



Family Promise of Grand Rapids

Summer - 2010

Ending homelessness...
one family at a time.

8th Annual Golf Marathon is September 20, 2010!

Blythefield Country Club will be the site this year for our 8th Golf Marathon. The event, a Family Promise 100-Hole Golf Marathon (play as many holes as you can up to 100), will begin on September 20 at 7:30 a.m. with breakfast followed by a shot-gun start at 8:00 a.m. Lunch will be provided along with a brief program and awards. We'll close the day and share golfing "tales" at 6 p.m. with a reception and hors d'oeuvres.

All proceeds from the event, including golf pledges and sponsorships, (ranging from \$400 - \$2,500 at the Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum Levels), will benefit children and their families in a housing crisis through Family Promise of Grand Rapids. You can find out more about supporting this worthy event by golfing and/or serving as a sponsor by contacting Michael Sytsma at 293-0546 or Barbara at Family Promise, 475-5220. It's sure to be a great day as we celebrate kids and their families!



"They helped us get our lives back on track."

-Geovanie, IHN Guest &
RBI Participant

Francheska Ortiz, age 18, and her husband, Geovanie, age 19, brought their daughter, Natallie, 16 months, to Grand Rapids last spring seeking a caring community and jobs to support themselves. They feel very blessed that through Family Promise they received the help they needed to make their dream of creating a home for their family a reality.

"Everyone was so helpful. We were able to accomplish getting our lives back on track," recalls Geovanie. "Through Family Promise we were able to secure important documents, such as identification cards and a birth certificate for Francheska. We learned how to get around town, and Francheska was able to secure a job at

the McDonald's Restaurant on Michigan Avenue."

Geovanie continues, "Everyone made us feel welcomed. They were friendly and willing to help us. The church volunteers were so kind to us. They played with Natallie and sometimes watched her so we could have time for ourselves. They fed us really well with meals like we've never had before. Trinity Lutheran Church even helped us by baptizing our daughter."

Within two weeks of entering the IHN Program, they were able to move into an apartment with the help of services through the RBI Program, which provides short-term rent subsidies and long-term case management. They are excited to finally have the home they have sought for so long.

It's all in the Name!

A BIG thank you to Brian Witvoet and his company, Witvoet & Sons. Brian provided us with two new signs reflecting our new name, Family Promise of Grand Rapids. One Family Promise sign is located outside the building and a second is located in the lobby of the building. Now our families and volunteers can't miss us!



Thoughts from our friends...

From Sandra --- "I felt so safe on my first night. The dinner was wonderful and the volunteers made me feel so welcomed and respected. It was the first time I felt like I was safe and could sleep and feel rested."

From Tyeisha --- "I didn't know what to expect but IHN really feels like my home. You all really care."

From Beth --- "Family Promise was our last hope. Now we have a new home to move into."

(616) 475-5220
www.familypromisegr.org

Mentors are Worth a Million

Would you like to deeply and truly make a difference in this world? You can when you become a mentor to a family through Family Promise. Your commitment: one year (although many exceed one year by choice). Your job: work with a family and Family Promise case manager to help the family become self-sufficient and stable in its housing and lives.

“Mentors make all the difference. During that critical year, a mentor will guide the family to community resources, develop a relationship with the family, walk with them and build a road map for the future,” explains Cheryl Schuch, Executive Director. “Just knowing someone is there beside you and that you are not alone makes all the difference.”

Mentors receive six hours of training and attend a once-a-month Mentor meeting and once-a-month Mentor/Mentee meeting. Generally, mentors and mentees talk weekly and meet every two weeks to once a month. Mentors can be an individual, a family, or small group from church or work. “We have one example of four sisters mentoring a family,” recalls Mary Brown, Family Promise Mentoring Program Director. Please contact Mary at mary@familypromisegr.org or call 581-1154 for further information.



*Words from Elycia- 4 years old --
“I was glad to have a place to
sleep that was cool and comfy.”*

Want to Help? Here's How:

Office/Administrative (Call Barbara at 475-5220)

- Work a couple of hours a week to help with general office needs.

Work with Our Families (Call Barbara at 475-5220)

- Does your family have an evening or Saturday to share? Evening volunteers are welcome at our host sites. Help provide dinner or enjoy activities with our guests! Saturdays are a great time to take a field trip or work on craft projects with our families.
- We have many one-time projects that you and your group can do (on site or off site) to help our families.

Furniture Donation (call Edie at 916-5119)

- Wednesday volunteers are needed to assist our staff with furniture pickups and moving families into their homes. You can donate furniture by calling this number. We also need volunteers to build shelves for storage.

Family Mentors (call Mary at 581-1154)

- Mentors help families define and meet goals to develop life skills, connect with community resources, improve housing and employment, and nurture and support their children. Mentoring training is provided.

Our Programs: There's No Place Like Home

Family Promise partners with local faith organizations, individuals, families, foundations and corporations to provide viable solutions for children and their families through five programs:

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) – An emergency shelter program for children and their families facing a housing crisis. Local congregations provide evening meals, private rooms for each family and volunteers to create a home away from home in the evenings. Families stay at the Day Center during the day to work with case managers to find housing and employment.

Partners in Housing (PIH) – A permanent housing initiative that offers Rapid Rehousing services to qualified families through the option of securing permanent housing through manufactured homes.

Re-Building Individuals (RBI) – A Rapid Rehousing program that provides short-term rent subsidies with long-term case management to families as they move into permanent housing.

Furniture Donation – Everything needed to make a house a home! Donated household items are collected from the community to assist families as they move into permanent housing.

