

General Council Report to the Presbytery
May 20, 2017
North Presbyterian Church, Elmira, NY

FOR PRESBYTERY'S ACTION

The General Council VOTED to recommend that the presbytery:

1. **Elect** the following persons to serve the Presbytery of Geneva:

Vice-Moderator of Presbytery (to fulfill the unexpired term of the Rev. Nancy Meehan Yao)

The Rev. Katherine Griffis (Hornell)

Committee Ministry (to complete the unexpired term of the Rev. Nancy Meehan Yao)

Class of 2018:

The Rev. Jim Kerr (Canandaigua)

And

Class of 2017

Elder Bessie Tyrell (Atlanta)

Committee on Representation

Class of 2019:

The Rev. Kirk Baker (Newark)

ACTIONS TAKEN ON BEHALF OF PRESBYTERY:

Acting on behalf of the presbytery, the General Council VOTED to:

(Rural & Migrant Ministries – Grant Endorsement)

1. **Endorse** a grant application for available General Assembly restricted funds, on behalf of Rural & Migrant Ministries for \$1,496.00 of available restricted funds through the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

(Family Promise of Wayne County – Grant Endorsement)

2. **Endorse** two grant applications for available General Assembly restricted funds, on behalf of Family Promise of Wayne County [see **Attachment A**, below]:
 - #59251, for \$1,707.00
 - #58842, for \$1,423.00

ITEMS FOR PRESBYTERY'S INFORMATION:

The Council VOTED to:

(Communion)

1. **Approve** the service of the Lord's Supper during the Fall Gathering on September 9, 2017. The Rev. Katherine Griffis will officiate.

(General Council Day Apart)

2. **Set aside** a day to be together, to reflect, and to plan: Tuesday June 13, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The location will be confirmed soon. A short Council meeting will be built into the day's agenda, to conduct necessary business. The hoped-for outcome will be: To leave the day with a shared sense of destination.

(West Virginia Mission Trip – September 2017)

3. **Approve** a Presbytery of Geneva West Virginia Mission Trip, scheduled for September 10-16, 2017. [See report of April Mission Trip, **Attachment B**, below.]

ATTACHMENT A
Family Promise Proposal
Executive Summary

Throughout the United States, homelessness touches nearly every city and town. Estimates of the homeless population range from 1 to 3 million. Our nation's diverse homeless population includes a growing number of single and two-parent families. Sadly, one homeless person out of five is a child five years of age or younger.

Here in Wayne County, families are living in poverty and deal with homelessness at least 300 times each year (according to school data). As you may know, there are no homeless shelters in Wayne County (just limited beds for individuals who qualify for other services). Families in Wayne County must find makeshift, inadequate arrangements living in automobiles, doubling and tripling up with relatives or friends, or living in housing unfit for human habitation.

The initiative described in this proposal is part of a proven and successful national program that has effectively addressed the crisis of family homelessness in communities across the country.

Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. will:

- provide shelter, meals, and comprehensive assistance (to find housing and jobs) for homeless families with children, utilizing existing facilities and services throughout the community;
- encourage and increase volunteerism in the community to provide direct services on behalf of homeless and low-income families.

Family Promise is a collaborative effort: houses of worship provide rooms for overnight shelter; social service agencies refer homeless families and provide a day center; and the congregations supply the volunteers. Because existing resources are used, a Family Promise Affiliate is cost efficient, having no need for a sizable paid staff, facility construction, or renovation costs.

The Board of Trustees of Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. has set a target opening date of January 1, 2018. Thus far 5 area congregations have committed to serve as host facilities. FWPC is close to completing an agreement for a centrally-located day center, which will include an office for the Director, showers, laundry, a play area for small children, a learning space, and a room for parents to meet with service providers. First year start-up and operating expenses are estimated at \$157,000. To help establish Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y., we are respectfully requesting a grant of \$2,000 from the Presbytery of Geneva.

Organizational Background

Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. is a non-profit organization that will provide shelter, meals and comprehensive assistance for homeless families. Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. is a collaborative effort that will involve over twenty congregations, the Family Promise of Wayne County day center and Wayne County social service agencies. A salaried director will be hired to provide case management to families, and to train and coordinate volunteers. A Board of Trustees currently comprising 12 members is actively developing the program, and will oversee program operation.

