


THE Journey

THE NEWSLETTER OF  Family Promise
of Cowlitz County

Creating Hope, Nurturing Strength, Transforming Lives

December 2022 Vol 3, Issue 6

A Place to Lay Their Heads

by Vonda McFadden, Board Chair

Thanksgiving has just passed and we are on the path to Christmas. Not only is it a wonderful time of celebrating our thankfulness to the Lord as well as celebrating His birth, but even in the midst of all the festivities that take place, we are often reminded of the difficulties people go through as well. While the intention is not usually needing to "keep up with the Jones's" so to speak, there is a desire on the part of parents to bless their children with a few gifts. Those of us who are parents know what a great joy it is to see the looks of surprise and expressions of appreciation for gifts received during this time.

"At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of a child that had nowhere to lay His head...Jesus knows what it means to be without a home."

As you can imagine, we here at Family Promise know the hardships of those in our community. We see time and time again the families, especially the children that just want a place to lay their head for the night. Sounds a little familiar, doesn't it? At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of a child that had nowhere to lay His head. Jesus and his parents fled to Egypt and became refugees. They were houseless. Jesus knows what it means to be without a home. He lived three years of his life traveling from town-to-town loving

people without a permanent home to call his own. He benefited from the generosity of those who believed in his message. We are here still spreading that message of love and acceptance.

The board and staff wish to express our thankfulness to you as you support our work to help children and families in our community. We know that it has been a hard year for many. Your support means everything to us and to our families. Without you there would be no Family Promise of Cowlitz County. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

So, we come with an ask. As you consider your year-end giving, would you also consider giving a portion to Family Promise? We depend upon the support of our churches and community. We know there are many places to give your money and we don't take your support lightly. Thank you so much for considering us, and even if you are unable to give, we understand. Just pray along with us that we will be able to minister to families in need during 2023!



In this issue:

- In Their Own Words*** page 2
- Congregational Spotlight*** page 3
- Family Promise: What We Do*** page 4
- The Impact of Promise of Home & Our Local Impact*** page 5
- Night Without A Bed Update & Our Awesome Partner Congregations*** page 6
- Gifts and Gratitude*** page 7
- At Your Service*** page 8

In Their Own Words



by Angela Gamar,
FPCC Graduate

I would like to share my experience while my family was with Family Promise. After being homeless for months and months staying in motels, camping and really struggling I finally found Family Promise. At the time I had no idea the journey I was about to go through.

My whole life I've done everything you're supposed to do, and I've fought hard and pretty much done everything on my own. When you're taking care of a family sometimes you're too proud, but you can't let your pride get in the way because your family is more important. It was really hard for me to let my guard down and become vulnerable.

When Sara Wallace brought us to Family Promise, the pressure taken off my shoulders was unbelievable. Family Promise fed my family. They provided a whole room, blankets, bedding, showers, laundry room and peace for my soul. Sara met with me and mapped out our

journey. I watched this woman go above and beyond for my family. I watched her fight for us, pray for us, advocate for us with everyone that would potentially be an asset for my family. We walked into the program in March 2022 and Family Promise let my

"Because the day my family went to Family Promise and the things we experienced reset my soul and I believed in humanity again."

family stay for six months. We graduated in September 2022 with knowledge and confidence and were able to build our savings back up. During that six months Sara and I not only had weekly visits, but she checked in with me every single day.

There were days that were really hard. Feeling like a failure as a mother and a provider was not easy. Family Promise helped me through that. They were a real emotional anchor, assuring me that I am good, and I am OK. Many times, Sara would sense

that I was feeling down when other people wouldn't know, and she was there with inspiring messages and positive affirmations. Not because it was her job, but because it was in her heart and soul. Jamie and other staff genuinely loved us too. My children loved their children, and Jamie was always wanting to do fun children's activities. The kids loved it. It was the most amazing, comfortable, family orientated place.

I will forever be indebted to Family Promise. I'll never be able to put in words my experience and outcome. But I do believe in the journey and the knowledge and experiences, and I feel honored that God found me special enough to be blessed by them. Because the day my family went to Family Promise and the things we experienced reset my soul and I believed in humanity again. I cannot thank this program enough and I cannot stress enough that Jamie and Sara not only are good at their jobs, but they were meant for them.

