



This year in America,  
more than 2.5 million children  
will experience homelessness.



## THE CHALLENGE

Families with children make up 35% of the people who experience homelessness in this country. Family homelessness is a non-partisan issue striking at a core American value—the family. We all agree that **every child deserves a home**.

## OUR MISSION

To help families experiencing homelessness, and low-income families, achieve **sustainable independence** through a community-based response. We are the leading national nonprofit organization providing a comprehensive set of solutions on this critical issue.

## OUR SCOPE

Founded in Summit, New Jersey, in 1988, Family Promise today comprises more than 200 Affiliates in 43 states, engaging 200,000 compassionate volunteers who want to make a difference in the lives of families in need. Through our innovative approach, we **keep families together** and serve more than 125,000 children and adults every year.

## OUR VISION

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

## OUR ASPIRATION

We will **change the future** for 1 million children by 2030 through our community-based programs.



## OUR STORY

A chance meeting in 1982 between Karen Olson, a marketing executive in New York City, and Millie, a homeless woman on the street, sparked a nationwide movement. On impulse, Karen bought her a sandwich. Millie accepted the sandwich but asked for something more – a chance to be heard. Karen listened to what Millie had to say. What she heard convinced her that a simple, personal connection can make a profound difference.

When Karen learned that homelessness was affecting families right in her own community in New Jersey, she left her marketing career to focus on the issue. Because of their mandate to serve, she reached out to the religious community. Local congregations agreed to use their houses of worship for shelter and meals. The YMCA provided space for showers and a family day center. Volunteers contributed their skills, knowledge, and compassion to help their neighbors find employment, reconnect with society, and restore their dignity. The first [interfaith hospitality network](#) opened on October 27, 1986.

Congregations were inspired to develop similar programs in other New Jersey counties, soon followed by communities in Pennsylvania and Ohio. In 1988, the National Interfaith Hospitality Network (NIHN) was formed. In addition to shelter, meals, and housing, our Affiliates began developing programs for job skills training, health and wellness, childcare, and homelessness prevention.

In 2003, we changed our name to Family Promise to better reflect the broad range of programs being offered. The name refers to the promise communities make to families in need. But it also refers to the promise, the potential, inherent in every family.



## OUR WORK

Family Promise recognizes that poverty and homelessness are intricately connected problems that require a multifaceted approach. We respond by integrating educational outreach, smart programming, effective policies, and the hands-on work of thousands of volunteers.

**Shelter:** Our flagship program addresses family homelessness cost-effectively by utilizing existing community resources. Our guests are housed in warm, welcoming environments, typically congregational buildings, with volunteers giving their time, making meals, and sharing hospitality. They create and connect families to community, lending their passion and expertise to help families regain their independence.



While the shelter program is centered on families experiencing homelessness, our model is a holistic response. There is simply not enough affordable housing in America; one in four renter households spend more than 50 percent of their income on rent and utilities. Family Promise addresses this daunting challenge through our two other major areas of focus: prevention and stabilization.

**Prevention:** Family Promise Affiliates intercede on behalf of families in danger of losing their homes through a variety of programs and partnerships, providing rental assistance or landlord mediation so families do not end up on the street. There is tremendous benefit to families in avoiding the trauma of homelessness, but the savings to society are also considerable.

**Stabilization:** The issues that cause homelessness are complex and often cannot be fully addressed while a family is in the shelter program. It is vital to provide continuing support once families have moved back into housing. Affiliates offer a variety of targeted initiatives like food donations, financial capability programs, permanent housing, transportation, and workforce development, among others. Family Promise stabilization programs help families succeed today and create transformational opportunities for tomorrow, empowering them to aspire to the future every family deserves.

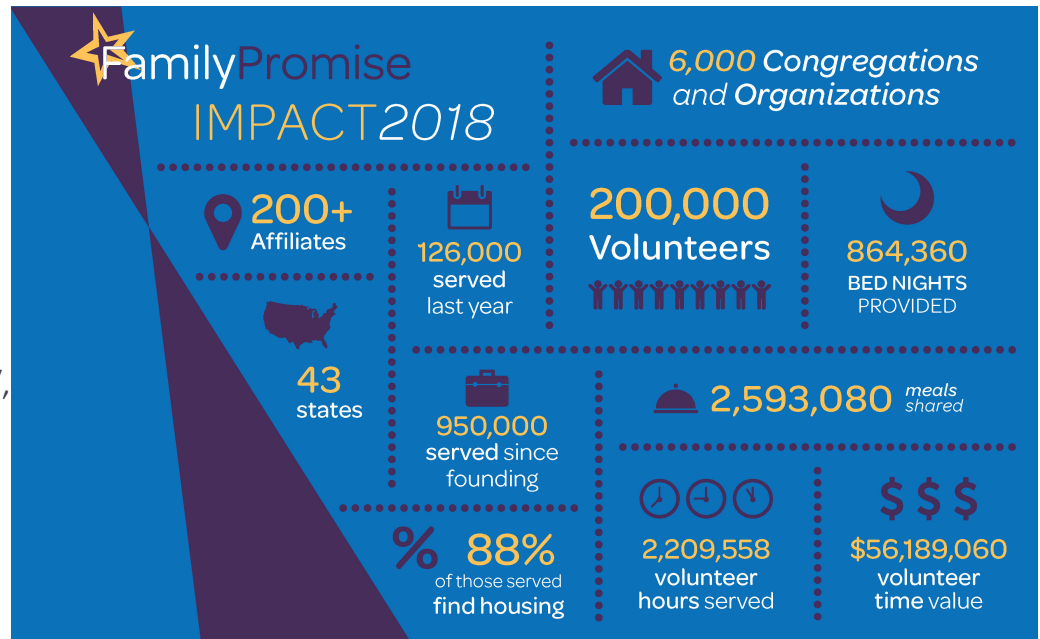


## FACTS AND FIGURES

- In 1988, Karen Olson founded Family Promise in Summit, New Jersey.
- More than 6,000 congregations and organizations are involved in Family Promise programs.

- 200+ Affiliates in 43 states: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, ME, MI, MN, MO, MT, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI, WV, and WY.

- More than 200,000 volunteers are engaged with Family Promise Affiliates nationwide.



- 950,000 men, women, and children have been helped through Family Promise programs since our inception.
- 88% of families in our shelter program secure housing.
- Through the mobilization of existing community resources and thousands of volunteers, Family Promise provides comprehensive services to families at a fraction of the cost of government programs.
- Family Promise Affiliates have developed 1,700+ targeted initiatives to prevent homelessness, build skills, and ensure stabilization.
- In 2018, Charity Navigator rated Family Promise a Four-Star Charity for the sixth consecutive year.
- Family Promise CEO Claas Ehlers sits on the Sesame Street in Communities Advisory Board on Family Homelessness and the New York Federal Reserve Bank of New York Community Advisory Group.
- Family Promise has been nationally recognized for our excellence, including the President's Annual Points of Light Award for being one of the top twenty volunteer agencies in the country.

# Family Promise Affiliates

