lutheran Church	<i>David &amp; Ginger Walworth and Susan Dickey</i>
Kelso First Baptist Church	<i>Sylvia Hale</i>		
Kelso Ward of the LDS	<i>Carina Anderson Kara Warner</i>		
Lk Sacajawea Ward of the LDS	<i>Craig Jones</i>		

Many, many thanks to these dedicated and awesome folks and to all the volunteers they coordinate to help provide the day-to-day support for our Family Promise guests. Your work makes hosting families a reality and blesses all of us.



# Homelessness Prevention and Shelter Diversion

## How It Works

Family Promise National partner Help Us Move In (HUMI) has provided a two-year challenge-match grant to help us start Promise of Home. We're now asking the community to match the initial \$20,000 each year. Promise of Home needs a solid foundation to keep families--and our community--strong into the future.



## Impact

Since starting in December 2021, Promise of home has kept 10 families with 19 children in their homes.

*"I am a single mom. I have come across hard times: my family got COVID months back and we still haven't recovered financially. I have taken out loans and got a second job, and thankfully, I was almost caught up.*

*I was referred to Family Promise to apply for Promise of Home. It saved us from being on the streets. I was many months behind on rent and my landlord was also suffering the effects. Promise of Home granted us the last month of rent we were behind and I was able to catch up and be current.*

*It brings tears to my eyes to say we are able to keep our home. THANK YOU!"*

--Tanya H, Promise of Home grantee, winter 2021

## How You Can Help

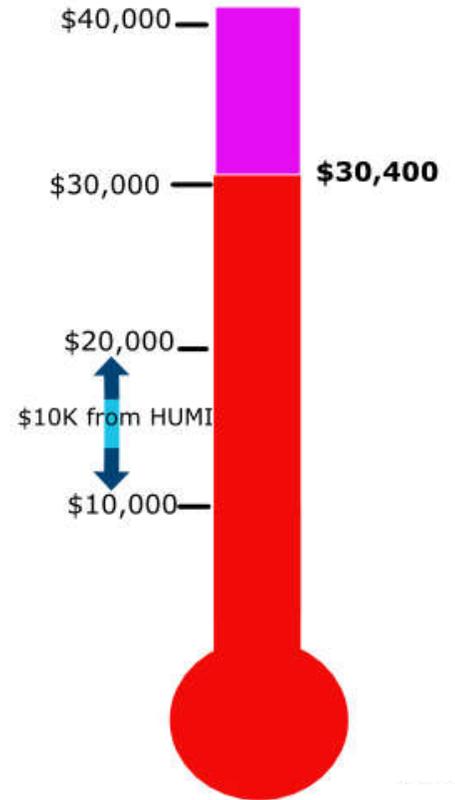
If you would like to donate to Promise of Home to help us keep Cowlitz County children in their homes, please visit our donation page (see the yellow Donate button in the upper right corner), and in the form, scroll down to Promise of Home.

Got a youth group or a mission group? Or a bunch of friends who want to do something good for the community? Please consider a fundraiser for Promise of Home! Ideas include bake sales, craft sales, rent-a-youth, spaghetti feeds, selling seasonal plants, dunk-the-pastor . . . the sky's the limit!



## 2021 - 2023 Progress

(updated Dec. 2021)



**proudly partners with**



**United Way of Cowlitz & Wahkiakum Counties**



# 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!

## 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.

Patricia Baker  
Lucia Becchetti  
Frances Crosby  
Sarah Owens  
Charles Rak  
Cindy Stevens

## Business and Organization Donors

In the last year, these businesses and organizations have supported us and the community through their donations. Please support them and thank them for their support.

Bicoastal Media  
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  
Kroger  
Longview Century Club  
Luggage of Love  
Mike Burchett, Media Consultation  
Minuteman Press  
Network for Good  
Pacific Doors and Window  
PEO Sisterhood Chapter IL  
Performance Sheet Metal, Inc.  
Redwood Toxicology, Inc  
Sign Masters Awards  
Solid Rock Cruisers  
Wilcox and Flegel Fuel Oil Co.

## Financial Donors

These donors' gifts in November and December offer families facing homelessness the promise of home.

Nancy Althof  
Anonymous  
Patricia Baker  
Alan Barkman  
Karla Bean  
Daryl Berg  
Marjorie Berry  
Renewal City Church  
Frances Crosby  
Davis & Associates, CPAs, PS  
Judie Digby  
Anne Dubosky  
East Hills Alliance Church  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
Bob Erickson  
First Baptist Church of Longview  
Esther Freeman  
Dan Frei  
Chris Frei  
Generational Hope Foundation  
Gibbs & Olson, Inc.  
Trudi Gross  
Gail Groth  
Richard Gushman  
Amy Hamilton  
Howard Hammond  
Ray Harrison  
Herb Kleven Estate  
High Cascades Agency  
David Hoffman  
Martha Jeanetta  
Jackie Keller  
Kelso First Baptist  
Kelso United Methodist  
Presbyterian Church  
Kristine Keough  
Mark Koelsch

