



FAMILY *Matters*

The newsletter of Family Promise® of Monmouth County

Summer 2008

In this Issue

2

Family Promise at First Presbyterian Church of Freehold

3

NJ Marathon Recap

3

Summer/Fall Wish List

3

Family Promise Merchandise On Sale Now!

4

Making Wishes Come True

4

Coming Events

Understanding Homelessness in New Jersey

Social service agencies seek to understand more about the homeless population in New Jersey in order to design programs and services to better serve the individuals in need of help. Each year, one critical step in gathering data of our homeless is called the “Point In Time Survey,” conducted on the same day in every county of NJ. Agencies offer free coats, food, county resources and other services, for

example, to draw individuals forward on that day in order to assess their needs on a standardized questionnaire. Other teams cover geographical areas with their questionnaires in an attempt to find

as many people in need as possible. At the end of the day, all the data is gathered and reported to the Corporation for Supportive Housing in New Jersey which organizes the data into a comprehensive format and then reports it back to the social service agencies, government bodies, general public and other interested parties around the state.

The highlights of this year’s Point In Time 2008 Survey have been released at a meeting sponsored by CSH, and attended by Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Joseph Doria on June 10, 2008.

The data revealed that 27,628 men, women and children are estimated to be homeless across New Jersey over the course of the

year. Nearly 40% of all homeless surveyed said that loss of their job or inability to find a job contributed to their homelessness. A third of those responding said that the high cost of housing kept them homeless. Of those responding in the survey, 86% were originally from NJ, and 94% were U.S. citizens.

Families with children represent 22% of the NJ homeless population. 37% of those who are homeless have been without a



permanent place to stay for more than one year, 18% have been homeless for three to six months, and 17% for seven to 12 months. This translates into more than 72% who experience homelessness for extend-

ed periods of time—not just a week or two! The families in the survey averaged one to two children per household, and 70% were led by single women heads-of-household. We know from data collected over the years that surviving in NJ is nearly impossible on one salary, and in many cases is still difficult with two income earners.

The majority of these homeless families stay in transitional housing, with family or friends, or in emergency shelters. Unfortunately, 6% did admit that they stay on the streets with their children.

HUD does not have a classification for “chronically homeless” families; they only

(continued on page 2)

Family Promise of Monmouth County Board of Trustees

Carol Barnett
President

Mark Bueide

Daniel Carluccio

Phoebe Edwards
Secretary

Karen Hinds

Jennifer Mendez
Vice President

Jeanette Muldoon
Treasurer

Jill Niehaus

Chuck Payette

Family Matters is published quarterly by Family Promise of Monmouth County. Copyright © 2008. All rights reserved.

Family Promise of Monmouth County
PO Box 304
Keansburg, NJ 07734

Phone
732-495-1050

Fax
732-495-0400

Email
info@familypromisemc.org

Web
familypromisemc.org

A PDF version of this newsletter is available online.

Family Promise at First Presbyterian Church of Freehold

by Sandra Whitehill

First Presbyterian Church of Freehold has been a part of Family Promise (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network) since the first faltering steps back in the summer of 2001.

The commitment to join this interfaith network to combat family homelessness was a leap of faith for our church: that we'd be able to convince almost 50 people each week to stray out of their comfort zone to perform small acts of kindness for regular people who just didn't have a place to call "home" at that time.

With God's grace, we convinced them, trained them and put them to work cooking, chatting, helping with little ones, sleeping over, and moving beds (before the days of air mattresses). Seven years later some of the original volunteers are still committed to their piece of the puzzle, like Kelley, who picks up the clean linen every week and takes back the soiled linen the next week. She doesn't expect thanks and doesn't do it for the glory; for her and for our church, this is a mission, to put our faith into action. The Presbyterian women's circles automatically step up to the plate when it's their turn, without complaining that they're too busy with their families, too stressed with their schedules, or enjoying retirement too much to be bothered. They volunteer out of love.

We are indebted to our faithful volunteers from support congregations: Colts Neck Reformed Church, Temple Beth Torah and Temple Beth El in Ocean. It's a great way to let others know about this life-changing program.

We like to think our church has grown spiritually because of this mission. When the hosting schedule hits a holiday weekend, or the difficult summer period, or the busy September back-to-school time, we remember to pray for guidance and for the hearts of our volunteers to be opened. When



our Sunday school classrooms are transformed into bedrooms and some of the kids are helping to make the beds, we ask them to pray as they go to sleep for the kids that will sleep in their classroom.

We've held spaghetti dinners over the years to raise funds for the network, so we can give financial support to this worthy cause. Our Champion, Laurie, drummed up some kids and runners for the Spring races in Long Branch again this year. Our Coordinator, Diane, has instituted "wishboxes" that we fill with toiletries for the day center every time we host. Our Mission Commission makes sure Family Promise gets a healthy dose of publicity to the congregation every month.

We've been privileged to have a baby born on our watch! We've agonized with some Moms who took a long, long time to get on their feet, through no fault of theirs. We rejoiced when Jade, a teenage guest, blossomed at a leadership seminar in Washington D.C. We have definitely received many more blessings than we've given, and we would recommend this program to any congregation looking for a hands-on mission. Get inspired; get Family Promise! ✨

Homelessness in NJ

Continued from page 1

consider single adults to fall into the chronically homeless category. However, 24% of all homeless families with children have had at least four episodes of homelessness within the past three years.

