

# 2019 – 2023 **STRATEGIC PLAN**



# BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Family Promise began in 1986, in the midst of an emergent crisis. The previous year, **the primary cause of foster care placements** among children in New Jersey was not abuse or neglect: **it was their mothers becoming homeless.**

As congregations and community members learned about this situation, they felt called to take action. Our founder, Karen Olson, organized them and forged a novel approach: **using resources in the community to help those who had lost their homes.** That meant congregational buildings for shelter, community partners for services, and people—compassionate, concerned volunteers—to staff the overnights.

Just as importantly, it created community. Volunteers gained understanding of the impact of poverty and the lack of affordable housing. Families in need kept their dignity.

Neighboring counties faced the same challenges of family homelessness and the same **wealth of available**

**community resources.** The program grew and in 1988 became a national organization.

By 2004, the 100<sup>th</sup> Affiliate had opened. We added mentoring and education programs. More than 100,000 people volunteered every year. Tens of thousands of families went from homelessness—and the concomitant loss of opportunity and agency—to sustainable independence and a brighter future for their children.

**Today, Family Promise is the leading provider of services to families facing homelessness.** Our program has evolved to include robust initiatives that prevent homelessness, divert families from shelter, and stabilize them long-term. In fact, most people served are not in shelter, but people at risk of homelessness.

Despite all this success—we have served about one million people since 1986—family homelessness is as pressing

**OUR GOAL**  
**Family Promise will change the future for one million children by 2030 through community-based programs.**



an issue as it ever has been. **Housing is less affordable than it was 30 years ago.** The gap in skills and income has grown. Systemic factors—such as the legacy of racism, the criminalization of poverty, and the lack of opportunity for many low-income families—have made housing instability a pernicious and generational crisis.

And then there is the future. Numerous factors will prevent us from creating and protecting affordable housing at the pace needed to ensure all families have safe, stable homes. The acceleration of technology and change in the workforce threaten to make today's low-income children tomorrow's unskilled, underemployed, and precariously housed parents.

At Family Promise we can look back at our growth and expansion. We can count the families we have served; we can celebrate the personal stories of transformation.

Can we be content with only reaching 120,000 people each year? We cannot. But we know that Family Promise works, and we are committed to making it work better for more families each year. **We have seen families go from homeless and hopeless to housed and successful.** Importantly, we have seen them build wealth, lifting themselves from the threat of instability that robs children of their futures. We can do this because we have the most powerful natural resource imaginable: an army of committed, compassionate, capable volunteers.

While each of our Affiliates is unique, our flexible, collaborative federated model is a natural incubator for innovation and

excellence across our network. In 200 communities across 43 states, Family Promise Affiliates are addressing the needs of families holistically, mobilizing volunteers into action, shining a spotlight on the causes of homelessness, and identifying ways to empower families. Affiliates are creating and implementing solutions that catalyze families' strengths into success.

**The time has come to invest in these successes:** of families, Affiliates, and communities. We know that the ratio of resource to outcome is dynamic. With our \$3 million annual budget we produce \$55 million on the Affiliate level, matched by more than \$100 million of in-kind from across the country. Our strategic plan guides our continued growth and excellence. But to alter the course of family homelessness in this country, we cannot settle for a steady approach: we need a big bang.

We have identified four key sectors, informed by our strategic planning process, where additional resources will enable us to leverage our national scope capability to amplify the impact on a local and national level. These investments will produce many outcomes: preventing hundreds of thousands of families from experiencing homelessness, building their skills to prepare them for a rapidly changing world, addressing the role of technology in empowering families, to raising awareness of a national crisis that affects **one in 30 children a year.**

Our aspiration is to change the future for one million children by 2030. We have already taken the first steps. We need **you** to take the journey with us. If you do, the power of community will make family homelessness history.

**Internal**

## Strengths

- Long track record of success
- Recognition of organizational excellence: Four Star Charity Navigator rating seven consecutive years
- Unique community-centered model
- Cost-efficiency
- National reach
- Culture of innovation

**External**

## Opportunities

- A new generation motivated to act in meaningful and relational ways
- Affordable housing and income inequality becoming more widely understood as critical challenges
- Speaking with a national voice on the issue
- Innovations and analysis of outcomes to prove efficacy of our approach

## Positive

## Weaknesses

- Federated model with local empowerment makes quality control and brand coherence variable
- Lack of national understanding of family homelessness
- Entrenched organizations that refuse to define family homelessness as a broader issue of housing instability
- Public profile does not match national impact
- Limitations in longitudinal data collection and analysis

## Threats

- Aging volunteer base
- Decline of religiosity; closing and dwindling of host and support congregations
- Changes in governmental approaches to family homelessness
- Municipal threats to our core rotational model, such as fire code issues

## Negative

# MISSION

## OUR MISSION

To empower families experiencing or at risk of homelessness to achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response.

