



Family Promise of Genesee County

## From the Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

Hard to believe the holiday season is upon us. It seems like only last week we were helping our families get ready for the start of school - and yet parent-teacher conferences and Halloween have come and gone. Now we are receiving calls from concerned volunteers, like yourself, asking how they can help for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Recently we were fortunate enough to bring in a new mom and her beautiful daughter, "Hope." After a sudden job loss, the small family had been bouncing around between relatives and friends, with no one able to help them for any length of time. This kind of activity adds a level of despair to our parents which can be transferred to the children, in the form of fear and sometimes anger. Certainly not what a parent wants to convey to their child.



Quickly Hope became "best friends" with everyone at the Day Center. Eager to greet everyone with morning hugs, the smile on her face is priceless when someone prints an Elsa coloring page for her. We are sure she holds a special place for all volunteers at the host and support churches. This sweet little person has all the qualities of a young girl of her age - she is curious, fearless, sensitive, open to suggestion, and, most of all, loving. I am sure that if you have had an opportunity to be around her - you, too, go away

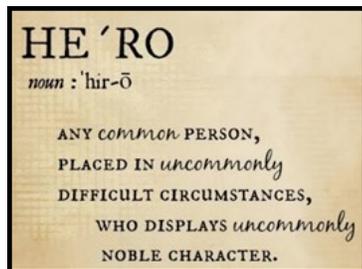
giggling to yourself with a smile on your face - the innocence of childhood is positively infectious. The only thing that Hope (her mom, and future brother or sister) does not have is a safe, secure place to call home. But at her age, there is little she can do about this - as she still must rely on mommy to provide everything for her. But, with the help of Family Promise, they're well on their way to regaining stability.

Our heartfelt thanks to you, if you have already given this year, whether your time or resources, we cannot thank you enough. Your generosity allows us to provide haven to those in need year-round. If you have been looking for a way to get involved or give back, we encourage you to consider an investment in our mission, so we may continue offering a hand up to families like Hope's.

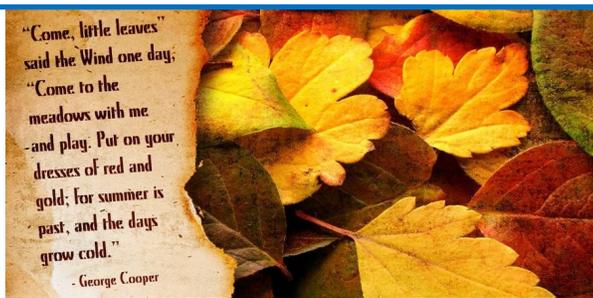
Your generous gift allows us to work toward ending homelessness...one family at a time.

From everyone here at Family Promise, we wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas!

Warmly,  
Karen Vobach, President  
Family Promise of Genesee County  
Board of Directors



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## From the Director's Desk

Last month, Nicole Hoste-Breslin (Director of Development) and I attended the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual National Family Promise Conference; this year it was in Washington, D.C. and the theme was United We Serve.

It was my third conference and Nicole's first. And, as Nicole prepares to celebrate her first anniversary with us, it was only fitting she celebrate alongside hundreds of Family Promise staff from across the country, including our affiliates in Alaska and Hawaii! We each attended several workshops to learn strategies for growth and ideas for improving our affiliate and came back with pages and pages of notes!

But, perhaps one of the most meaningful moments I had was when Family Promise President & CEO Claas Ehlers shared his story of why Family Promise means so much to him:

*"As I reflected on my journey, I remembered Clara Seeger. Let me tell you who Mrs. Seeger was.*



*Mrs. Seeger owned a house on 39<sup>th</sup> Street, in Flatbush Brooklyn, in 1970. My mom and I moved in that summer. I was 5 years old, and it was the first time my mom had a place to live that she controlled herself. That was important.*

*A bit of backstory: My father left before I was even born and for my first two years I lived with my mom, her father and his second wife, my mom's stepmother. When he died, my mom's stepmother kicked her out—me too, we were a package deal—and she lived with extended family and friends and she then had medical issues and I ended up in foster care for a year. By the time we got to Brooklyn, I had lived in 7 different households.*

*That summer of 1970, my mom got a job as a dog groomer and worked all different hours, so I spent a lot of time with our landlady, Mrs. Seeger. She taught me checkers. We spent the entire summer playing checkers. Now, either she taught me really well or I was some kind of prodigy, because I never once lost a game.*

*Of course, it's not really important that she taught me checkers. What is important is that she taught me to value myself, to appreciate the incredible hard work my mom did, and that I could have the future—the opportunity—that allows me to stand before you today.*

*That is an essential element of FP—that a community of caring people can help alter the future for children and their families.*

*Mrs. Seeger and several other adults in those first 5 years made sure I had stability, security, and safety. They made sure we could have the opportunity for the kind of life every family deserves."*

I am so thankful for my opportunity to serve! Because of you, our guest children and their families have an opportunity to rebuild their lives!

Blessings,  
Lindsay Moore, Director  
Family Promise of Genesee County



Since opening in  
March of 2014...

