

## Following a Star

- Brian Johnson, Executive Director



"Where do guest families come from?" is probably one of the top three questions I get asked. Everyone has a unique, fascinating story about how they found their way to our door. Consider this journey as told by a family in their own words.



### **L**uke, Katie, Shawn, Dakota, & Cheyenne

*Our family first came up here from Colorado to Hysham, MT for a farm/ranch position. I was with the employer for one month; it didn't work out. We tried to apply for housing and jobs. My wife had a few job interviews in Great Falls. We stayed there for three days. A friend that lived in Helena told us that there were lots of jobs. We arrived on a Friday and didn't have any money to stay anywhere. My friend took us to go talk to Dave & Joe at God's Love. They didn't judge us at all. They were very helpful and gave us three nights in a motel room so we could figure out what to do next. And sure enough Brian got in touch with us and we talked for a few hours. He told us he could help! We went through the process. He didn't judge us at all and said there are many other families just like us out there on the streets. He told us don't feel guilty, it happens. We have gotten so much help from other people that we have met. They are very kind people. But getting into the program took a lot of stress off me and my wife! Our kids are in school and they love it. More importantly, our family has a warm and safe place to go to and great home-cooked food to eat. All of the volunteers have sacrificed their time and effort to help us and we are so grateful.*

Luke and Katie have since stabilized their finances and started saving money. Katie is working and Luke is on the verge of steady, full-time employment.

You really are changing lives. On behalf of the families we serve, thank you and Merry Christmas.

## By the Numbers

- Program Service information

- ☆ **7** - months open
- ☆ **54** - families in need we've met
- ☆ **25** - local congregations participating
- ☆ **349** - trained volunteers
- ☆ **3** - successful family graduations



Millie & Renee gifting us with personal items for our guests from a collection drive by the Senior Center Community and the Public Service Commission office.

- ☆ **1.5** - FTE: Director & Driver
- ☆ **3** - families on our waiting list
- ☆ **3/4** - bathroom space at Day Center
- ☆ **495** - "Friday Update E-mail" followers
- ☆ **863** - total shelter nights since May; 66 in June and 279 in November



Volunteering through her class at Helena High School, Libby Rail sorts donations at the Day Center.

## Guiding Lights

- Mary Larsen, Board President

Almost four years ago, a few of us had a good idea: to help families in our community facing homelessness regain sustainable independence. Through the commitment of 25 local congregations, more than 300 trained volunteers, our founding staff, and countless donations of goods, services, and money from the community, the idea has become reality.



We've welcomed eight families into our network so far; three have graduated to sustainable independence, two are still with us, and three more, after entering, chose to take a different path into their future. We're well on our way to building a local agency that delivers the 75% average success rate realized by Family Promise affiliates across the country. And we owe it all to you, our supporters.

Every one of you shines as a guiding light in the lives of our guests. The dinners you prepare and bring in the evening nourish minds and bodies to pursue employment, education, and a home. The referrals you make connect our director with families in need. The checks you send keep our Day Center warm and our van operating.

At Family Promise we experience the darkness and anticipation, not just during the cold Advent season, but all year long. Families we meet have lost their way, lost hope, sometimes lost everything. Then, you shine in their lives and, just as often, the families shine in yours. May all of us, board, staff, volunteers, and families be guided by this light.

## Constellations of Hope

- Joan Higgins-Smith, Vice President

Locally, 25 congregations, representing 16 distinct religious traditions, cooperate in service to families in a homeless situation. I'm so thankful for the witness of love and justice from our congregations and volunteers.

- ☆ Carroll College
- ☆ Cathedral of St. Helena
- ☆ Church of Christ
- ☆ Covenant United Methodist
- ☆ Faith Crossing
- ☆ First Baptist
- ☆ First Christian
- ☆ Episcopal Church of the Nativity



- ☆ Our Lady of the Valley
- ☆ Our Redeemer's Lutheran
- ☆ Plymouth Congregational
- ☆ Seventh Day Adventist
- ☆ St. Paul's United Methodist
- ☆ St. Peter's Episcopal
- ☆ Unitarian Universalists

- ☆ First Church of Christ, Scientist
- ☆ First Presbyterian
- ☆ Helena Alliance
- ☆ Helena Jewish Community
- ☆ LDS Helena Stake (5 Wards)
- ☆ Life Covenant
- ☆ New Life Lutheran



## Board of Directors

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*Jesse, in our donated van, delivering families to the Day Center for another busy day.*

## Staff

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Brian Johnson

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**Past Campus Corps**  
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## Good Stewards

