



A Year of Accomplishments

by Dan Frei, Board Chair

As the last few leaves fall from our trees and the days become colder (and possibly wetter than some of us would like) I am mindful of the many accomplishments we’ve made in this, our 6th year of operation.

Family Promise of Cowlitz County (FPCC) has continued to change and refine its operations to better address homelessness in our community. We learn with each family that crosses our threshold and from each phone call taken from those asking for help. We continue to make use of the many organizations throughout our community in addressing a variety of needs.

If you view the Family Promise National website (familypromise.org) you will see that we have “earned the distinction of being the nation’s foremost organization addressing the crisis of family homelessness in the nation.” We can be proud to be the local face of this organization. The website also states that nationally there was a 39% surge in family homelessness last year in the United States. In response, FPCC, as well as over 200 affiliates were encouraged to expand their services to offer eviction prevention. As a result, while our affiliate has made progress in expanding the capacity of its shelter, we’ve

additionally focused on helping an even larger number of families avoid homelessness.

Each family we encounter has unique situations and issues that caused them to become homeless. Developing a plan that helps them return to a stable home requires good case management. While it is true that we work with each of the families we house at our shelter to develop a plan to regain stable housing for themselves and their children, it is also our policy to fol-

low those families for an entire year after they graduate from our program. I feel that this best

“Each family we encounter has unique situations and issues that caused them to become homeless.”

conveys our intention to ensure the families remain successful.

September 11th of this year, many in the community joined in a “Day of Caring.” I had not participated in this wonderful event before but was so impressed with the many who turned out to help their neighbors in need. FPCC benefited by having our shelter cleaned and storage rooms organized. A second focus, of which I was a part, was to accomplish as much as possible to help our very 1st graduate (Hilary) at her

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Community Corner

On October 9, 2025 we participated in the Cowlitz Community Mediation Center & PUD Resource fair. It was a great turn out seeing our partners and those in the community who came out to learn the resources available to them. Thank you all, Marsha and CMC and friends at the PUD.



Sara Wallace and Jamie Craig

We welcome new board members! Summer Bailey is sure to make a great addition to the group! Summer helped out with our Bingo event and is stepping into the treasurer role of the board! Also, welcome Steve Pond, Sr., long-time Cowlitz County resident, dentist and FPCC supporter! Welcome to you both!

We want to thank departing board member Cindy Barbee. Thank you for your years of service and dedication, Cindy, we will miss you!

We would like to welcome Elliot! He is the newest member of our program, he is a KVA Graduate, he graduated early and has been working his way through school. He is enrolled in LCC now and plans to go to University in the Fall! We are so proud of his accomplishments and welcome him with open arms!



Elliot and Sara

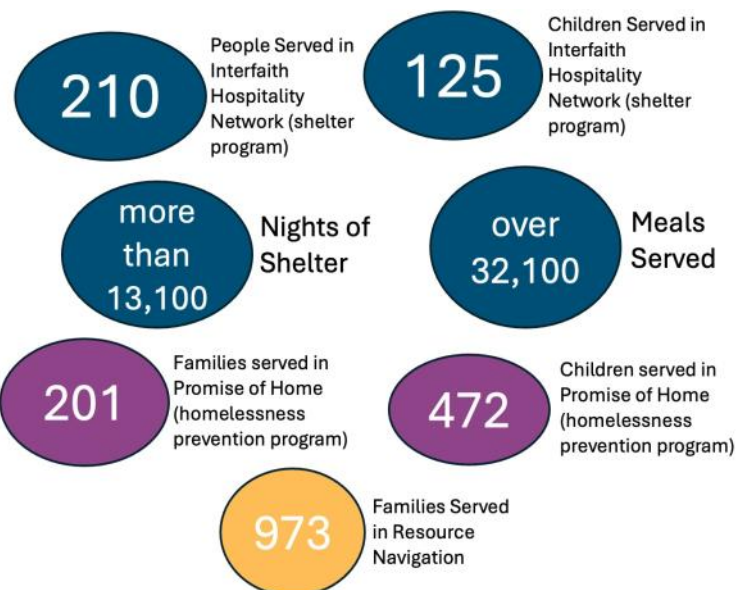


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new Kelso home. The flower beds were cleaned, backyard leveled and house painted all in one day thanks to the wonderful support of several volunteers, many of which were from the Weyerhaeuser woods department.