Family Mentoring – A support initiative that builds mentoring relationships with families as they establish self sufficiency and long term sustainability.



Family Promise Wish List

There are many ways you can help our families...everything from food and personal care items to crafts and the items listed below:

- Bus tickets/gas cards
- Personal hygiene items
- Gently used furniture
- Household items (cleaning, laundry supplies, etc.)
- Gift cards (Wal-Mart, Family Dollar, Meijer)
- New underwear, t-shirts, socks (all sizes)
- Gently used beds
- Medicine and first-aid supplies

East Congregational Church & St. Stephen's Parish Provide a Loving Touch in Hosting IHN Families

Mary Ann March, IHN Coordinator at East Congregational Church, remembers when the IHN Program began in Grand Rapids in 1997. "Our pastor at the time, Brian Byrne, had been involved in the IHN program through a church in the suburbs of Indianapolis. We were looking for an outreach project to make use of our church space. The more our committee talked the more we realized the IHN program was exactly what we wanted to do to serve," remembers Mary Ann.

The church serves as a host congregation three to four times a year. IHN families come to the church for seven nights. Through the partnership with support congregation St. Stephen's Parish, two nights are hosted by volunteers from St. Stephen's. "They have brought energy and excitement on the two nights they host. Because they have a school on site in use five days a week, they are unable to be a host site. Our partnership allows them to be involved and allows us to continue our involvement. They are even responsible for one of the two nights of take down and set up as the program moves to another church," says Mary Ann.

St. Stephen's Coordinator Joanie Snyder remembers the origin of the partnership between the two congregations. "In 2004, I was involved in a Bible study group looking for a service opportunity. I had friends in the community involved in IHN through their churches. Our church could not host due to the school on site, but we were able to join with another Bible study group to form a large group ready to serve as a Support Congregation. Our pastor, Father Paul Milanowski, has embraced the program. He often comes to dinner and plays his guitar, singing with the children and families. We have a solid base of up to 50 volunteers."

Through the program, a host site provides meals, sleeping quarters and hosts who share a meal and fellowship with the families and provide activities. "We have transformed five Sunday School rooms into bedrooms and we also provide a lounge area for the families," adds Mary Ann. Volunteers provide playtime with children after dinner so parents can take a break or do laundry (washer, dryer, and shower are also provided). Every evening, 12 volunteers and two to three coordinators volunteer their time to serve IHN families. Approximately 70 people serve on the team at East Congregational Church.



Mary Ann March & Joanie Snyder

In reflecting on her personal experience, Mary Ann says, "I feel blessed to be a part of the program. I've had the opportunity to get to know people and have come to realize that we have more in common than not. When you know people, eat with them, and hug them when they leave, it makes real the problems people face. Issues such as job loss, poverty and homelessness become very personal."

Joanie adds, "Serving through IHN has taught me a lot about compassion and caring. The service is so hands on that you serve with your heart."

Thank You... Thank You... Thank You!



Travis Baker

Kristie Baker, Summer Program Coordinator and IHN Coordinator at Cornerstone Church, Intern Travis Baker and Intern Catie Sattler, a Glenn Van Noord Short-Term Urban Missions Intern through Thornapple Covenant Church, are busy this summer coordinating the "Stop Summer Learning Loss" Program, provided through a mini-grant from the RDV Corporation. This program involves pre-k through

elementary children in all of our programs from 9 a.m. - noon, Monday through Friday, for six weeks this summer. Thank you, Kristie, Travis, and Catie and the RDV Corporation for making this great learning program possible for Family Promise kids!

Way to go team!



Kristie Baker



Catie Sattler



Kaitlyn Erickson, a GVSU student majoring in accounting and finance, provides her expertise as she volunteers 5-6 hours a week since March. Kaitlyn has set up a tracking system for our in-kind donations and provided graphic design work.

Kaitlyn is a shining star for the children and families we help. Thank you Kaitlyn for sharing your talents with us this year!

Lauren Treiber, another Glenn Van Noord Short-Term Urban Missions Intern, is working toward a Social Justice degree and is interested in learning the inner workings of a non-profit organization. She is working closely this summer with Executive Director Cheryl Schuch to assist her as she learns the different roles and functions of Family Promise and how the organization interacts with the community. Thanks Lauren for the creativity and energy you are sharing with our families this summer!





906 S. Division Ave., Suite 205
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

IHN Network Members

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
Nelard 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
Grandville First Reformed Church
Oakdale Park Christian Reformed Church
Renaissance Church of God in Christ
St. Stephen Parish

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Help Families as they Help Themselves

When you support Family Promise through your contributions, donations and volunteer time, you are enabling us to help children in need. Please consider a gift during these summer months. While many of us enjoy the lazy summer months, the families we serve often see summer as “lean months” since they are not receiving the assistance through school and other community programs that operate during the school year.

You can make a donation through our website, www.familypromise.org, by using your credit card or PayPal account. If you prefer to donate by mail, make the check to payable Family Promise of Grand Rapids and mail it to 906 South Division, Suite 205, Grand Rapids, MI 49507. Since Family Promise is a non-profit organization, all gifts are tax deductible.

Additional Ways to Donate:

Corporate Giving Programs - Many employers have a matching gift program for their employees to support their favorite charities. Please check with your employer to see if a corporate giving program exists.

United Way - Please designate your United Way contributions to Family Promise. To donate through West Michigan United Way payroll deduction, check the “Special Care” box on the pledge form. Please include the full name of Family Promise, 906 South Division Ave., Suite 205, Grand Rapids, MI 49507.

Thank you for your support!