

Family Promise of MidCoast Maine Winter 2023 Newsletter

The mission of Family Promise of MidCoast Maine is to help families without housing and families who struggle with impending housing loss to achieve their housing goals through a community-based response.

UU Church of Belfast Votes to Become Family Promise Host Site!

In a show of overwhelming support, the Unitarian Church of Belfast voted on January 29 to become Family Promise of MidCoast Maine's first official host site. After a number of information meetings in which members had a chance to have their questions and concerns addressed, there was strong support for taking action and helping support MidCoast families at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Conversations are currently underway with other local churches to also become host sites. The goal is to recruit twelve or thirteen local churches who could each provide temporary overnight shelter for four families (a maximum of 14 individuals) for a week at a time, three or four times per year. Churches and organizations who would like more information can contact Bob Johansen, Board Chair, at robertjohansen2790@gmail.com or 978-333-3424.

St. Brendan the Navigator Parish Caring Fund Committee Votes to Support Family Promise of MidCoast Maine

A big thank you to the Caring Fund Committee of St. Brendan the Navigator Parish (including the churches of St. Francis in Belfast, Our Lady of Good Hope in Camden, and St. Bernard in Rockland) who voted to support Family Promise of MidCoast Maine through their annual fund raiser. Recognizing the on-going needs of homeless families in the MidCoast area, the Committee pledged their support for our work and will partner with us in getting the word out about how the Family Promise model works with local partners (including the Knox County Homeless Coalition and WaldoCAP and area congregations and organizations) to provide temporary shelter for families experiencing homelessness.

Family Promise of MidCoast Maine Helps Mark National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month

In November 2022, Maine Senator Susan Collins and West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin led a bipartisan effort to designate the month National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month. Family Promise of MidCoast Maine, with the support of the MidCoast Homeless Response Services Hub, joined with the Belfast Soup Kitchen, But Still I Am One, and Waldo Community Action Partners (WaldoCAP) to mark the month and raise awareness of the area's needs. Bright green posters in downtown offices and businesses, radio interviews, and articles in local papers helped get the word out about the numbers of children and youth experiencing homelessness. A Community Conversation on Homelessness on Nov. 19 at the Belfast Soup Kitchen drew approximately 40 people with follow-up meetings taking place on-line (contact Neva Allen at: butstilliamone.org@gmail.com to get on the email list). In addition, three area restaurants generously donated a portion of their proceeds on designated November days to help support the four agencies. Thank you to Nautilus, Darby's and Angler's (Searsport) for their generosity and support!

The Need for Family Housing Continues

Families at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness continue to seek help from the Belfast General Assistance Office where Kristi Osgood and staff work tirelessly to help. In the month of January, Kristi reports that 33 people applied for housing assistance, including nine men, 15 women, and nine children, including five families. Currently the waiting list for housing includes 30 people: 13 women, seven men and ten children. These include seven families. Currently there are no homeless shelters in Waldo County and there are waiting lists for housing in Knox County and surrounding areas as well.

Check Out Our New Website!

Thanks to local volunteer and webmaster Mike Hickcox and with the support of the national Family Promise organization our local affiliate now has a website. To learn more about us, to link to the national website, to contact us or donate to support our work, visit:

www.familypromiseofmidcoastme.org

What Is a Family Promise Affiliate?

There is sometimes confusion over the difference between the national Family Promise organization and local affiliates like Family Promise of MidCoast Maine. The national organization was founded thirty years ago in Union County, New Jersey. In the three decades since, it has grown to include 200 local affiliates in 43 states. The national organization provides support, technical assistance and expertise for local affiliates. But each affiliate is a separate nonprofit with its own local board, staff, and volunteers. Each affiliate partners with local congregations and organizations to support families experiencing or at risk of homelessness in their geographic area. Nationwide, Family Promise affiliates served more than 187,000 people in 2021.

For more information about Family Promise of MidCoast Maine contact Bob Johansen at: robertjohansen2790@gmail.com or 978-333-3424.

To make a donation to support our work, click on this link and select Family Promise of MidCoast Maine from the drop-down menu:

<https://familypromise.org/donatenow/>

*Family Promise of MidCoast Maine
37 Miller Street,
Belfast, ME 04915*