Kathleen Lappe  
Richard Loewen  
Longview Presbyterian Church  
Donna MacKenzie  
Pr. Dave Martin  
Rev. Vonda McFadden  
Melissa Wilke Living Trust  
Gavin Jeanne Mills  
Ron Naff  
Network for Good  
Northlake Church  
Irene Olason  
Kim O'Neill  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Lucia Becchetti Peterson  
Eugene Pistorese  
Steve Pond  
Debbie Raclawski  
Renewal City Church  
Robert J. & Elaine Ciatto  
Family Foundation Inc.  
John Roche  
Carol Ruiz  
Veronica Sethre  
Alexandria Sheridan  
Autumn Sheridan  
Steve Sheridan  
Claudia Sobczuk  
St. Rose Catholic Church  
Paula Stepankowsky  
Danielle Trimble  
Kathy Troupe  
Umpqua Bank Charitable Foundation  
United Way  
Watershed Science & Engineering  
Eric Wisch  
Peter Zackaroff



## Take Us to Your Leaders

Church Council, Council of Elders, Church Board, Board of Trustees, Meeting, Parish Council, Session . . . whatever your denomination calls them, they're your highly valued leaders!

And you know that one person you're going to miss a lot now that they're not on your Church Parish Council Board Meeting Session of Elder Trustees anymore? We want them!

If you know (or are) one of these leaders, we are inviting applicants for the Family Promise of Cowlitz County Board of Directors.

### So, what's involved in sitting on our Board?

Previous Board experience helpful, but *not* required. Board terms are a three-year commitment. People of color, women, young people, and those who have personally experienced housing insecurity or homelessness are especially encouraged to apply. For more details, please email us directly at

[Director@FamilyPromiseOfCowlitzCo.org](mailto:Director@FamilyPromiseOfCowlitzCo.org), [PastorVonda@gmail.com](mailto:PastorVonda@gmail.com), or call 360-703-3131.

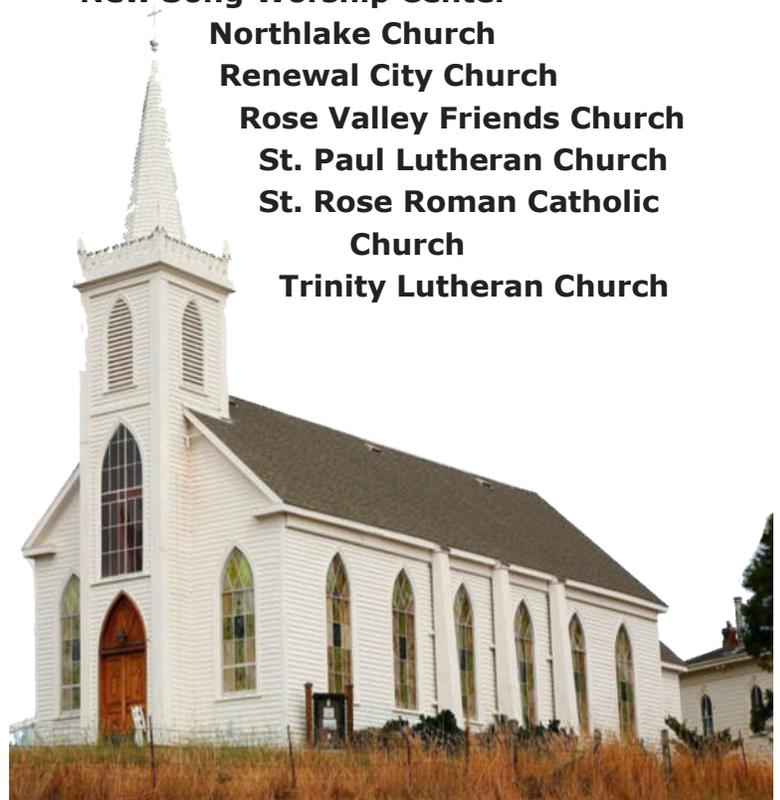
### Extra Extra!



Want to hear about something specific in this newsletter? Drop us a line—or a whole draft!  
([Editor@FamilyPromiseOfCowlitzCo.org](mailto:Editor@FamilyPromiseOfCowlitzCo.org))

## 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 Catholic Church
- 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 the Nazarene
- Longview Presbyterian Church
- Longview United Methodist Church
- New Song Worship Center
- Northlake Church
- Renewal City Church
- Rose Valley Friends Church
- St. Paul Lutheran Church
- St. Rose Roman Catholic Church
- Trinity Lutheran Church



# 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

<u>Lisa Staudinger</u>	Executive Director
<u>Sarah Wallace</u>	Case Manager
<u>Jamie Craig</u>	Administrative Assistant

## 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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