

Reflections

on Family Promise and the Interfaith
Hospitality Network (IHN)

"IHN helped me keep my family together and my children in school. I was able to save money and find an apartment. Now my wife and I volunteer in IHN."

Andy, Guest
Indianapolis, IN

"IHN has involved more people than any other program in our church. It has stirred some people who had not been active before, as well as drawn the participation of new members. People feel, 'Here's something that I can do. It's concrete. This is something the church ought to be doing.'"

Rev. Russell Fuller
Memorial Christian Church
Ann Arbor, MI

"During our crisis it was peaceful to come to a church and feel protected. Although our home moved weekly, we would not be abandoned until I was able to secure a permanent job and affordable housing."

Anonymous Guest Parent
Age 26

Host Congregations

Advent Lutheran Church

Church of Our Savior Catholic
Community

Church of Our Savior Episcopal

Emmanuel United Methodist
Church

Faith Viera Lutheran Church

First Presbyterian Church of Palm
Bay

First United Methodist Church of
Cocoa Beach

First United Methodist Church of
Melbourne

Grace Fellowship Church

Hope United Church of Christ

Riverside Presbyterian Church

St. Mark's United Methodist
Church

Suntree United Methodist Church



A Community Response of
Help and Hope
To Homeless Families



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Brevard's

Homelessness Problem

According to the Florida Campaign to End Homelessness

- More than 83,900 children experience homelessness each year in Florida.
- Children experiencing homelessness are sick four times more often than other children.
- Homeless children go hungry at twice the rate of other children.
- Children experiencing homelessness are four times more likely to show delayed development and twice as likely to have learning disabilities.
- Children who are homeless experience a number of traumatic stressors that can lead to educational and developmental challenges.

In Brevard County, that translates to 2,100 homeless families. The grand opening of Family Promise of Brevard, Inc. will take place this July, helping to alleviate these problems.



Family Promise of Brevard's Unique Solutions for Families

Host Congregations

About four to six times a year – for one week at a time – Host congregations provide overnight lodging, meals (supper, breakfast, and brown-bag lunch), and hospitality. Hosting rotates among the eight to thirteen Host congregations in the Network, which provide lodging for three to five families (up to fourteen individuals) from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. the next morning.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the heart of the Network; without them, it cannot exist. Volunteers provide a variety of services: cooking and serving meals, playing with children or helping them with homework, and staying overnight. Beyond providing lodging and meals, volunteers interact with the guests, treating them with respect and responding with compassion.

Social Service Agencies

Local social service agencies refer families to the Network. The agencies may also help guests find housing, jobs, and other services. Since Family Promise is primarily comprised of volunteers, the social service agencies help assess potential guest families for active substance abuse, domestic violence or psychiatric problems.

Resource Center

Guests use a local resource center, space at a congregation or agency, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to participate in case management, shower and do laundry. Many guests are employed during the day and go to work. During the school year, children go to school. The resource center provides guests with a mailing address and a home base from which to conduct their housing search. The Network Director's office will be at the resource center.

Transportation

A shuttle service takes guests to and from the resource center. The van also carries agency beds and luggage to the next Host Congregation.

Support and Other Congregations

Hope Episcopal Church

Greater Allen Chapel AME Church

Hope Episcopal Church

Presbyterian Church of the Good Shepherd

Prince of Peace Anglican Church