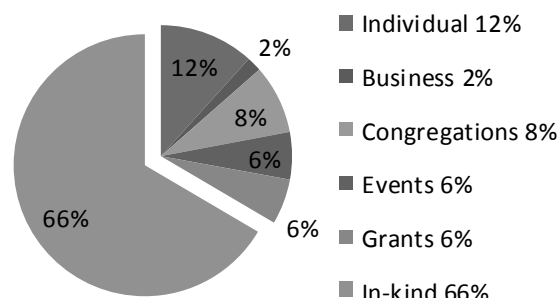
- Julie Flynn, Treasurer

Our mission at Family Promise is to support families in a homeless situation until they can regain sustainable independence. To ensure our agency's sustainability, we operate on a very efficient budget. Thanks to the network of 25 partner congregations, the majority of fixed costs associated with sheltering families is donated through the use of church space for shelter, prepared and donated food for meals, and volunteer time for evening and overnight staff. These in-kind donations cover expenses valued at \$273,301. Our cash expenses total \$132,293 and cover staff salaries and benefits, Day Center and operating expenses, and transportation costs.

<b>TOTAL CASH EXPENSES</b>	<b>132,293</b>
<b>DONATED EXPENSES</b>	<b>273,301</b>
Food	30,660
Volunteer Shelter Staff	206,871
Shelter Space	35,770
<b>CASH and DONATED TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>405,594</b>

Please be in touch if you would like to know more about our mission and how we use your contributions to meet the needs of families with children who are homeless.

## Family Promise Annual Revenue Sources



Family Promise leverages every \$1 of cash donation into \$2 worth of in-kind goods and services. An amazing 66% of our expenses are covered through in-kind contributions!

## The Gift is Ours

- Pastor Dave Andersen, Covenant UMC

We believe God wants us to live simply, gratefully, and generously so others can simply live. With this spirit in our hearts, Covenant stepped forward in October as a substitute host church. In partnership with the 4th Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day

Saints, we hosted three families at Covenant for one week: six children and five adults. The parents were all young adults and the children ranged from 8 months to 10 years old.

Members of our congregation, along with members of the LDS 4th Ward and St. Paul's United Methodist Church, took turns providing over night presence. Covenant, LDS 4th Ward, and East Helena United Methodist Church all helped with meals. What collaboration!

Our guests concentrated on getting their kids in school, finding permanent housing, and looking for jobs. At this writing, the children who are old enough are attending school. Two of the adults have found work. One of the dads is registering for technical training at University of Montana - Helena. More importantly, these families experienced the love of Jesus Christ in practical ways.

Our 10-year-old guest... thanked God for the "warm and safe place to stay, the good food, and the nice people."

I also noticed that the volunteers from the four churches involved brought attitudes of joy and thanksgiving. There was a lot of laughter among the volunteers, new friends made, and a growing respect for each other as members of the larger Christian community. Our guests were no longer "homeless," but people with names, stories, and hope. For me, I

saw the church being what we are called to be: the Body of Christ ministering to a hurting world.

One evening when dinner was hosted by the LDS ward, we gathered around

the table for grace. Much to everyone's surprise, our 10-year-old guest volunteered to pray. So as Mormons, Methodists and guests prayed together the young man thanked God for the "warm and safe place to stay, the good food, and the nice people."

Once in a while, we really do get it right.

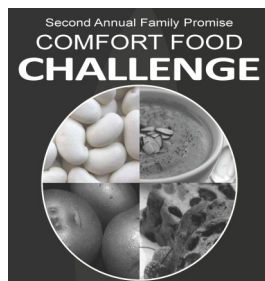
*Update: Covenant UMC has since joined the regular rotation of churches that host for Family Promise. Might your church consider joining us?*



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**L&C Fairgrounds**  
**Jan. 29th**  
**4-6pm**

Good food, live music and fun!  
Tickets \$10 each.  
Kids 10 and under eat free.  
[www.familypromisehelena.org](http://www.familypromisehelena.org)  
465-9467



Our community comes alongside families in a homeless situation until they can regain sustainable independence. Your generosity goes a long way!

- ☆ \$ 321 pays for one day of operation
- ☆ \$ 100 fuels the agency van for 2 weeks
- ☆ \$ 40 gives a guest phone access for a month
- ☆ \$ 10 washes a car load of dirty laundry



Andrea, Bella & Elena, the third successful Family Promise graduates, accept their certificate of achievement from Mary Larsen, Board President, & Brian Johnson, Director.

**Donate  
Now**

[www.familypromisehelena.org](http://www.familypromisehelena.org)

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