We now have a home that is perfect for our big family!!! Thank you so much!

THANK YOU!



We want to give a big thank you to LINKED design group for their fundraiser supporting Family Promise of Cowlitz County! Their efforts raised \$645 that will go directly to our program. Thanks again LINKED!

Congregational Spotlight: Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian and Longview United Methodist Churches

This issue we are shifting gears a little and featuring congregations rather than individuals in the spotlight. Kelso United Methodist Presbyterian Church led by Pastor Vonda McFadden and their FPCC partner, Longview United Methodist Church led by Pastor Allison Mattocks are the focus for December.

Both Pastor Allison and Pastor Vonda described their congregations as “older, mature, empty nesters with a long history of attendance”. Pastor Vonda also indicated a large number of members in the teaching/education profession which may explain why Family Promise is of such interest to her congregants.

Pastor Allison appreciates that Family Promise provides a full range of services that really helps young families with children get back on their feet. Both pastors appreciate the opportunity Family Promise provides for their volunteers to meet and interact with the guest families and the other congregation, although this has been severely impacted by COVID.

Each pastor has a group of households that handle the purchase of groceries and the preparation and delivery of meals to the Family Center. Pastor Allison indicated there was a great desire from her members to help those with food insecurity. She also noted that dietary restrictions can be challenging to those volunteers not used to dealing with limitations such as food allergies, gluten-free diets and other food related issues. Sometimes the challenge is as simple as actually finding the building entrance or having the correct access code to the door.

Pastor Vonda expressed her great joy when a newly graduating family was given a host of gifts at Christmas to help them establish their new home. She said it was a wonderful experience and “it highlights the difference we can make in people’s lives”.

Each pastor appreciates the Family Center where guest families are currently housed but look forward to a time when expansion is complete in order to accommodate additional families and also a time when health restrictions can foster more contact between volunteers and families.

Family Promise is a means for people of all walks to get to know one another, and for families with children in need to find the housing and practical help they need to re-enter the community.





What We Do

by Sara Wallace

Family Promise of Cowlitz County is a family shelter program focusing on consistency and stabilization for families with children or as we like to say children with families. FPCC provides hot meals, shelter, basic necessities, connections to local resources, housing and financial planning, referrals, financial assistance, intensive case management, and anything from furniture donations to moving assistance.

We now operate a non-rotational shelter: meaning we no longer rotate housing amongst our church partners. We use what was once known as the "day center" as our Family Center. When using the rotational model, the congregations took on a huge part of what it takes to manage a shelter program, feeding and housing the families in their buildings. However, the numbers show that stability and staying in one place while un-housed leads to quicker, more successful graduations from homelessness. We still utilize the support of the local congregations to deliver these families a homelike experience as they go

through one of the hardest times of their lives. It's not only delivering dinners or providing basic needs and shelter. It's the sense of community, the feeling of independence.

There is a sense of self dignity that is stolen the moment you become un-housed. FPCC provides the tools for these families to become stronger, more independent and persevere by helping to educate them about local resources in order to achieve some security. And once you have a stable living space, you can begin to draft a plan for the future. Sitting at a table with a Pastor, or a teacher in the community where they will be living gives a sense of being part of something meaningful, giving back some self-respect, and not feeling like the homeless family that is somehow inferior because of what has happened.

If there is a need, with the help of this entire community anything is possible, any need can be met. That is the most amazing part. Not money or "stuff", but if we all join together there is no unachievable goal, no burden too great to carry. It's the things you cannot see, things money can't buy, the feelings, the hope, faith and compassion that our staff and volunteers provide to families that truly defines success. Going through the program and coming out with the trust, love and support of the local people is the true prize and secret that FPCC embraces. Community Togetherness.

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 off your Church Parish Council Board 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.

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.

