

Our opportunity to help with Family Promise is right around the corner again. Beginning at 5 p.m. on Sunday April 24 we get to bless the families of Family Promise and they in turn will bless our lives. I thought that I would just give an overview on what this ministry does and what volunteering for this week of giving looks like.

Mission

Family Promise of Lubbock's mission is to provide homeless families with children the tools necessary to achieve long term financial, parental and personal self-sufficiency through a comprehensive program of temporary housing, case management and supportive services.

Our History

Lubbock Interfaith Hospitality Network, a nonprofit, non-denominational, volunteer-based organization, opened its doors in the fall of 1998 reaching out to homeless families with children. In early 2006 Lubbock Interfaith Hospitality Network changed its name to ***Family Promise of Lubbock***. This newer name consists of simple words that deliver a powerful message of hope. It is a pledge of our commitment to help families with children achieve stability and self-sufficiency.

Family Promise partners with religious congregations, community organizations and local social service organizations to help families achieve sustainable independence. We are one of 192 Family Promise affiliates operating in 42 states; we are linked by membership to the National Family Promise in Summit, NJ.

The offices and the Hope house where the families stay during the day if not working, is located at 1511 Ave M. The Promise House is the home that First Christian owns and Broadway uses for the evening meal and sleeping for the families and hosts, since our building is not well suited for hosting the families comfortably, is located at 2302 13th Street (corner of 13th and Ave W). If you volunteer here you will enter through the back door by going through the side gate on Ave W.

The families that are screened and interviewed to be part of this program are homeless or are on the brink of becoming homeless. They must have children to qualify to be part of the program and agree to a series of rules that are set in place to help them get to a better place by the end of their stay with Family Promise. They are required to have a job and put a large portion of their earnings in a savings for when they have their own place because while they are in the program they are feed, housed and most everything is supplied for them so that they do have this time to catch up and get ahead which is almost impossible when you are buying groceries and paying rent. They are given lessons in financial planning, parenting and making good choices along with anything else that may help them.

Right now there are 3 families in the program and they have each been there since February so these are most likely the same families that will be there when we get to volunteer next week. I

have attached their profiles so that you can read a little about them. I spoke with the staff yesterday and it looks like Alli will be going to work for a lawyer soon!

What volunteering for our week looks like:

We begin at 5 p.m. on Sunday the 24th with picking up the families at the Hope house and bringing them to the Promise house. When the volunteer gets to the Hope house they are given the “Blue Book” that contains the keys to the house and the vans. The volunteer can use their own vehicle or use the van to transport the families to the Promise house. We are blessed in that the Hammond’s growth group nearly always volunteers for this evening meal and the activity and they take care of getting the families to the right place! I LOVE them for this!!!!

Each night Sunday through Saturday, we prepare a meal for the families and stay and eat with them and visit. This volunteer spot includes having a meal prepared for the number of people that will be eating that night (it is sometimes different due to work schedules). Once the volunteer slots are getting full I will put out a list of what everyone plans on bringing for dinner so they do not have spaghetti or baked chicken every night. The volunteer should be at the Promise house on 13th and W by 5:30 where you will be met by a member of the staff of Family Promise, who will bring the families to the house by van. The staff member will hand you the blue book that has the keys, emergency cell phone and notes about the families and the program in it. They will unlock the door and make sure that all is good and leave and you will then be able to set out dinner and enjoy the food and conversation with the families around the table. The families are to clean up after dinner. We ask that you take leftovers home because each night new food is brought in. Sometimes we need to make a plate or two for those who had to work late and put in the fridge for them to warm up later. You will stay with the families until the activities volunteer arrives at the home about 7 p.m. We ask that before you leave, you open the blue book and there is a section for comments, write about how your visit went and if there were any problems with any of the guests or good things that occurred with the guests.

We have an activities volunteer that arrives at the Promise house by 7 p.m. This person or group can plan something with the children as simple as watching a Disney movie and eating popcorn, or as adventurous as doing projects with glitter and glue. Each time this may look different due to the age of the children and if school is in session. There are times that just visiting outside with the families and playing with chalk on the backyard sidewalk is great. There is no right or wrong here. This is just a time to bond and let the families know that we really do care deeply about them. You will be able to leave when the overnight host volunteer comes about 8 to 8:30. We ask that you write your comments about your visit in the blue book before leaving.

The overnight host comes by 8:30 p.m. (I think that this is the easiest of all volunteer spots) When the volunteer comes they will bring their own sheets, pillow and blankets to make up their bed in their own private bedroom. There are stated bedtimes for the children and adults set out by the staff and the families are aware of these. If they seem to have forgotten and are still up far past these times, we will remind them because they have to get up by 6 the next morning. Before bedtime I usually ask if anyone needs to pack a lunch for work or school the next morning. Once everyone is in their rooms usually by 9:30 or so you are free to go to bed yourself. Many of the families will get themselves up by 6 but if they are not, just knock on their door and let them

know that it is time to get up. I usually make a pot of coffee and the parents will get their children a bowl of cereal or something for breakfast but many of them eat breakfast at school. I usually get myself ready for work and sit on the couch and visit with any of the children or adults that are ready and waiting for the van to come and pick them up and start their day. We ask that you write in the book on how bedtime and the morning went. I usually write in the book before I go to bed and will add something in the morning if needed. The van driver gets to the house about 7 and picks up everyone and the book and you are free to leave at this time. Please make sure that all doors are locked.

There is time that we are responsible for on the Saturday and Sunday from 8-5 of just being with the families at the Hope House. There is no structured activities or meals but they just need someone there. I have stayed there on the weekend and gotten paperwork done or read a book. The families sometimes check out and go visit friends or do some shopping and will be gone some of the day. They are required to do all their families laundry of sheets, towels and clothes on the weekend and there are facilities at the hope house. The kitchen is stocked there so they make their own meals for breakfast and lunch. We ask that this volunteer write in the blue book on how the day went.

I will send out a list of rules that the families have to all the volunteers so that they know what is allowed and not allowed before our week comes up.

This week is ALWAYS a blessing to me and has been for years. There are some families that come into the program and go back to the way they were before entering but there have been many success stories that I have had the opportunity to watch and am still in contact with some of them and am still watching them grow. I would love to see this program grow so that more families could be helped to help themselves and raise their children to be Godly adults and stop the cycle that many of them find themselves in. You never know when you will be that person that changes a life by just being there with a hug and a listening ear.

I pray that you will consider helping in this beautiful ministry by giving of a few hours of your time once a quarter to help those who need our help so desperately and to bless yourself.

We have a site for any of you that would like to sign up to help out with this upcoming Family Promise rotation. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1sW6rBeB_Y1o2FZtS9NUfvifOpQk-wJkLX12e8k0-LHE/edit#gid=0%C2%A0

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

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