It certainly feels good to see the positive results of your efforts. Please know that the staff at FPCC, as well as an ever-growing number of volunteers are proving to be the "hand up" these families need to get back on their feet again. As you make your year-end giving decisions, we kindly ask that you consider Family Promise of Cowlitz County in your giving. Each dollar has a significant impact on the lives of the children we serve. We can't do this work without you. Thank you for your generous support as we look to the future with hope.

Our Local Impact





HE is Always On Time!

by Sara Wallace, Executive Director

Chris and his family found themselves homeless after Chris, the head of the family, was injured at work. He ended up with a hernia that left him without the ability to work for months. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness one-half to nearly two-

thirds of American families are living paycheck to paycheck and are one emergency away from ending up homeless.

The home that Chris and his family worked so hard to purchase, was foreclosed on and they packed up and headed to a hotel. With the family dogs in hand, they had very few options. T'era (Chris' wife) was still working so they still had her income. Soon, Chris began to work again, and they started planning on what was next. The biggest barrier was the cost of the hotel at over \$2800 per month, so saving the deposit and first month rent was seemingly out of reach. Living in a hotel comes with plenty of challenges. The cost of food goes up because you are "convenience" buying, and you can no longer buy in bulk and freeze for later. You can't cook, very well, either. But in the midst of all these challenges Chris and the family saved over \$7,000 and found a beautiful home to move into. We assisted Chris with the last week of the hotel cost before the home was ready. When I met Chris, he was so grateful for the chance to have this week covered. They were in the home stretch! They soon moved in, but money was tight, so Chris was utilizing local food banks to make ends meet.

About a week later I got a call from our board president, Dan Frei. He told me he's at the St. Vincent De Paul food bank and has a man in front of him needing a few beds. So, I got on the phone and I see Chris! He tells me they have everything they need but can't pay the storage fees until they get paid in a few weeks, so he needs just a few things to get by until then. I'm like, we got this, let's see what we can round up...

I began to search for a few twin beds. As I am going through my work day I got a call from the Olson's (we call them the Olson Elves). They were asking to adopt a family for Christmas, that their large family has all they need and they have a gift-wrapping party each year to give to those in need! Wow, all in God's perfect timing! Olson elf asks me if I know any families who need some furniture or that have just moved into a new place!?? Yes, I'm serious! So, I explain Chris' story and how they have come to this point and are needing to get by until storage fees can be paid.

Then, in the most amazing act of KINDNESS, the Olson elves offer to pay Chris' storage fees so his family can have all their furniture and pictures home in time for the holidays!!!

ALL IN GODS PERFECT TIMING! God is working through FPCC, our supporters, congregations and community. Thank you, Olson Elves and to Chris' family for letting us be part of this story. Happy Holidays to all!

Here is a letter Chris wrote to the Olson Elves and FPCC:

"To Sara, the Family Promise Team, and All Supporters,

My name is Chris McGowan, and on behalf of my wife and children, I want to express a gratitude so profound that it's truly difficult to put into words.

For so long, our family has faced an uphill battle. We have dedicated ourselves to working hard, but life's challenges often felt overwhelming. To finally reach out for help and receive not just a hand-out, but a true hand-up and a warm community embrace has been life-changing. It's the first time in 39 years that a positive experience like this has come around for us, and the relief and hope we feel is immeasurable.

We want to extend our deepest appreciation to Sara for your passion, your dedication, and for tirelessly working to connect people like us with the support we need. Your kindness is a bright light.

To the Olson Elves family, a special thank you just isn't enough. What you have done for us goes beyond charity; it is a profound act of grace and love that has given our family a new foundation to build upon. We are forever grateful for your generosity and the personal effort you made to ensure we had everything we needed. You have shown us the true meaning of community and compassion.

To every volunteer, staff member at Family Promise, and every person reading this who supports the organization: Thank you. Your involvement is creating stability and hope for families across our community. The sense of peace and security you have given us is the greatest gift we could ever receive.