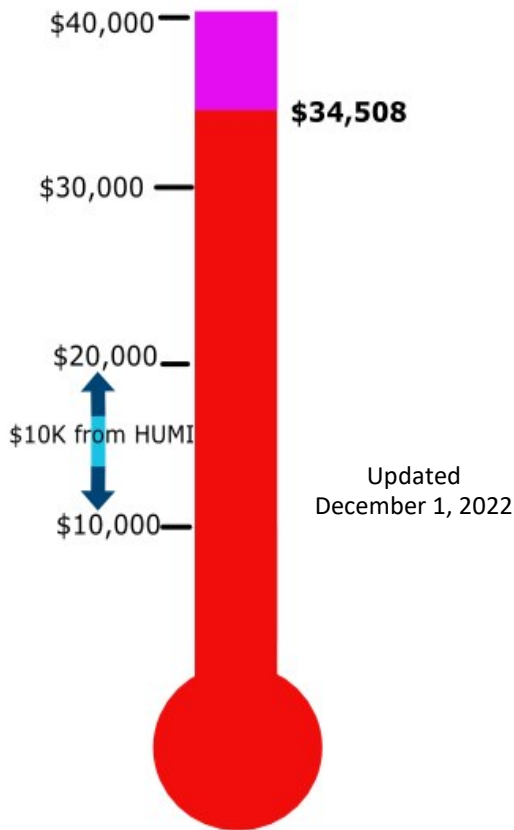
Extra Extra!



Want to hear about something specific in this newsletter? Drop us a line—or a whole draft! (director@fpcowlitz.org)



2021-2023 Progress



Financial Update

2022 Annual Budget:
\$207,994.00
 2022 Contributions to date:
\$132,043.29
 2022 Avg. monthly contributions:
\$ 12,003.00
 2022 Volunteer hours reported:
1,368 hours

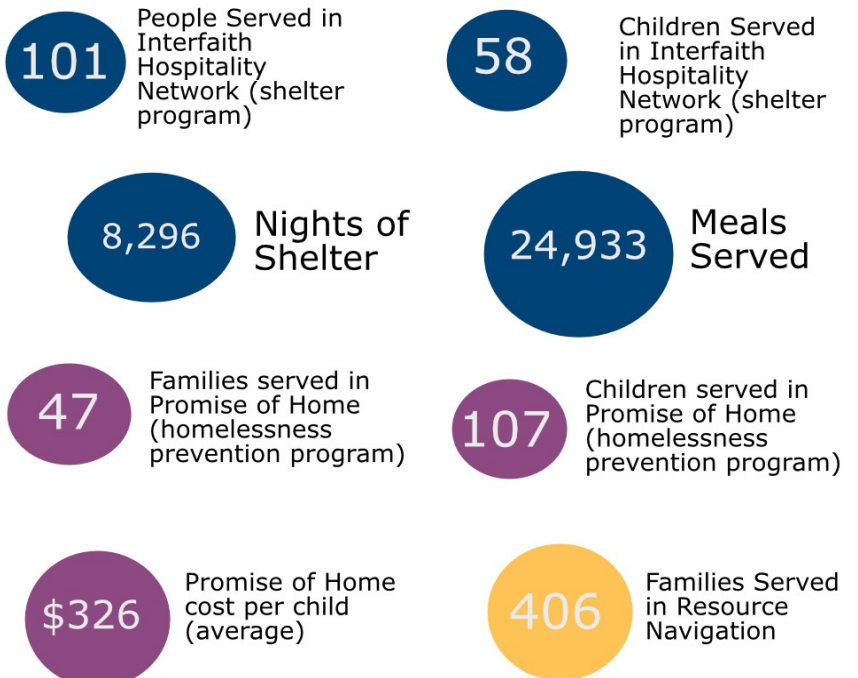
*Thank you for your support
 of families enduring
 homelessness.*

The Impact of Promise of Home

Below is a note from a client who received Promise of Home funding to move into a new place. She was in tears thanking us for the work we do and just looked so tired but said we were the answer to her prayers. She said without POH, she would have been in her car with three children. It was heartbreaking, yet so fulfilling to see her relief with this help. There is no other organization in town that helps with rent and deposit assistance in this way.

