

Ending homelessness...  
one family at a time.

### “My Prayers are Being Answered” ~ Christina, IHN Guest

Christina and her three-year-old daughter, Jazzlynn, came to Family Promise’s Interfaith Hospitality Network on January 4, 2011. Within 30 days, the single mom and her daughter were making plans to move into a Partners in Housing manufactured home in a family park in Wyoming, Michigan. “I am overwhelmed at how quickly my prayers are being answered,” said Christina.

Christina was born in Mississippi but moved to Byron Center at an early age when her parents divorced and her mother moved back to her hometown in Michigan. She graduated from East Kentwood High School. After graduation, she worked at Meijer, Inc. but due to a work accident was unable to continue. Christina is epileptic which is sometimes challenging. She married in 2008 but recently separated from her husband. “I lived with a friend for a while. With no income as a stay-at-home mom, I sought help and was referred to Family Promise.”

“I feel like Family Promise represents my second chance to stand on my own two feet. Within a short time, we were discussing housing options, including the Partners in Housing opportunity,” she recalls.

Christina admits that she was very nervous at first. “I was nervous but I found everyone welcoming and very respectful. I have been overwhelmed by how quickly we were able to find a home for me and my daughter.”

“I loved the churches and volunteers. The people are so nice and you have your own room for privacy and sleeping. Yet, there’s also a family room where church hosts played games with us and where we watched T.V. I have been overwhelmed by how quickly we were able to find a home for my daughter and me” she continued.



### What Happens to Children (When They Become Homeless)

- They are sick four times more often than other children.
- They have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems.
- They are four times more likely to show developmental delays.
- They are twice as likely to have learning disabilities.
- Their parents are likely to suffer depression and anxiety, leading to health problems.

(Source: National Center on Family Homelessness)

At Family Promise, we...

- Hold them, play with them, and make them feel at home.
- Make sure they stay in school, providing transportation, supplies and clothes.
- Refer them to community clinics if they are sick and provide medicine.
- Model good parenting habits and give stressed out parents new ideas.
- Put our faith into action and create lasting relationships.
- Surround them with people offering hospitality and encouragement.
- Support them in their hard work to regain their independence.

### 2010 Accomplishments

Because of your generous donations and tireless efforts, we served over 500 people through our Family Promise programs in 2010.

### IHN 2010 Program Information

Number of families served	57
Total Number of People Sheltered	189
Number of children served	113
Percent of IHN families who found Permanent/independent housing	93%

### Thoughts from our friends...

*From Nicole – “I appreciate that everything I need for my child and myself is provided. It helps me to save the little bit that I do have.”*

*From Christina – “I really do like how the program and volunteers have supported me. I’m soon on my way out and on my way to becoming a homeowner. I never thought that would happen in a million years!”*

*From Volunteer Joanie – “Everybody is part of God’s family.”*

# Yea! Our New Van is Here!

## Thank You, Friends

We are happy to announce that we have a beautiful new passenger van which is being used to transport our guest families. It is a “gently used” 2008 Ford E350 with only 21,000 miles. “This van is so critical to our IHN Program. Families can now ride with dignity and respect as they travel to Host Congregations each night and to medical and other appointments with our staff and volunteers,” said Cheryl Schuch, Executive Director.

Our guest families have been overheard as they enjoy the ride:

The kids were thrilled. One little boy mentioned that he had never smelled a new car and couldn't believe he got to ride in one (while the van is gently used, it looks brand new).

Nicole, one of the mothers, said that she felt like she was able to ride with dignity now. She sees the hope the program and its supporters have in her and it helps her feel confident as she seeks employment and a permanent home.

Sharonda was so thankful to have a nice warm van to crawl into in the early morning with her young baby. She says “thank you” for taking one of her worries away.

“We deeply thank the foundations that provided the matching grant and the other friends and churches who responded to make this critical transportation possible,” said Cheryl.