**37** families have successfully graduated from our program-- that's **127** people (**43** adults and **84** children)!

Host and support churches have provided more than **14,000** nights of safe sleep!

A big thank you to [West Vienna United Methodist Church](#) for their bountiful donation to our Day Center!



## Volunteers Get Reminder of “Big Picture”

Davison United Methodist Church co-coordinators, Ellen Wagerter and Susan Pollard shared this message of thanks with their congregation, following their October host week:

DUMC was called on to serve four times, in 2017, which we were able to do, thanks to about **64 volunteers** from our church, Otisville UMC and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian, putting in close to **286 hours** each time. We were able to make a difference in the lives of **11 families**, giving them hope at what might have been the roughest time of their lives.

The Family Promise team gets to spend the most time with these families and gets to hear the stories of thankfulness and gratitude most frequently, so we would like to share with you two stories from the October host week.

And, speaking of moms, the other story we wanted to share is about another guest mom who is 8 months pregnant and having those cravings that you hear about. She asked if we might be able to get her some strawberries and some Alka-Seltzer, which we were able to do. She left a sweet note for us, which

ended with, “Thank you for the amazing hospitality”. **Amazing hospitality.** Do you think that’s what Jesus means when he says, “Love one another”? Well done, Church, thank you for your good work.



*This picture was left for us by one of the moms who came into the program on Monday of the host week. At first glance it is just a house, colored while she was sitting with her little girl. But if you look closer, she added the words “The Big Picture”. You see, it isn’t a house. It’s a home. That is what you gave her that week. You might think that load of laundry that you did, that meal that you brought, that juice or coffee creamer that you donated, that bed that you made, the night you gave up your own bed, or that two hours that you sat at the church working on a puzzle was just that. But it was much more than that. It is all of us, working together on “the big picture” that makes this program so powerful for those who shelter with us for the week. Thank you for giving Home, Haven and Hope those three families that week.*

## Plante & Moran Team Tackles Storage Challenge



This team, from Flint’s Plante & Moran office, spent several hours organizing the Family Promise of Genesee County storage area, inside Habitat for Humanity ReStore, in Flint. “If you want to make a positive impact, it requires some kind of positive action,” said Jade St. Cin, Plante & Moran.

St. Cin and her colleagues gave the gift of time, during National Family Promise week (October 22nd – 28<sup>th</sup>). They labeled and categorized everything, making sure all the donations had the parts necessary to put it together. They also helped install ground cover.

Family Promise partners with ReStore, to pick-up and store donations of beds and appliances. Those items are stored until a graduate family needs them. And, thanks to our generous donors, we have had an influx and FPGC staff is not always able to properly maintain the area, as items come into the storage area. “Because beds and appliances can be an expensive part of re-establishing a home, those donations are critical,” said Lindsay Moore, Network Director, Family Promise of Genesee County, “now, thanks to Plante & Moran, children and their parents can more easily see what’s available and make sure they have what the need to put it together, at their new home.”

FPGC is honored to be the program Plante & Moran chose to support for a full year. In addition to Plante & Moran’s gift of time, so far this year, its staff has donated more than \$600, raised during various office activities. FPGC is grateful for the generous support!



## Grand Blanc Students Show Power of Positivity



“If everyone thought about others we could do away with greed entirely,” said Jacob, Grand Blanc High School Visual Arts student. Jacob, along with his Visual Arts classmates, made more than 350 greeting cards. Students sold those greeting cards during parent-teacher conferences, to benefit Family Promise of Genesee County.

The fundraiser was part of The Positivity Project, a nationwide movement the school district adopted. “I’ve always wanted my classes to do a project where they look to serve others through art making. My classroom selected Family Promise to sponsor because of the good they do in the community and their mission to

keep families together in times of tragedy. I’m so proud of my students and the work they put into this project. They give me hope for the future when I see them looking to make a difference,” said Amy Johnson, Art Teacher. The card sales raised an incredible \$610 which directly impacts the lives of the children and their families we serve.





Family Promise®  
of Genesee County

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Follow us at Family Promise Of Genesee County

To donate to Family Promise, visit  
[www.familypromiseofgc.org/donate](http://www.familypromiseofgc.org/donate)

Family Promise of Genesee County is part of a national volunteer-based nonprofit organization founded on the belief that Americans are compassionate people who want to make a difference. We are committed to help low-income and homeless families reclaim and maintain independence.

If you would rather receive this newsletter electronically, please send your email to [info@familypromiseofgc.org](mailto:info@familypromiseofgc.org) or call (810) 234-9444.

Family Promise of Genesee County invites you to our  
6th Annual

# Winter Wonderland Gala

Join us for an Evening of Celebration and Inspiration with Dinner and Dancing!  
Winter Wonderland Highlights of the evening:

Dazzling Entertainment  
Winter Wonderland Atmosphere  
Silent Auction  
Dessert Dash (*new this year!*)

Saturday, February 10, 2018  
Complimentary Cocktail Reception  
6:00pm

Genesys Banquet Center