## OUR VISION

A nation in which every family has a home, a livelihood, and the chance to build a better future.

## OUR ASPIRATION

Family Promise will change the future for one million children by 2030 through community-based programs.

## OUR CORE COMPONENTS



## OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

These four powerful strategic directions will guide our efforts for the next three years:

1. **Expand** the Affiliate network
2. **Ensure** service excellence
3. **Engage** stakeholders
4. **Elevate** our brand



A close-up photograph of a woman with long dark hair and red highlights, wearing large black sunglasses and a purple sweatshirt. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. She is holding two young children: a blonde girl on her left and a darker-haired girl on her right. The background is a bright outdoor setting with a grassy area and some buildings in the distance.

“ There is always hope even when you can’t feel it. Family Promise helps you to not only feel hopeful, but most importantly, helps you change your life to never lose hope again. ”

- Amber, Sacramento

# OUR PLAN

## ► EXPAND AFFILIATE NETWORK

In order to serve more families and children, we must expand and strengthen our Affiliate network.

### MAJOR GOALS:

- Increase breadth and capacity by expanding programs to prevent homelessness and stabilize families
- Assist Affiliates in scaling-up outcomes
- Open additional Affiliates
- Expand community partnerships

### OUTCOMES BY 2023:

- 25 new Affiliates and universal adoption of programming beyond shelter (prevention/diversion, stabilization)
- 10,000 additional children served through expansion initiatives

## ► ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

The long- and short-term effectiveness of our work is highly dependent on deepening engagement with our stakeholders.

### MAJOR GOALS:

- Deepen understanding of the issue with current donors
- Strengthen and expand volunteer network
- Develop new national corporate sponsorships
- Engage new donors and attract younger demographics
- Leverage national initiatives to increase operating support for Affiliates

### OUTCOMES BY 2023:

- Raise \$1,000,000 in pass-through funding
- 50,000 volunteers complete national training

## ► ENSURE SERVICE EXCELLENCE

To maintain integrity and earn the trust of our stakeholders, we must ensure service excellence at every level.

### MAJOR GOALS:

- Launch new programming in the areas of diversion, graduate support services and trauma-informed care
- Optimize technology solutions to improve Affiliate operations
- Support Affiliate leaders with training and resources for operational excellence
- Utilize constituent feedback when developing programs and policies

### OUTCOMES BY 2023:

- 90% of families with stable housing six months after exit from shelter
- 70% of clients improved self-sufficiency score at exit

## ► ELEVATE OUR BRAND

As we shift the public consciousness to focus on the issue of family homelessness, we must have a brand that is recognized and trusted.

### MAJOR GOALS:

- Become the most recognized thought leader on family homelessness
- Launch a national public awareness campaign
- Facilitate engagement with key advocacy channels, media, and influencers
- Maintain highest level of ethical, legal, and financial transparency

### OUTCOMES BY 2023:

- Five meetings per year with Congress members
- Leadership at three national forums and significant media coverage each year

# *Changing the future for children*

## PREVENTION



### SHELTER DIVERSION

Keeping families out of shelter is good public policy and good fiscal policy.



### RENTAL ASSISTANCE

*Our Future Begins at Home* program helps families remain housed.



### TRANSPORTATION

Locally created transportation solutions help families get to jobs and school.

## STABILIZATION

### HOUSING

Innovative solutions like tenancy training, rapid-rehousing, & home ownership.



### FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Creating the foundation for sustainable financial independence.



### CAREER PATHWAY

Preparing families for professional success in a rapidly changing economy.



## SHELTER



### HOSPITALITY

200,000 volunteers create a temporary home for the families we serve.



### CASE MANAGEMENT

Our 200+ Affiliates provide comprehensive guidance and resources.



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

6,000 congregations & organizations serve families at 1/3 traditional shelter cost.

A holistic solution to family homelessness 



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