## Participants SUPERBOWL to End Homelessness



On Superbowl Day, Family Promise had a big event of its own when kids, youth and families bowled in our First Annual SUPERBOWL at Wenger Bowl in Grand Rapids. The first shift of teams bowled from 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. and the second shift of teams bowled from 2:00 – 4:30 p.m. A great time was had by all and over \$3,000 was raised for our families! Thank you to all who participated and secured pledges.

We extend a special thank you to Rachel Erkel and Erika Hansen, co-chairs of the event, and to Ed Ladwig and AJ Purdum, of Wengers Bowl, who coordinated the event. Also contributing food and gift certificates to the day of fun was Domino's Pizza, Brann's Restaurant and Wenger Bowl.

“We are so thankful to all who planned and participated in our SUPERBOWL event. Our goal is to raise awareness of families with children who need a home. We also want to provide a way for youth and families to engage in our mission through our “Kids Care” Program,” said Cheryl Schuch, Family Promise Executive Director.

## Welcome New Board Members

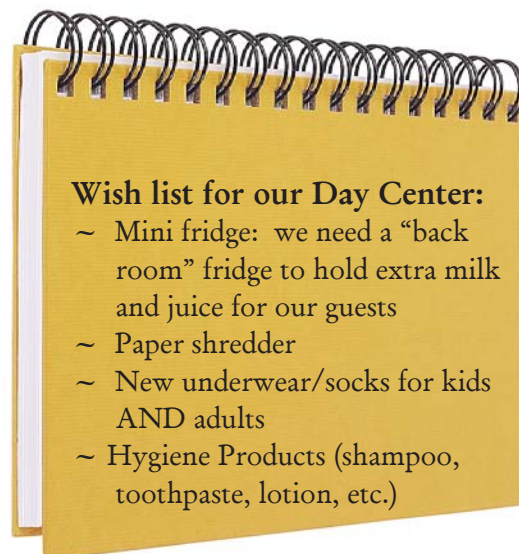


Family Promise is pleased to welcome two new board members to our roster. Randy Locke is a Market Research Manager with Amway where he is responsible for

conducting global research on all Amway brands and products. Laura Young, through her consulting practice, Aspen-Young LLC, helps organizations reach their business objectives by creating effective infrastructure and aligning their business processes with their strategic goals.



Returning Board members include: Jerry Broersma (President); Michael Systma (Vice President), Boyd Griswold (Treasurer), Cheryl Schuch, Mary Kay Baker, Cynthia Champion, Pat Clifford, Becky Heath, Amy Kramer, Sue Rowe and Trent Taylor.



### Wish list for our Day Center:

- ~ Mini fridge: we need a “back room” fridge to hold extra milk and juice for our guests
- ~ Paper shredder
- ~ New underwear/socks for kids AND adults
- ~ Hygiene Products (shampoo, toothpaste, lotion, etc.)



Cheryl Schuch  
Executive Director

## Creating a Bright Future!

With little change in our state's economy, families continued to face an up-hill battle last year to keep their jobs, homes, and basic needs for their families in place. The National Conference of Mayors reported that in 2010 there was a 9% increase in families with children becoming homeless. This is on top of a 22% increase in families becoming homeless in West Michigan between 2008 and 2009.

Despite the challenging environment, you helped the families we served to succeed! In 2010, over 500 people were served through the different Family Promise Programs. Through IHN, 93% of the 57 families you provided shelter for found a new home! Many of these families are on a new path to independence and self-sufficiency because of our network of over 1,600 volunteers who continue to walk with our guests in their time of crisis. More than 90% of the guests that moved out over a year ago are still independent, creating a lasting change and a bright future for their children and for our community!

## Gifts of Time and Talent

I would like to thank all of our generous volunteers for their awesome donations of time the last few months. Of the many things that our volunteers can do, playing with kids is by far our guests' favorite activity. One of the moms currently staying with us just told me that her son isn't really excited to move into their place because of all of the volunteers he's gotten to spend time with! What a wonderful testament to the direct benefit our volunteers are having in the lives of children that are currently suffering the trauma of a housing crisis. If you, your family, or a group you're involved with would like a place to volunteer your time, please call me so that we can get you connected!



