



FAMILY PROMISE OF LEE COUNTY

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1 MAY 2020

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From our Executive Director- Tamara Brogan:

Welcome to our first newsletter! The current COVID-19 crisis in the US has had an impact on our organization. With Governor Cooper's order, we have changed our operational model. The families are currently staying at the Day Center with the continued support of churches, volunteers, and staff. The families have cleaning supplies, masks, and gloves if needed.

Our staff is currently working modified hours, to help our staff stay safe during this time as well as our families.

Once the Governor reverses the order, we will go back to our usual rotational model.

These are challenging times, however, we will continue to help our families and the community as much as possible. This crisis will cause an increase in families needing assistance and families that find themselves homeless from the economic fallout from the crisis.

We ask for your continued support for the families we serve and our organization, so we can continue to help families experiencing homelessness.

Monetary donations are most needed, so we can continue to operate and help families in our community. Donations of non monetary items are also appreciated.

Thank you for your continued support!

From our Case Manager- Robin Saenz:

Homelessness doesn't just "stop" during a crisis. Because services are still critically needed, homeless shelters are considered essential and have remained open throughout the stay at home order. Right now, Family Promise of Lee County is currently at capacity- housing 3 families (13 individuals).

As the only agency of its kind in the area that accepts entire family units into our shelter program, I'm grateful not only for the health of our staff and families in the program, but also the goodwill from our over 30 host and support churches, our volunteer coordinators, and our over 300 volunteers- the backbone of what makes our program successful. The support we continue to get from social service agencies and other nonprofits has also been tremendous.

Considering the circumstances, our families are doing well, and we are doing everything we can to ensure life is as "normal" as possible during this challenging time. Families are still going to work, still getting kids off at daycare, and still working their plan in order to get into their own safe, stable and affordable housing. We are also continuing to help former families. In the last month we have been able to serve past families with needed toiletries, paper products, and food.

Unemployment / Underemployment are the two biggest of reasons why homelessness continues to exist and grow in exponential numbers. With unemployment numbers in NC continuing to soar, we are anticipating a need for organizations like Family Promise more than ever. For those wanting more information on how they can help, please call the day center at 919-718-1540.

A graphic of a spotlight with a yellow beam shining from the top left towards the church name.

Family Promise Church Spotlight:

COOL SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

1313 COOL SPRINGS RD. SANFORD, NC 27330

Pastor Matt Martin

Associate Pastor Tim Burriss

FP Volunteer Coordinator Van Dowdy

A special **WELCOME** to **Cool Springs Baptist Church** for recently deciding to join the Family Promise of Lee County family. We reached out to Time Burriss and Van Dowdy to share their Family Promise experience

As told by our Associate Pastor Tim Burriss:

Several months ago, Cindy Hall came to visit me about our potential involvement with Family Promise of Lee County. She explained the program to me and asked if we would prayerfully consider becoming a host church for the program. I was anxious for our church to be a host church, but I wanted to be certain that there was a genuine commitment from enough members to do this. Over the next several months I held meetings to engage both the level of interest and commitment. I was not surprised at the overwhelming response. Many of our members had been involved with the issue of homelessness in different parts of the county. After seeing this commitment in action, I presented the proposal to the board of Deacons. They were happy with the idea and gave it a warm approval. The meeting brought up some legitimate concerns from some church members. However, I think addressing these concerns helped to better educate the members about the Family Promise program. Once we saw that these concerns were handled, we moved forward having Tamara come speak to the church members on two occasions. We were blessed to have Van Dowdy step forward to coordinate the program. Many mission groups and Sunday school classes eagerly volunteered to help with meals. We were blessed to also have enough people willing to do the overnight part of the program. We feel blessed to be a part of this service to families in Lee County.

As told by Van Dowdy:

