

Building communities, strengthening lives.



Family Promise of Hunterdon County

2015 Community Report

*Celebrating
25 Years*

FAMILY PROMISE OF HUNTERDON COUNTY has been providing a homeless shelter and many related services to families for 25 years. Back in 1990, Hunterdon County was one of the very first affiliates for Family Promise National, which was (and is) headquartered in Summit. In February 1991, we were incorporated as a 501c(3) by the IRS, which made us an official non-profit entity, and that's why we're celebrating 25 years in 2016.

IHN of Hunterdon County opened its doors in October 1990 with several hundred volunteers and 23 participating churches. Nine congregations served as host sites and 14 provided additional volunteers and supplies. Fast forward 25 years and we now have 14 host sites and 31 support congregations that collectively provide almost 12,000 volunteer hours each year!

In 2012, IHN of Hunterdon County was renamed Family Promise of Hunterdon County as part of a national initiative. The change was intended to reflect a broader range of programs and reaffirm our core commitment to helping families realize their own potential. And that truly is what we are all about. Helping families achieve long-term stability.

Providing Shelter

IS NOT ENOUGH

Meet Fanta and her children

“I feel so independent,” says Fanta Fofana after many years of working and struggling. Fanta and her four beautiful children came to Family Promise of Hunterdon County after she left her homeland of West Africa, battled breast cancer, escaped her abusive husband and spent a month each in two domestic violence shelters. Fanta was referred to us by SAFE in Hunterdon and when she realized that she would have to move her family to a different church every week or two she thought that while it would be really hard, “It will be an adventure” too. Fanta says her time in the shelter was really good simply because of all the people who cared for her and her family.

Not long after we helped Fanta find housing she found herself battling cancer for the second time. Family Promise of Hunterdon County jumped in to line up a group of caring volunteers who helped with the children and provided home-cooked meals until Fanta was back on her feet. Fanta says she is forever grateful because of how hard it was struggling to make ends meet. “You deal with one thing, and then another thing happens and, God forbid, you get sick. I don’t know how I would have been able to get through it without Donna and Geleen.”

Fanta is not only grateful for the help she got while she was sick but more importantly, for the guidance from our case management and NEIGHBORS IN NEED program over the years. She described how hard it was when she was motivated and wanted better for her family but didn’t know which direction to turn. “Fanta absolutely brings out the best in everyone,” says Donna Michelsen, Family Promise’s Director of Network



Services. “All I had to do was help her to see a path and give her a list of tasks and she did absolutely everything, knowing it would help her family.”

Now, seven years later, Fanta is in a wonderful apartment and working in home health care. But that isn’t enough for her. She has gone back to school to become a physical therapy assistant and is working hard to learn computer skills as part of the PT program so she can get a better job. When she talks passionately about the importance of education, her children look up and smile knowingly - clearly they hear that message from their mom all of the time!

Here at Family Promise of Hunterdon County we know how important case management is. We also know that in addition to case management, we need to provide a long list of other forms of support for our families long after they leave us. That’s how we help families help themselves. And as you can see from Fanta...*it works!*

2015 Achievements

\$607,843 estimated in-kind donations of volunteer time, real estate, transportation, meals, furniture and supplies for our guests.

SHELTER provided for
12 FAMILIES
18 children and 12 adults

3,365
shelter nights provided by our
volunteers

89% of families exited the shelter into
permanent housing, and one found housing
in 2016.

45 FAMILIES
received Christmas gifts from our
“Adopt a Family” program.

Welcome New Host Congregations!
FLEMINGTON JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER
ST. MAGDALEN’S CHURCH, FLEMINGTON
CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

26 FAMILIES
were helped through our mental
health program

Volunteer Spotlight

Jane Paradiso



As a former Family Promise board member, Box City founder, overnight shelter volunteer and high school teacher, Jane Paradiso has a unique point of view and a real soft spot in her heart for Family Promise of Hunterdon County. At Hunterdon Central High School in Flemington, Jane uses her classroom as a tool to open the eyes of students about issues that surround them.

“These students often don’t realize that there is a problem and when I tell them there are homeless teenagers in their own school, they look at me like I’m crazy,” Jane says. “I tell my students that I can’t bear the thought of a child sleeping in a car or sofa surfing every night and they shouldn’t be OK with that, either.” Jane encourages her students to open their hearts to those less fortunate and to do something to make a difference. And they do.