There is more data that will be released from this study, as well as information on how agencies around the state will be using it for funding and planning purposes. Family Promise will keep you all updated on the data as it is released. Share these numbers with volunteers, friends and others so that everyone understands the importance of the work we do each and every day. Thank you for keeping families with children off the streets, helping them find some permanency in their lives, and giving them hope! ✨

NJ Marathon Recap

Once again, the NJ Marathon Saturday events were held on a typical spring morning on the Jersey Shore at the Long Branch Great Lawn and Promenade. It was somewhat overcast, threatening rain and a tad breezy. Well, maybe windy would be more accurate. In fact, it was so windy—OK everybody—“How windy was it?” It was so windy that when one of our volunteers opened her umbrella 200 kids roared in unison, “Look! There goes Mary Poppins!”

But, in spite of the less than optimal conditions, the kids came out IN FORCE to enjoy the games, Bubbles the Clown, the Fun Bus, Mr. Scott the Music Man, and the Kids Races. The kids fortunate

enough to run their races with the wind to their backs all logged in record times! The inaugural “Kids” 1.2-Mile Marathon had some great participation with kids of all ages, even as young as 3. And, as usual, the morning was kicked off by the three-mile



Dr. Mark Wassef and his son, Luke.

fun run/walk with the finishers being treated to a complimentary breakfast thanks to Steve Levine of the The Windmill Restaurants.

Thanks to our generous sponsors, ALL proceeds (over \$2500) collected from applications and donations will go towards the programs of Family Promise. We are especially grateful to Investors Savings Bank for their underwriting sponsorship that covered most of the costs. All prizes given out to the kids were sponsored by Dr. Mark Wassef and Glenwood Premier Dental of Holmdel. Other sponsors included Costco, Liberty Tax Service, Grainger and Stevens Communications. Also, it was our pleasure to work with a great organization, Sudden Unexplained Death in Children to put on this event in partnership with the NJ Marathon organization and the NJ Road Runners Club.

And finally, we want to extend a special THANK YOU to all of our volunteers. You make this happen! We are very grateful to the groups that came out—Shore Players from Shore Regional High School, Lincroft Presbyterian youth group, Kohls and Investors Savings! ☆

Family Promise Merchandise on Sale Now!

We are happy to make available Family Promise wear items to all of our supporters. Show your pride and commitment to Family Promise through wearing items embroidered with the FP/PMC logo. For immediate sale are black golf shirts for \$20, aprons for \$12 (shipping/handling \$4.00) and mugs for \$13.99. We will also be offering hoodies (including



zipped), sweatshirts, windbreakers, ¼-zip fleece pullovers and more very soon from our web site. The golf shirts, aprons and mugs are available immediately. If you can't wait for the web site, the other items can be ordered too! Just contact Chuck Payette at chuck@familypromisemc.org or call 732-542-5517. ☆

Summer/Fall Wish List

Looking for a great way to help out Family Promise of Monmouth County? Create a Wishing Well to support the families in the network or those who are moving out! Currently, we are collecting products to help our families and children through summer which include:

- Sunscreen for the children in camp and recreation programs
- Mosquito repellent sprays for kids and adults
- Payless Shoe Store cards for sandals and back-to-school shoes
- Gift cards to Target, Kmart or Walmart for back to school clothes and needs

The day center always needs hygiene items to keep our families clean and ready for job interviews, work, school and other activities. Currently we need deodorant, feminine hygiene products, pain relievers for all ages, and shavers.

If you would prefer to put together a housewarming basket, a family moving into their apartment can always use a laundry basket or kitchen garbage can filled with all the little gadgets we take for granted like spatulas, can openers, kitchen towels, garbage bags, mixing spoons and other items. We will present it to a moving family with a card from your congregation on moving day!

Fall needs: *Family Promise is in need of twin-sized blankets for families to keep them warm as they travel from host to host! Please consider a blanket drive for twin-sized cotton or microfleece blankets!* ☆

Making Wishes Come True

As a result of reading about the FPMC wish list in the last newsletter, the Outreach Committee of St. George's-by-the-River decided to conduct a health and hygiene products drive at the church. Committee members constructed an attractive and sturdy "Making Wishes Come True" well which was available for product donation dropoff from Mother's Day through June 1st.

As the accompanying photo shows, this first drive was a success! The committee plans to utilize the well periodically in the future to collect a variety of products needed by various local non-profit organizations.

St. George's-by-the-River, a Family Promise host church, was involved in developing the Monmouth County chapter of the former Interfaith Network and is also one of the original host churches. ✨



From baby aspirin to shaving cream—a variety of health and hygiene products donated for the FPMC day center by parishioners of St. George's-by-the-River, Rumson.

Coming Events

Special Events Planned for Family Promise Anniversary

We're going to join Family Promise's nation-wide celebration of its 20th Anniversary with some special events in September. We are planning a Network-wide bake sale, the largest bake sale ever seen in Monmouth County, to raise funds for our program operations. Towards the end September we are planning an evening of food, entertainment and fun designed to get us all together to celebrate Family Promise's great milestone and FPMC's own great accomplishments. Stay tuned for more information!

The Hope for Children Foundation Gala will be on November 7, 2008 at the Ocean Place Resort and Spa. ✨

Building Community, Strengthening Lives

PRSR STD
Non-Profit
PAID
Keansburg, NJ
Permit No. 17

Family Promise®
of Monmouth County
PO Box 304
Keansburg, NJ 07734