



## The Real Christmas

*by Lisa Staudinger, Executive Director*

I heard someone say recently that "Christmas might not happen this year." I was perplexed. Then I heard the news story they were referring to: the supply chain is missing a few links and things are chaotic and backed up. It might be hard to receive stuff you order or find stuff in stores for this Christmas.

now go do the deed. And what Jesus taught us most of all while he was walking with us was to care for one another. "Love one another as I have loved you."

And you do! It's Christmas every day around here. Which brings me back to the Festival of Thanks, our annual volunteer appreciation event.

I thought back to the "Christmas might not happen" statement and thought, Someone doesn't know what Christmas is. And they definitely never read *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (which mean they missed last year's Festival of Thanks!). "It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags."

This is the season when we reflect on the past year. As we look back at all we've survived, all the guests we sheltered and families we've assisted in 2021,

*This is the real Christmas,  
and  
Amazon can't  
deliver it.*

we know we owe it all to you. You, who were sent into the world to love. By gifting your time, talent, and treasure you

give children a chance at a stable life. You reach a helping hand out to parents in desperate situations 365 days a year, passing the ball from congregation to congregation so no one is overburdened.

At this point the Grinch puzzles 'til his puzzler is sore. But he soon figures out that Christmas means "more".

This is what we will celebrate at the Festival of Thanks in December. This is the real Christmas, and Amazon can't deliver it. I hope you'll join us to celebrate our progress and the very special contributions of our Volunteer of the Year, Coordinator of the Year, and Business Partner of the Year.

Now, I'm getting way too familiar with that sore-puzzler feeling, but about Christmas I am not confused. Because you all demonstrate it to us every day of the year.

Christmas means "the Mass of Christ." Let's break it down a little more.

(I'm not telling. You'll just have to watch.)

The word Mass (Latin *missa*) means "sending." As in sending into the world to do service after worship. You've gotten the Word,

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# Remodel to Restore Capacity to Get a Boost from Skilled Volunteers

*"Many hands will make light work of a big job"*

When the pandemic hit, we stopped sheltering guest families in our partner churches for everyone's safety. But sheltering at the Family Center cost us half of our guest capacity.

The effects of this were minimized for a while by the eviction moratoria keeping many families in their homes, but now the moratoria have expired, and our waiting list is growing. To restore our shelter capacity to four families, we plan some changes to the Family Center.

Since guests have beds at the Family Center, the nursery is no longer needed and will become a guest room. The living room will have new walls built to accommodate two guest families. An adjoining door between the rooms will make it possible for one large family to occupy the space as well.

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*Bart and friends have the equipment and the contracting expertise, and are fans of Family*

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Adding these to the guest room next to the Director's office will bring us back to four rooms and full guest capacity again. Sounds pretty simple, right?

But the 1937 building says otherwise. We puzzled over code questions and how to cut the gnarly concrete wall to make the nursery window comply with fire code for overnight occupation. We were stuck until Board Secretary Dan Frei called on some former coworkers.

Bart Chrest of JH Kelly came and assessed the situation and feels confident that a crew of his coworkers would help and could handle all the needed changes. They have the equipment and contracting expertise and are fans of Family Promise.

Daryl Berg (2020 Volunteer of the Year) has deep knowledge of our building's electrical systems and can guide work on needed changes to fixtures in the living room and elsewhere. Others who have volunteered to help with the remodel include Andre Stepankowsky, who also plans a benefit piano recital to help with funding.

Family Promise partner congregations St. Rose and Immaculate Heart of Mary have donated \$3000 to the remodel. The money had been earmarked to upgrade the Family Promise guests rooms at Immaculate Heart. When the decision to stay in static shelter indefinitely was announced last August, the parish decided to use the funds to support remodeling guest rooms at the Family Center instead.

We hope to complete the remodel early in the new year. If you would like to help with any part of the work (flooring, general carpentry, painting, fixtures, etc.), please contact the Family Center at 360-703-3131.

If you'd like to help financially, you can donate via our website ([www.FPCowlitz.org](http://www.FPCowlitz.org)) or send a check to P.O. Box 1152, Kelso, WA 98626. As always, all donations stay local.