Statement of Need

Here in New York State, there are approximately 11,700 homeless families, with nearly 30,000 of those living Upstate (NYSDoE, 2013). More specifically, in our Continuous Service Area there are an estimated 187 homeless individuals (AHAR 2015, HUD), with 11% of Wayne County families living in poverty, and without a permanent home. Currently, *there are no transitional shelters for families in our county*. All the families who experience homelessness, with nowhere to turn, are forced to live in abandoned buildings or cars in Wayne County. Clearly, there is a critical need for emergency shelter and support services in our community.

Program Description

The Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. will consist of over two dozen congregations, who together will harness the resources of 800 to 1,000 volunteers. Each participating church serves as a host congregation for three to five homeless families for a one-week period, four to six times each year. The host congregation provides meals and overnight sleeping accommodations for approximately 150 family members annually. Guest families spend the day at a Day Center, where they care for children and look for jobs and housing. A van owned by Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. will transport guests to the Day Center each morning and back to the host congregation in the evening.

Local social service agencies refer homeless families to Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y., and work cooperatively to provide day programs, including employment training, counseling, entitlement orientation, child care and health care. A director, a social worker who provides case management services to the families, works out of the day center/administrative office. The director also promotes linkages to other community agencies and facilitates volunteer services.

Goals and Objectives

The principal goals of Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. are to:

- provide shelter, meals, and case management for homeless families.
- help homeless families find a home.
- refer homeless families to appropriate agencies for job training or retraining and family services.
- increase volunteerism in the community and advocacy for meeting the needs of low-income and homeless families.

Specific objectives are to

- recruit at least 13 host congregations to provide shelter for homeless families within their own facilities.
- recruit 40 to 60 volunteers to staff each week's operation at a host church.

- provide private sleeping accommodations, and all meals (dinner, breakfast, and a bag lunch), 365 days a year for up to 14 homeless people each night.
- provide shelter, meals, and support services in a cost-effective way, using volunteers, community facilities, agencies, and other local resources. Generally a Family Promise's cost per person per day is less than one third the average cost in traditional shelters.
- help 70% or more of homeless families in the program obtain suitable housing.

Staffing

Trained volunteers are at the heart of Family Promise program. They operate the program at their congregations and provide personal support for homeless families, who are considered guests of the Affiliate. Volunteers set up beds, cook meals, do laundry, and perform many other tasks. Volunteers work in shifts, and stay overnight at the congregation's facility.

By sharing meals and conversation, by interacting with and listening to parents and children, the volunteers come to know the human face of homelessness and learn about its root causes. Volunteers not only work in their congregation's facility but also help guests find housing, jobs, and job training opportunities.

In the beginning, Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. will have three staff members only: a full-time director, a part-time case manager, and a part-time van driver. The director trains volunteers, supervises the day center, evaluates and refers families to the Affiliate, and puts families in contact with needed services. The director makes sure that children in the Affiliate are enrolled in school.

Working together, utilizing the proven and effective model of the Family Promise program, Affiliate volunteers and directors across the country have made a dramatic impact on the lives of thousands of formerly homeless people. Nationwide, approximately 70% of Family Promise guest families secure housing. We want to replicate this statistic in Wayne County, N.Y.

Family Promise's Impact on the Religious Community

Participation in a Family Promise of Wayne Co., N.Y. provides a direct way for lay people to be involved in outreach to homeless people.

Family Promise's Affiliate mission appeals to members of a religious community, even those who have not been committed to any other form of religious service. Family Promise offers members the opportunity to get involved with homeless families in a personal, "hands-on" way—to have a chance to get to know homeless family members one-on-one. Volunteering can be done right in the volunteer's own congregation, and there is a job for everyone—including young people and senior citizens. In participating congregations, stereotypes and prejudices often break down as volunteers see that homeless families are "just like them." As personal relationships are established, volunteers may continue their involvement with homeless families long after they leave Family Promise of Wayne Co., N.Y. Volunteers may also begin to initiate other programs to help homeless families. As the lives of volunteers change, so do the congregations themselves.

Some clergy members have remarked that participation in Family Promise was a "turning point" in their ministry and their congregation, causing them to become less ingrown. Others maintain that Affiliate became the focal point for renewal, as a spirit of "cooperation and generosity" increased among parishioners.

Family Promise unites many different streams of the religious community into a joint mission effort. By sharing a mutual concern and response to the problem of homelessness, relationships are born that transcend denominations and cultures. A common purpose enriches not only the congregations themselves but the life of an entire community.