11/29/22
 I Cheilina Reing I want to say my appreciation and thanks to the people in the family Promise for helping us for our deposit to move in a house, I appreciate you guys help and we hope your service will continue on to help the people same as my family. Thank you very much and have a wonderful day and Christmas holidays
 Cheilina Reing
 Howard Osawa
 RJ Osawa
 Dyllyna Osawa

Our Local Impact





**Night
Without
a Bed**

In October, Family Promise of Cowlitz County participated in a program to raise awareness (and funds) for our affiliate through an event called "Night Without a Bed".

The National Family Promise organization has been leading the challenge for people all around the nation to spend one night sleeping somewhere other than their own beds. People sleep on couches, in tents, in their church (you get the picture) in order to create a better understanding of what it feels like to be without a warm, comfortable bed to take refuge and recharge in nightly.

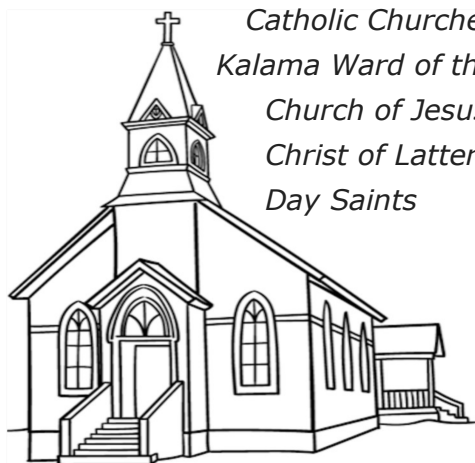
Our goal was to create more awareness amongst the young people in our county, so we invited the local church youth groups to ask their members to participate by posting their pictures with the hashtag #NWAB or #NightWithoutABed.

We will continue to build on this momentum in 2023 by increased outreach to our youth groups as well as leadership clubs at the local schools. Having our youth "walk a mile in my shoes" regarding the challenges and experiences of peers who may be without shelter can lead to increased understanding and less judgement. This is the kindness and goodness we want to foster through outreach and education.

Every child deserves to have a home. Please put October 2023 on your calendar now and help us continue to raise awareness in our community.

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 First Baptist Church
Longview Presbyterian Church
Longview United Methodist Church
New Song Worship Center
Northlake Church
Renewal City Church
Rose Valley Friends Church
Trinity Lutheran Church



GO GREEN! Like our Newsletter? Get it delivered straight to your email and help us cut down on printing costs. Email Jamie at office@fpcowlitz.org to sign up for our digital newsletter.

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 July, August and September offer families facing homelessness a hand up on the road to home.

Greg and Karla Bean
Daryl and Gail Berg
Pete and Frances Crosby
East Hills Alliance Church
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Bob and Kathy Erickson
First Baptist Church of Longview
Pete and Cindy Foley
David Futcher
Grace Bible Fellowship
Brian and Amy Hamilton
Amber Harris
Chuck and Cree Ann Henderson
Sarah Hines
Thomas and Carol Kirwan
Joe and Donna MacKenzie

Roy and Lisa Maier
Rev. Vonda and Tom McFadden
Donald and Gavin Jeanne Mills
Laurie Morrison
Ron and Kay Naff
Renewal City Church
Dr. Chris and Heidi Shaw
Steven and Patty Sheridan
Adam and Danielle Trimble
Theresa Walter
Mary Wingate
Landen Yanez

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.

Daryl and Gail Berg
Jeanne O'Connor
Marge Murray



**DONATE
TODAY**

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
LINKED Design Group
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.
Realty ONE Group 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
Dan Frei	Secretary
Cindee Barbee	Treasurer
Bob Erickson	At-Large
Randy Hall	At-Large
Jim Johnston	At-Large
Hollie Kero	At-Large
Ron Naff	At-Large

Family Center Staff

<u>Dawn Morgan</u>	Executive Director
<u>Sara Wallace</u>	Case Manager
<u>Jamie Craig</u>	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 (Cowlitz County)

www.familypromise.org (National Organization)

Find us on Facebook at:

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

Copyright © 2022 Family Promise of Cowlitz
County (All Rights Reserved.)