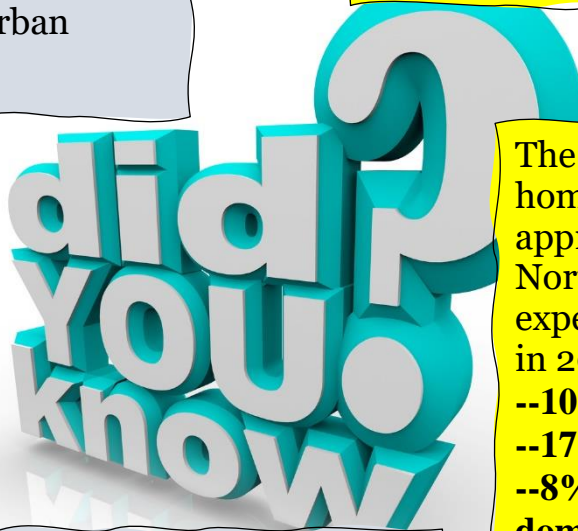
I spoke with most of our volunteers afterwards and they all enjoyed meeting the families and truly loved having an opportunity to share the love of Christ in serving them. The families were friendly and both respectful and appreciative to the volunteers. This made the whole process easy. As this was our first time participating in the Family promise Ministry, we learned much about what to do and not to do the next time. I started a "Lessons Learned" journal and listed what went right and what went- "not so right". Moreover, there are some logistical things we would do differently next time and keep others unchanged. For example, I think it's a great idea to have families meet in the Fellowship Hall and introduce our Church to the families before splitting off and setting up their rooms (ie introduce everything from the church layout and dinner times to where the refrigerator is located) I think learning from our experiences and trying to improve along the way will make us better stewards and Christ honoring and the families will have more comfortable week at our church. We are very much looking forward to serving again during our scheduled time in July.

Family Promise of Lee County is a non-profit organization that provides assistance to homeless families in Lee County. Family Promise provides a community response to homelessness, made up of the giving hearts of community members, houses of faith, and local social service agencies. We believe that every child deserves a home, and that every family deserves a chance to be whole and have a roof over their head.

Half a million Americans are homeless. Someone is counted homeless if he or she “lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,” according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

In 2019, Family Promise of Lee County served 16 family units (49 individuals- 33 of whom were children under 18)

More people- almost **47 million-** live in poverty today than at any other time in American history



The NC Coalition to end homelessness estimates that approximately 29,000 North Carolinians experienced homelessness in 2019:

- 10% are veterans
- 17% are children under 18
- 8% are victims of domestic violence

According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, **more than 1.5 million children in the United States will be homeless for some period of time this year**

THANK YOU TO PAST PARTICIPANTS HERSCHEL AND SARA FOR LETTING US SHARE THEIR STORY:

Hershel, Sara and their 2 daughters- a 2-year-old and 8 month old, entered our program in November of 2019 after being referred by our local DSS.

While enrolled into our program, they both were able to secure full-time jobs. Herschel was working at a dealership detailing cars and Sara was working at a local factory. We were also able to secure daycare for them. Throughout their time here, they were able to save enough to move into their own permanent housing- a 3 bedroom home here in Lee County. All this in 90 days! They were also actively involved in our Parenting and Financial Literacy classes we hold every other week.

Overall, Sara and Herschel feel that the FP program was invaluable, and they appreciate all the love and support they received from staff and church volunteers.

Last year we were fortunate to receive the Lighthouse Grant from BB&T. Family Promise received new playground equipment, a soccer goal, a basketball goal set, and patio furniture. They also planted flowers and shrubbery!! We are incredibly grateful for being chosen to receive this grant

We also appreciate the Elks Lodge for donating Walmart gift cards to the families in the program for Christmas 2019. It was a blessing being able to hand our gift card to our parents for them to shop for Christmas presents for their kids. Because of the Elks generosity we were also able to pass along gift cards to past families

A heartfelt thank you First Baptist Church Men's Group for keeping our grass cut and doing yard work. We had forgotten how fast our grass grows when it starts to get warm out!!

To Coty & United Way of Lee County for donating hand sanitizer. Not only did this come in handy for staff and volunteers, but also our families. We recently had someone start working with Instacart- he was relieved we were able to provide him with items to keep him safe while working.



➡ **211 TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR COVID-19**

Governor Roy Cooper has announced that 211 is the number to call for assistance and resources related to the COVID-19 coronavirus. NC 211 is an information and referral service, operated by United Way of NC, where families and individuals can obtain free and confidential information on health and human services resources within their community 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Resources are available in most languages.

➡ Due to COVID-19 Coronavirus & Governor Roy Cooper's State Stay At Home Order, Family Promise has modified our staff hours. We will be closed on Tuesday & Thursday. Our office hours are Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 12pm-5pm. Please call on these days to schedule pick-up and deliveries for donations. We are also doing intakes over the phone at this time

➡ Because of the virus, Family Promise unfortunately had to cancel our Sustainer Luncheon. If you would like more information on becoming a Sustainer or wish to donate, please contact us for more information