With sincere gratitude,

Chris McGowan (and Family)"



Please Join us in making the shelter look festive for the holidays! If you have any old Christmas décor you would like to donate, please contact us! Let's make this place sparkle with Christmas joy for these kiddos!



To all of our friends and family who attended, supported and helped, made cookies, helped set up or donated a basket, at our Bingo & Burgers event, THANK YOU! These fundraisers are how we continue to serve the families in the community who need us the most. Your help means so much, we cannot do this without your unwavering support! We were able to raise, \$13,000!! It takes a village, and with gratitude and love we thank each and every one of you! Special thank you to Dave Fatcher, BINGO extraordinaire! Master of Bingo, thank you for coming and supporting our mission and keeping us smiling! Huge Shout out to Aly and Mike with East Hills Alliance Church! They cooked and provided all the food and with a smile! THANK YOU!

Year End Giving

Dearest Friends,

As the blessed year draws to an end, we look forward to family gatherings, good food, and laughter. We are reminded to be grateful for our families, our health, and our homes. At Family Promise of Cowlitz County, our goal is simple and urgent: to ensure every child has a safe place to call home.

This year, more families than ever have come to us in crisis. Many arrive carrying the weight of job loss, rising housing costs, unexpected emergencies, and the fear of not knowing where their children will sleep that night. But the moment a family walks through our doors, something shifts. They are no longer facing these challenges alone.

Because you trusted our vision, 14 families—32 children—found shelter with us this year. Of those, 12 families with 29 children graduated into permanent, stable housing. These are not just numbers; they represent lives changed, trauma interrupted, and new futures made possible.

Preventing homelessness before it begins is one of our strongest commitments. With the support of this community, in 2024 alone, we helped prevent 35 families with 111 children from experiencing the trauma of homelessness. Your generosity has been life changing. Thank you.

Childhood homelessness is an invisible crisis. These children look just like our children and grandchildren. They did not choose the circumstances—poverty, substance use, domestic violence, mental health challenges, and a severe lack of affordable housing—that pushed their families into instability. Yet these systemic issues create generational trauma that can follow a child for life.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, children experiencing homelessness are more likely to:

- Fall behind academically (even though Washington no longer allows grade repetition)
- Have lower academic performance, be expelled, or drop out
- Experience higher rates of health problems
- Face increased mental and behavioral challenges

Imagine eliminating these barriers and giving every child the same chance to learn and thrive as their peers. That's what your support helps make possible.

Because of your generosity, hundreds of individuals received shelter, meals, hotel stays, and comprehensive support through our shelter, prevention/diversion, and stabilization programs this year. You empowered families to regain stability and return to homes of their own. Family Promise has continued to provide more than shelter — we offer intensive case management, life-skills coaching, advocacy, and a path toward long-term stability. Whether it's a parent learning how to budget for the first time, a child finally having a quiet place to complete homework, or a family achieving a permanent home, you are helping make these milestones possible. For that, we offer our deepest thanks.

But the need continues to grow. We receive 4 to 12 calls per day from families who are homeless, struggling to pay rent or cannot find affordable housing. This is why we are expanding our focus upstream—providing support earlier, strengthening protective factors, and working to break the cycles of poverty and instability affecting so many families in Cowlitz County and Southwest Washington.

To meet these needs, we need your help. We are seeking:

- Additional church partnerships
- Monthly donors to sustain our growing programs
- In-kind donations for families entering shelter
- Volunteers who want to make a real and lasting difference

At Family Promise of Cowlitz County, we teach family self-sufficiency through a community-based approach. No family walks alone. No child is left behind.

One of the most powerful things you can do is help spread awareness. Please consider sharing this letter with your congregation, adding our mission to your church bulletin, or telling a neighbor or colleague about the families we serve. Together, we can do even more for the children who need us.

From the little boys and girls who walk our halls—safe, fed, warm, and loved—thank you. Truly, thank you.

Your generosity changes lives

It keeps children safe.

It strengthens families.

It builds a community that refuses to look away.

Thank you for believing in this mission and for standing with the families of Cowlitz County. We couldn't do this without you — and we wouldn't want to.