"Of all the outreach ministries of our church, Family Promise has been easiest to 'sell' and the one that fills up soonest with volunteers. After all, it's Biblical. The spiritual gift of hospitality means nothing less than, literally, 'a love of strangers.' It's real love in action, broadening perspectives on poverty and homelessness, and allowing singles and whole family units an opportunity to be servants and to make new friends at the same time."

[Rev. Dean Nadasy, Cross View Lutheran Church, Edina, MN]

Method of Evaluation

Family Promise of Wayne County's Director and Board of Trustees will evaluate the effectiveness of [Affiliate] after it has been operational for one year. The evaluation will, in part, be based on consultations with representatives from the program, including volunteers and guest families.

Evaluation criteria will include the following:

- The number of homeless families served.
- The number of homeless families who secured housing.
- The number of homeless individuals who secured employment.
- The number of volunteers and congregations involved and, after the Affiliate has been operational for two years, the number of other volunteer-based, community initiatives that develop as an outgrowth of the Affiliate.

Future Funding

Once fully operational, Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. will have the unique advantage of broad participation from the community, resulting in ongoing support from volunteers and congregations. With over 800 volunteers and much of the religious community participating, the Affiliate will become self-sufficient, drawing approximately 50% of its funding from participants. Other funds will be secured from foundations, corporations, governmental agencies and civic organizations.

Conclusion

Denominational support for Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. is an investment in helping homeless families. It is also an investment in building stronger communities throughout Wayne County. Fortunately, homelessness is typically a temporary situation. Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. will offer a lifeline—a connection to caring volunteers and community services that can help families work through their temporary crisis toward hope, improved circumstances, and ultimately, independent living.

This collaborative effort will also be a catalyst for the development of other community initiatives that address the root causes of poverty and homelessness. When fully operational, we expect that Family Promise of Wayne County, N.Y. will develop programs in areas such as parenting, GED preparation, and renovation of low-income housing.

ATTACHMENT B

- NEWS RELEASE - April 30, 2017

PRESBYTERY OF GENEVA MISSION TEAM REPAIRS HOMES IN WV

A Presbytery of Geneva WV Mission Team composed of volunteers representing Park Presbyterian Church of Newark, The First Presbyterian Church of Geneva and Corning First Presbyterian Church traveled to Summersville WV by car on Sunday, April 23rd, and returned on Saturday, April 29th after a week of hard work. Team members included Fritz Aude – Geneva; Paul & Jeanne Salisbury, Karen Watson, and Curt Richardson - Newark; Derwin Nelson, Frank Hamm, and Ken Baer – Corning; Dee Wickman – Rochester. Sue Kirby from the Asheboro NC First Presbyterian Church also participated with the team. The team was housed in the First Presbyterian Church of Summersville WV.

West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy Workcamps, Inc (WVMAW) plans and coordinates the week's work. Work can include home repair and reconstruction, deconstruction, playground restoration, parks cleanup, stream bank stabilization, and vacation Bible schools. WVMAW is supported in part by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Synod of the Trinity and The Presbytery of West Virginia as well as churches and individual donations. The Presbytery of Geneva Mission Team is one of 40 – 80 volunteer groups coming from churches of various faith traditions, as well as from colleges and universities. The cost for a week-long mission experiences is \$250 per person.

The team's mission work involved home repairs on 2 homes and installation of a deck and ramp. The homes are located near Birch River WV where flooding occurred in June 2016. The team also completed installation of dry wall and painting for 2 new showers at the host church in Summersville WV.

Trip Coordinator, Paul Salisbury, reported the two residents receiving the home improvements were unable to accomplish the needed work. Team members were rewarded with hugs of appreciation for their efforts.

WVMAW Site Supervisor Tim Stewart is responsible for reviewing applications. He conducts interviews and home visitations as part of the process to identify those most needy.

Salisbury said the work trip provides the opportunity for discipleship by partnering with those in need due to natural disasters or poverty in areas of West Virginia. He related that the decrease in the demand for coal has caused coal mines to close, resulting in economic hardship for many WV residents.

The Presbytery plans to return for another week of mission work in September 2017. Persons interested in joining the team should contact the Presbytery Office in Penn Yan NY (presbyteryofgeneva.org).