## Save the Date

## Festival of Thanks

Our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event

2021

December

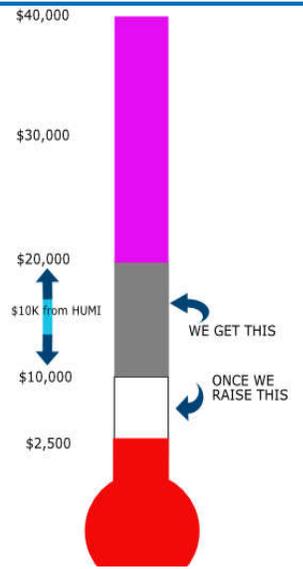
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11

# Prevention Program Launch Inches Closer

An ounce of prevention is worth thousands of dollars' worth of cure and a few years of recovery! Keeping families stably housed is a major priority for Family Promise. Preventing the loss of housing costs a small fraction of the cost of sheltering people who have lost their homes. And then there's the loss of possessions, the grief, the fear, the chaos, the damage to credit reports, the risk to health and safety, the health and education effects...you get the idea.

We have raised a quarter of the \$10,000 needed to receive Help Us Move In's "Homeless No More" challenge grant, thanks to a generous gift from Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian Church.

A small team is working on Promise of Home's terms, eligibility, and logistics. They're also cooking up some FUNdraising ideas. If you would like to join the Promise of Home team, please contact Lisa at [director@familypromiseofcowlitzco.org](mailto:director@familypromiseofcowlitzco.org).



## Andre Stepankowsky

*Presents*

### A piano recital

On YouTube December 5

*to benefit the Family Promise of Cowlitz County  
Family Center capacity expansion*

More details soon!



**proudly partners with**



**United Way of Cowlitz & Wahkiakum Counties**

## Business and Organization Donors

Please help us thank these businesses and organizations that have helped us over the past year by supporting them!

Community Foundation for SW WA  
Davis & Associates, CPAs, PS  
High Cascades Agency  
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the NW Community Giving Campaign  
Kroger  
Longview Century Club  
Luggage of Love

Mike Burchett, Media Consultation  
Network of Good  
Pacific Doors and Window  
PEO Sisterhood Chapter IL  
Performance Sheet Metal, Inc.  
Sign Masters Awards  
Solid Rock Cruisers  
Wilcox and Flegel Fuel Oil Co.

## In-Kind Donors

Erin Byrom  
Longview United Methodist Church  
Exodus Christian Fellowship



Steve and Diane Pond have been in the Cowlitz County area since 1973, when Steve relocated his law practice here from Seattle. They attend the Lake Sacajawea Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They recently passed their 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

They both served on the Family Promise development committee for the Cowlitz County affiliate and have helped with hosting families, recruiting helpers to provide meals and being overnight hosts.

Diane appreciates that Family Promise is not government supported and that the affiliate carefully screens potential guests, leading to high success rates in helping families experiencing homelessness return to stable housing. She very much likes meeting the guest families and working with people from other churches.



Steve appreciates the interaction with guest families, as well. He is also enthusiastic about the recent HUMI grant which is designed to help families remain in their homes. Steve likes that Family Promise of Cowlitz County operates locally but still has the support of the national Family Promise organization that "has a terrific track record" and great credibility.

Both Steve and Diane said they have no hesitation in approaching and recruiting other people to help with Family Promise.

Thank you, Steve and Diane, for supporting families experiencing homelessness through your hard work with Family Promise of Cowlitz County.

## Family Promise Receives Highest Rating From Charity Navigator for 9th Consecutive Year With Perfect Score



From Family Promise National website ([www.FamilyPromise.org](http://www.FamilyPromise.org))

SUMMIT, N.J. – September 24, 2021

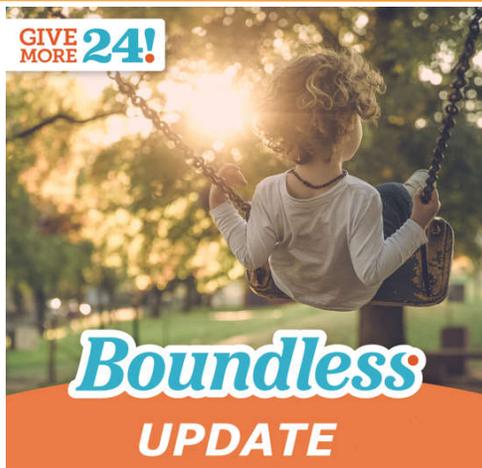
One in 16 American children experience homelessness before they enter the first grade. That's equivalent to one child in every kindergarten classroom. Even with the extreme challenges presented by an unprecedented global pandemic, national non-profit Family Promise adapted to the new landscape, continued to engage volunteers, and served more families and children in 2020 than ever before.

