

## **Family Promise of Waukesha County Family Resource Center Overview**

### **Family Promise Mission, History and Capacity**

Family Promise of Waukesha County was founded in 2012 through a collaborative effort of local pastors who wanted to serve the needs of families experiencing homelessness. In November 2014, after two years of preparation, we opened our doors to two families. Since 2014 we have served 101 families, 330 individuals, by utilizing the facilities and volunteers of 28 Waukesha County congregations. 90% of families who complete the program remain in their homes for at least one year. The Family Resource Center provides our guests a home base during the day. Families utilize the resource center for showers, washing and drying clothes, storing personal effects, a mailing address and phone number. It is here where they meet with our case manager who works with them to create a plan and identify ways to meet their individualized goals. Our ability to bring together churches, train and orientate 1,300 volunteers, provide 18,000 warm meals and nights of shelter over five years speaks to our qualifications to help families overcome homelessness and achieve independent housing.

The Executive Director, Joe Nettesheim started at Family Promise in November 2019. Previously he served as Executive Director of Inspiro Youth Ministries, Inc. and the Adult Literacy Center of Ozaukee County. The focus of Joe's role is to collaborate with the board of directors to establish the mission and vision for the organization and then to execute that vision by managing the day to day operations of Family Promise. Joe has extensive experience in providing leadership, fundraising, and communicating the purpose of the organization.

Our Certified Social Worker brings an expertise to this endeavor that is invaluable to families. Christina Perkins, BSW began in May 2019 as a certified social worker employed by Family Promise of Waukesha County. Her role is to work directly with families to find employment or job retraining, search and apply for apartments and navigate social service agencies that can offer additional support. Her responsibilities include case management for each family for one year after they have departed the shelter. Previously Christina worked both in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties with families with children.

Collaborating with churches and utilizing volunteers ensures a significant level of community involvement and support. The volunteers are the foundation of Family Promise. They make and serve meals, tutor the children, listen to stories of heartache, and walk with the families. Volunteer involvement is the Waukesha County community saying, "We will not tolerate the devastating effects of homelessness." We are proud of our ability to motivate the community to action. It is also what allows us to follow through on our goals.

### **PROJECT**

Family Promise of Waukesha County is strategizing to purchase a facility on 139 E. North Street in Waukesha to be used as a Family Resource Center. While the Resource Center would continue to be utilized as a home base for families in the shelter program, this building presents a significant opportunity for Family Promise to maximize its potential in assisting Waukesha County families to regain and retain their independence.

Family Promise began a new Family Homelessness Prevention Program in March 2020. Our estimate is that the prevention program will allow Family Promise to serve an additional 80 families. It is our vision that the Family Resource Center would become a place where families who need help with

rent/mortgage and utility assistance could receive services to insure, that they are able to maintain their homes. Providing the funds for rent and utility assistance is not enough. Our plan involves offering case management, support for those who have lost a job, skill workshops on how to navigate the trauma of financial difficulty, budgeting skills and resources for parents. Additional workshops and resources would be provided as needed by the families we serve.

Like many shelters, Family Promise continues to navigate the impact of COVID-19. Our short-and-long term planning has made an emphasis on identifying ways to safely shelter families. The board of directors continues to discuss how this new facility could play an important role in safely and creatively sheltering families. Utilizing Congregations and their volunteers is simply not a viable option now. Yet the need remains. Therefore, it is our hope to also provide shelter to one or two families not to equal more than seven individuals at a time. Families would live on the second floor and have their own sleeping space and bathrooms. This might be a temporary arrangement, until we can return to the Churches. However, we also would like to have the option of having a family stay in the facility periodically even when the pandemic ends. We envision a future shelter that allows for social distance, promotes family independence, offers case management, and provides a safety net.

Finally, being able to purchase this facility is an enormous opportunity for Family Promise and Waukesha County. Creating a resource center for low income families will make a significant impact on homelessness in Waukesha County. We cannot move forward with these plans in Wales. A new location is crucial to creating an effective prevention, stabilization, and shelter program.

## **RATIONALE**

A new Resource Center will empower Family Promise of Waukesha County to increase the number of families we are able to serve with shelter, case management, financial assistance for homelessness prevention and stabilization. Family homelessness is a significant problem that needs to be addressed. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, 33 percent of the homeless population are families. 2.5 million children experience homelessness each year. Family homelessness is a traumatic experience and disrupts the stability necessary for a family to thrive. Homelessness impacts a child's emotional, psychological, and behavioral development. It limits the ability of a family to access health care and has negative impact on the mental health of children and adults.

As Family Promise expands our programming, the reality is our current location is not suited to provide the services and workshops that are needed. Our center in Wales, does not provide space for workshops and cannot accommodate the number of families we intend to serve. In addition, the new Waukesha location is accessible by bus, near other social service agencies, W2 funded child-care and closer to low-income housing. Just as our new program will expand who we are able to serve, our new location will increase our ability and reach to families.

Finally, it must be noted that due to the tremendous amount of financial devastation COVID-19 is creating in our economy, the number of families that need help is already rising. With the prevention program and a new resource center Family Promise is positioning itself to serve this increasing need.

## **OUTCOMES**

### **Outcome #1:**

Family Promise will establish a resource center for low-income families and families who are experiencing homelessness, in the city of Waukesha, for the purpose of either homelessness prevention and stabilization or empowering homeless families to regain their independence and homes.

In the first three years, the Family Promise Resource Center will provide:

- Nine workshops, with collaborating agencies, in the areas of financial literacy, career planning and job seeking, job loss support, mental health issues, parenting, and other opportunities.
- Pilot a mentoring program for six families.
- Develop a network of landlords willing to work with low-income families.

**Outcome #2:**

The Family Resource Center will bring about an increase in the percentage of families served by Family Promise who are able to live independently for a minimum of twelve months. The percentage increase will be:

- 2021: 40% increase
- 2022: 20% increase
- 2023: 10% increase

These statistics will increase due to establishment of the Family Resource Center, its programming and case management. Participation in the Family Resource Center will bring about:

- Families with improved problem-solving ability, financial status, and family stability.
- Increased income and manageable percentage paid for rent or mortgage.
- Changes in family behavior and lifestyle.

**COST**

Estimated Cost of Facility:	\$295,000
Purchase Price of Facility	\$245,000
Improvements	\$30,000
Closing Fees	\$10,000
Relocation Costs	\$10,000

Some of these costs could be donated.