Kristie Baker  
Director of Volunteer Services

If you would like to volunteer for a one-time project or something every week, please give me a call at 475-5220 or 822-3377 (cell) or email me at [kristie@familypromisegr.org](mailto:kristie@familypromisegr.org).

Kristie Baker  
Director of Volunteer Services



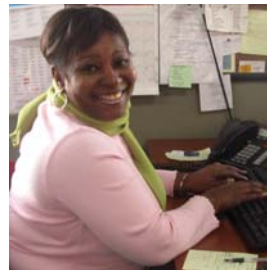
## Save the Date!!

### SEPTEMBER 19TH



September 19, 2011 - Family Promise Golf Outing at Blythefield Country Club, Belmont, MI. A day of amazing golf and fun is planned with a shotgun start golf scramble. Join in the fun by contacting Rachel Erkel (295-2048) or [raerkel@yahoo.com](mailto:raerkel@yahoo.com) or Erika Hansen (291-0380) to find out more about this important event. All proceeds from this event are used to provide shelter for homeless families and assist them in securing permanent homes.

## Volunteers are Love in Motion



Denise Martin is our Spotlight Volunteer this quarter. Denise is a former guest who appreciated our program and how Family Promise was able to help her so much that she now volunteers at least 15 hours a week. She is a wonderful addition to our Day Center/Office as she does whatever is asked of her such as answer phones, carry in groceries on shopping day and support our current guests with their struggles. We really appreciate Denise's generous contribution of time and talent! When Denise is not here, she loves to read, cook, and spend time with her precious granddaughter Christian.

If you would like to volunteer your time at the Day Center or at one of our host churches, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Kristie at 822-3377 or [kristie@familypromisegr.org](mailto:kristie@familypromisegr.org).

## IHN Network Members

### **IHN Host Congregations**

Calvin Christian Reformed Church  
Cornerstone United Methodist Church  
East Congregational Church  
First United Methodist Church  
Fifth Reformed Church  
Grace Episcopal Church  
Ivanrest Christian Reformed Church  
Mayflower Congregational Church  
Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church  
Plymouth Congregational Church  
Princeton Christian Reformed Church  
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
Trinity Lutheran Church

### **IHN Support Congregations**

Aldersgate United Methodist Church  
Brookside Christian Reformed Church  
Eastminster Presbyterian Church  
First Reformed Church (Grandville)  
Fountain Street Church  
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church  
Oakdale Park Christian Reformed Church  
Plymouth Christian Reformed Church  
Renaissance Church of God in Christ  
St. Stephen Catholic Church

(616) 475-5220

[www.familypromisegr.org](http://www.familypromisegr.org)

## My Spring Gift to Family Promise

Family Promise relies on your support to help us create a true community of hospitality for families with children who face homelessness. With a record number of homeless families contacting us for help, your support this spring will allow us to work with families through mentors, volunteers and staff until they secure permanent and sustainable housing and a plan for the future. An envelope has been provided for your convenience or you can donate online by visiting [www.familypromisegr.org](http://www.familypromisegr.org). Every gift is deeply appreciated.

## It's Not Too Late To Join... CLUB 365

Would you like to make a difference every month in the lives of homeless children and their families? As a CLUB 365 member, your donations will help our families by providing for basic needs like shelter, food, clothing. Your gift will help the children and families we serve in finding new homes, and more importantly...keeping them!

Please send your tax-deductible gift today with a notation stating CLUB 365. As a CLUB 365 member, you pledge to contribute \$365 to Family Promise in the course of the year through a monthly, quarterly or annual gift. You will join the many supporters who have already jumped into action by responding to our mailing in December and started helping our families as we kick off the new year.