"The pandemic rendered our core communal shelter program nearly impossible, and we increased prevention, diversion, and stabilization services to keep families housed and avoid shelter," said Claas Ehlers, Family Promise CEO.

Recently, Family Promise's strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. This is the ninth consecutive year Family Promise has earned this top distinction, including a perfect score of 100 out of 100 points.

Over the last year, Family Promise Affiliates have increased their work in prevention and shelter diversion. New, innovative programming like A Future Begins at Home, an initiative that helps families in crisis avoid the trauma of homelessness through comprehensive support, and Innovation Grants that supported the expansion of prevention services helped Affiliates deliver critical services to families during the pandemic, keeping them housed and safe.

The Annual Impact Report showcases Family Promise's achievements and the community's engagement. Overall, in 2020, Family Promise Affiliates served 177,474 family members in all programs. By increasing prevention, diversion, and stabilization services, half of Family Promise's 200 Affiliates doubled the number of individuals served, and 28,398 episodes of homelessness were shortened or avoided altogether.



Thanks to you, we had a very successful Give More 24! campaign. Donations by checks, cash, on-line (card) and PayPal donations helped us reach our goal of \$30,000.00.

The impact of your generosity is that we have closed the gap for this year to date.

Thank you so much for sharing and emailing to help us continue our life-saving services to children and their families who are experiencing homelessness.

**The brotherly love of community comes from the sense of responsibility we have for each other, and out of love comes action.**  
**Our sincerest gratitude to all those who supported Give More 24!**

Sid & Sheryl Ackler  
 Judith Ainslie  
 Nancy Althof  
 Rick & Theresa Ames  
 Gina/Kevin Axsom  
 Mike & Cindy Barbee  
 Karla Bean  
 Marilyn Becchetti  
 Daryl Berg  
 Art & Mary Birkmeyer  
 Rick & Cathie Brien  
 Shelly Bullet  
 Boyd & Deborah Burns  
 R Ernie & Oriana Cadman  
 Kristal Champagne  
 Kevin & Peggy Connors  
 Bill & Cindy Coonan  
 Donald Corkrum  
 The Corwin Family Fund  
 Susan Coulombe  
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 Judie Digby  
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 Duhamel Family  
 Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
 David Engebo  
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 Bob & Kathy Erickson  
 Pat & Bruce Eyer  
 Family Promise of Clark  
 County Board  
 Family Promise of Cowlitz  
 County Board  
 Melissa Firth  
 Dan Frei  
 Tom Garstki  
 Dennis Gaul

Nancy Gill  
 Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
 Joanne Gotshall  
 Rich & Annette Gushman  
 Sylvia & Bill Hale  
 Randy & Kerry Hall  
 Richard Hallett  
 Arlene & Les Hambly  
 Byron & Irene Hanson  
 Richard Hardecker  
 Chuck & Cree Ann Henderson  
 Lorraine Hendren  
 Lauren Henricksen  
 Brian Hewitt  
 Margaret Hickey  
 Lessley Hillger  
 Joe Hobson  
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 Jill Johanson  
 Sally J. Jones  
 Teri & Mike Karnofski  
 Jackie Keller  
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 Ruth Kendall  
 Kristine Keough Forte  
 Nancy Kuehlwein  
 Mida LeSollen  
 Dana Libby  
 Nancy Lundquist  
 Donna & Joe MacKenzie  
 Diane Manasco  
 Ronald Marshall  
 Pr. Dave Martin  
 Richard & Mary Martinsen  
 Richard McCaine  
 Vonda McFadden  
 Donna McLain  
 Howard Meharg  
 Mary Jane Melink  
 John Melink  
 Antoinette Miner  
 Minuteman Press  
 Dawn Morgan  
 Karen Murphy