Over the years, Jane has had several former students take these lessons and start fundraising/awareness events at their respective colleges or made career choices based on their experiences in her classes. This, says Jane, is the reason she teaches.

Jane served on the Family Promise of Hunterdon County Board of Trustees for several years and it was during her tenure that she learned about other affiliates doing Box City fundraisers. She was inspired to start one at Hunterdon Central, and thanks to incredible support from the school administration, the

event is in its sixth year and has raised more than \$100,000 for the agency in the first five years!

“I’m very proud of Box City because it’s inspired so many young people to get more involved and make a difference,” Jane says. “Hopefully, they will encourage their parents to get involved as well and volunteer as a family to help the shelter.”

As if all of that weren’t enough, Jane gives her time during the summer to help fill shifts at the overnight shelter sites. She would love to see more people get involved, particularly families, because it’s such a great volunteer project for parents and their children to do together.

We are very grateful to Jane for giving her time on so many levels – as a volunteer, a teacher, and a leader – to our families and our agency!

<p>THE WEIDEL REAL ESTATE COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROGRAM</p>		
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Hunterdon County home buyers who enroll in the Community Partners Program are eligible to receive a rebate of up to half a point of the purchase price of their home to donate to Family Promise. If the buyer’s employer provides matching funds for nonprofit donations, Weidel will facilitate, if eligible, to make the buyer’s donation all the more impactful. In addition, Princeton Mortgage is refunding their mortgage application fee at closing for buyers who donate through the Community Partners Program.

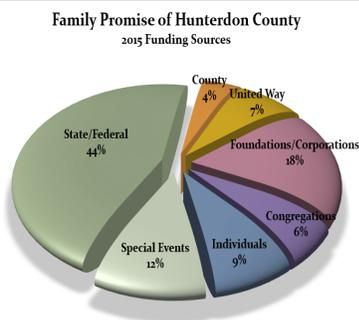
To find out more about this wonderful program that gives back to the community, please visit <http://www.weidel.com/communitypartners/>.

"It's simply astounding to see what happens when compassionate volunteers work together to help their neighbors in need. Over and over again, I see how families become empowered, and communities are transformed,"

- Karen Olson, founder & president emeritus, Family Promise.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Where do we get our funding? A variety of sources. We manage several government grants but the good news is that we are nimble enough within our office that we typically don't have to add or delete staff whenever we gain or lose program funding. In other words, we do not rely on this funding to stay open. It's also important to note that this funding is often critical to being able to keep community residents in their homes (through the Homeless Prevention Program or HPP) and to rapidly re-house those who are homeless (through the Homeless Prevention/ Rapid Re-Housing or HPRP). That said, the breakdown of all of our sources of restricted and non-restricted funding for 2015 shows our diversity in funding sources:



FAMILY PROMISE STAFF

DONNA MICHELSEN, Director of Network Services
COLLEEN DUERR, Development Director
SHARON GERTZMAN, Financial Manager
PAM BRIANT, Office Manager

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Shining a Light on

The Hunterdon County LINK

It takes a lot of work and multiple partnerships to make our overnight shelter program work, and work seamlessly. The Hunterdon County LINK is one of those critically important partnerships. The LINK provides transportation to get our families back and forth from overnight shelter sites all over the county to our day center in Flemington. This saves our agency tens of thousands of dollars a year because we do not have to purchase, operate, and staff a 16-passenger van. But our strong relationship with the LINK goes well beyond that.

The dispatch staff is always friendly and very accommodating when there are changes or special transportation needs. The drivers are kind to our guests and very much aware that they often have long days with multiple trips on the LINK with children.

Erin Neukum, LINK transportation coordinator, says,



“I am so impressed with all of the services that Family Promise of Hunterdon provides...housing, shelter, help with education and employment, etc. I realize how much we can help support those efforts and help the clients with low-cost transportation even after they leave the program. The transportation staff, dispatch office staff and LINK drivers work hard to be accommodating and we love knowing that our work helps local families.”

Thanks to dedicated drivers like Scott (pictured) and the Hunterdon County LINK, managed by Erin (pictured) and who transport – and care for – our client families!