With gratitude,

Sara Wallace,
Executive Director,
Family Promise of Cowlitz County

Financial Update

Updates are through October 31, 2025

2025 Annual Budget:

\$ 164,000

2025 Contributions to date:

\$ 197,837

2025 Avg. monthly contributions:

\$ 19,784

2025 Volunteer hours reported:

1,166 hours

Donors to the General Fund, Grants & Sustainability Campaign (through October 31st, 2025)

(Donors highlighted in yellow participate in the 100 for 100 Sustainability Fundraiser)

Judy Ainslie
Cindy Alexander
Theresa Ames
Ron Anderson
Larry & Veryl Anderson
Charlotte & Donald Armstrong
Kevin Asay
Robert Avignone
Alice & Ron Bakke
Kelso First Baptist
Alan & Deana Barkman
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Linda Beattie Inlow
Daryl & Gail Berg
Sherry Berteaux
Alicia Bisson
Kathryn Black
Kariann Botero
Triangle Bowl
Cindy Brado
Boyd & Deborah Burns
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
East Hills Alliance Church
Grace Bible Church
Longview Presbyterian Church
Trinity Lutheran Church
Renewal City Church
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Pete & Frances Crosby
Barbara Davis
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Marlys & Rod Ericksen
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Richard M. Schulze Family
Foundation
Exodus Christian Fellowship
Cindy & Pete Foley
Dan Frei
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E-lois Gebhart
Nancy Gill
John & Joanne Gotshall
Amy & Brian Hamilton
Ann & Steve Hanson
Karen & Richard Hardecker
Kate Harlan
James Wallace & Lauri Harris
Phillip Hatfield
Chuck & CreeAnn Henderson
Marlene Herget
Margaret Hickey
Lowe's Home Improvement
Allison Hutchinson
Don Iverson
Gary & Susan Jackson
Janet Jacobs
Darylan Johnson
Dayne & Jim Johnston
Patrick & Kathy Jones
Mike & Teri Karnofski
Eileen Kasemeier
Ronald & Ruth Kimmel
Carol & Thomas Kirwan
Kelso Lions Club
Richard & Ardyth Loewen
Carol & Louis Locke
Clifton Lollar
Donna & Joe MacKenzie
Roy & Lisa Maier
Larry & Margaret Malone
Ron Marshall
Louise McAuliffe
Melinda McCrady
Rev. Vonda & Thomas McFadden
Fred Meyer
Gavin Jeanne Mills
Brian & Toni Miner
Kay & Ron Naff
Deborah Nelson
Susan Olson
Grocery Outlet
Heidi Palmer
Dennis Perry
Eugene Pistorese

Susan Pointer
Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian
Church
Bill Hundley & Kay Purcell
Cherie & Larry Rapp
Peggy Reibe
Leon Rennells
George & Mildred Robertson
Derene & Karl Salzsieder
Debbie Sanders
Jori Scruggs-Brown
J. Chris & Heidi Shaw
Patty & Steven Sheridan
Autumn Sheridan
Richard & Debra Shuren
Lisa & Robert Sudar
Karen & Mark Thorson
Annie & Darrel Tietze
Marsha Treadway
Dennis & M. Chris Wallace
The Walworth Family
Mary Wheeler
Monica White
Melissa Wilkie Living Trust &
Robert Wilke Living Trust
Mary Wingate
New Song Worship Center

In-Kind Contributions

Patrick & Kathy Jones
Steve Douglas
Dara Moody
Maggie Destromp

Special Donations

In Honor of:
Marlin and Dorothy Nelson and
Keith and Erika Abraham
by Marlene Herget

At Your Service

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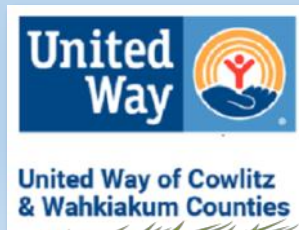
Visit our website at:

www.fpcowlitz.org (Cowlitz County)
www.familypromise.org (National Organization)

Find us on Facebook at:
www.Facebook.com/FamilyPromiseCowlitzCounty

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