Ron and Kay Naff  
 Elizabeth Oliver  
 Susan Olson  
 Dennis Perry  
 Patricia Peterson  
 Kat Pettersen  
 Vernon Pickett  
 Ron & Cindy Pihl  
 Eugene Pistoese  
 Steve & Diane Pond  
 Kay Purcell & Bill Hundley  
 Cherie Rapp  
 Gilbert Ratcliff  
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 Glenda Schuh  
 Alexandria Sheridan  
 Autumn Sheridan  
 Steve & Patty Sheridan  
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 Stephen Shope  
 Richard & Debbie Shuren  
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 Mike & Deneice Stephenson  
 Lisa Sudar  
 Robert & Elaine Theriault  
 Ian Thompson  
 Jan Thompson  
 Pamela Torgersin  
 Dani Trimble  
 Sharon & Julian Tuck  
 Barbara Vining  
 Maria Wallace  
 MaryAlice Wallis  
 Phyllis Westervelt  
 Geri & John Willems  
 Bill Wood  
 Leonard Workman

# Rent Well Gives Guests a Leg Up in a Tough Market



Family Promise gives families suffering homelessness a hand up. And now a

leg up too! *Rent Well* is a 15-hour course on how to apply effectively for rentals, how to communicate with landlords, rights and obligations of both tenants and landlords, and much more.

The curriculum was designed by Transition Projects, which teaches renters how to overcome barriers that make them less attractive to landlords. This is especially important with our 0.5% vacancy rate.

Sara and Lisa took the class themselves last

month and will take the instructor certification course as soon as it's available. "We're already using what we learned in *Rent Well* to help our graduates find housing," said Sara. "We're one of the few agencies in this area getting clients into housing."

Once Sara and Lisa are certified, both guests and Promise of Home clients will be offered the class.

Sometimes the cause of housing insecurity is a tenant and landlord not communicating well or knowing what their legal obligations are. *Rent Well* can help keep people in their home *and* improve their relationship with their landlord for greater long-term stability. And that's the ultimate goal.

## Our Awesome Partner Congregations

***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***  
***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. Rose Roman Catholic Church***  
***Trinity Lutheran Church***



## Financial Update

2021 Annual Budget:	<b>\$167,976.00</b>
2021 Contributions (thru 9/30):	<b>\$107,430.16</b>
2021 Volunteer hours:	<b>688 hours</b>

Thank you for your support of our work for families enduring homelessness.

# Gifts & Gratitude



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

We operate almost entirely on your donations; we are not a “fee-for-service” organization and don’t have government funding for our operations.

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 September offer families facing homelessness the promise of hope.

Ron Bakke  
Karla Bean  
Lucia Becchetti  
Mariya Belden  
Daryl Berg  
Josh Droke  
Ruth Earnest  
East Hills Alliance Church  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
Bob Erickson  
Greg Filer  
Dan Frei  
Judith Fromdahl  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Marie Grant  
Amy Hamilton  
Brian Hamilton  
Sarah Hines  
David Hoffman

Myrna Hustoft  
Allison Hutchinson  
Gary Jorgensen  
Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian Church  
Donna MacKenzie  
Pr. Dave Martin  
Rev. Vonda McFadden  
Sue Megenity  
John Melink  
Dennis Midwood  
Ron Naff  
Northlake Church  
Doug Radke  
Chris Rugg  
Karl Salzsieder  
Debra Shuren  
Claudia Sobczuk  
Danielle Trimble  
Weyerhaeuser Longview

## Wanted:

Former members of your congregation’s Leadership!

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? 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 is 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 contact us at the Family Center: 360-703-3131. Or you can give us their contact information and we’ll take it from there.



# At Your Service

## Board of Directors

<a href="#">Pr. Vonda McFadden</a>	President
<a href="#">Karl Salzsieder</a>	Vice President
<a href="#">Linda Davis</a>	Treasurer
<a href="#">Dan Frei</a>	Interim Secretary
<a href="#">Pr. Dave Martin</a>	At-Large
<a href="#">Ron Naff</a>	At-Large
<a href="#">Leticia Casarez</a>	At-Large

## Family Center Staff

<a href="#">Lisa Staudinger</a>	Executive Director
<a href="#">Sarah Wallace</a>	Case Manager
<a href="#">Jamie Craig</a>	Administrative Assistant

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

## Family Center Address

215 Academy Street, 2nd Floor  
Kelso, WA 98626  
360-703-3131

## Family Center Hours

9 a.m. — 6 p.m. Monday through Friday

## Visit our website:

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

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

## Look for us on Facebook!

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Kelso, WA 98626

P.O. Box 1152

of Cowlitz County

