

March 2019 Newsletter



Bringing Families Home

**PO Box 733 – 781 Spring Parkway
Woodstock, VA 22664
540-459-4599**



Board of Directors:

George Bowers, President
Katherine Morrison, Vice President
Kent Jeter, Treasurer
Libby Rocco, Secretary
Ellen Bowers
Ellen Fairchild-Flugel
Linda Holler
Mary Jane Koch
Becky Leland
Willie Mitchell
Steve Ranson
Pat Rosenbaum

Staff:

Sherry Arey, Executive Director
Diane Wittreich, Case Manager
Diane Pence, Administrative Assistant
Rick Kessler, Van Driver
Jane Lim, Intern

Message from Sherry

This is FPSC's fourth year of "**Bringing Families Home!**" Two of our moms spoke at our recent Celebration of Gratitude about what Family Promise means to them and expressed their thanks for all the support and love they received from all the volunteers. One mom talked about how scared she was when she found out that she and her daughter would be moving from church to church each week and meeting new people frequently.

FPSC works like this: Sunday afternoon parents get bedding together and pack items the children will need during the week. The van driver picks them up at 5 pm on Sunday so they can arrive early at the host site to get their beds set up before eating dinner. They often wake up by 6 am to be ready to leave the host site between 6:45 and 7 am. School age children catch the bus at 7:20 am and return about 3:40 pm. Parents head to work or stay at the Family Center during the day to do housing and job searches. Often parents have appointments and will walk if close by or FPSC staff will transport them. By 5:30 pm, they are headed back to the host site for a meal, activities and sleep. On Sunday morning, families pack up all their items, the beds are loaded in the van, and they are off to the Family Center before church starts.

Our families have to balance many schedules - school, work, appointments, case management, housing and job searches and host site schedules. They have to take everything they might need during the night to the host site because returning to the Family Center in the evening is not an option. Families are amazing "adjusters" - they are resilient and want to be independent again. **The mom who talked about being scared when she entered the program ended by saying she quickly found out that she had no reason to be scared. She stated: "All the people we met just loved me and my daughter so much. No one judged me and everyone just accepted me as I was and showed me someone cared about us."** Thanks for all you do! Hope to see you at the Steak Dinner & Silent Auction later this month.

Sherry Arey, Executive Director

Claire Koontz Invites You to the Fourth Annual Steak Dinner & Silent Auction



Claire, a long-time supporter of Family Promise, invites you to our Fourth Annual Steak Dinner & Silent Auction! Claire, who has known Sherry Arey for many years, first volunteered when the Family Center was being set up – helping bring in furniture, organize and whatever else was needed.

Claire is a freshman at Central High School. She loves helping in the community as much as she can, including serving dinners at the Edinburg Fire Company and her church (Wesley Chapel). So, she was well-suited for volunteering at the FPSC steak dinner fundraiser for the past three years. Last year, she helped make over 600 salads! She said she was “off salad” for quite a while after that. Claire has also helped set up, take orders, and serve.

The daughter of Suellen Gardner Koontz and Jamie Koontz, Claire and her older sister have been encouraged to “get out and participate” – their mother isn’t one to allow them to “sit around and watch

TV.” Claire has been a competitive cheerleader for the last seven years, and her family travels quite a few weekends for her to compete. She also likes to ski at Bryce.

When asked what else she likes to do in her spare time, Claire quickly replied, “I raise pigs.” When asked if this was an FFA project she told us, “No, they just wandered in one day.” After trying without success to find the owner, the family went through an “adoption” process to get legal custody of the pigs; and Claire enjoys taking care of them.

This year, Claire won’t be able to help out with the Steak Dinner due to a cheerleading competition; but she hopes you will come out and support a cause which she holds dear.

Thank you, Claire, for all you do in our community!!

Diane Pence

Steak Dinner & Silent Auction March 23, 2019, 4-7:30 pm Woodstock Moose Lodge

**Tickets available at the Family Center
781 Spring Parkway, Woodstock (540-459-4599)**

\$20 – adults ★ \$12 – petite steak

Carry Out Available!

Steak Dinner Sponsors	Silent Auction Items
<p data-bbox="250 184 683 216">Fillet Mignon (\$1,000 & Above)</p> <p data-bbox="258 258 675 289">Porterhouse (\$500.00-\$999.99) Antioch Church of the Brethren Mitchell & Witherall Families William Pence Co. (Bill & Maxine Pence)</p> <p data-bbox="295 441 638 472">Ribeye (\$250.00-\$499.99) Mary Jane Koch</p> <p data-bbox="240 550 695 581">New York Strip (\$100.00-\$249.99) Saumsville Christian Womens Fellowship</p> <p data-bbox="313 659 621 690">Sirloin (\$50.00-\$99.99) Mike Keffer</p>	<ul data-bbox="824 203 1468 802" style="list-style-type: none"> • P. Buckley Moss Prints & Snow Globe • Shenandoah County Fair Crocks • Handcrafted Bullet Pen (Dale Bowers) • Handcrafted Pastry Rolling Pin (Dale Bowers) • Apple Cream Cheese Cake with Pecan Praline Icing (Judith Wordsworth) • Water Color Painting of your House/Barn (Judith Wordsworth) • 4 Hours Fishing on Lake Anna (McCotter's Lake Anna Guide Service) • Load of Gravel (Racey Paving & Excavating) • Pink Dogwood Tree & Planting (Fort Valley Nursery) • One-Hour Therapeutic, Full-Body Massage (Shelia Helsley) • And so much more! <p data-bbox="824 844 1468 875">Check out Facebook & our Website for photos!</p>

**Volunteer of the Month
Lesley Bowyer**



Family Promise has been so fortunate to work with Lesley Bowyer! This talented pastor’s wife manages a full time job and volunteers her time for the important job of keeping the books for Family Promise! While initially the time required in setting up the books was intensive, Lesley allows that now that things are running smoothly. She spends about six to seven hours a week on the books and payroll.

Involved with FPSC from its inception, she and her husband, Mark, volunteered with Family Promise of Allen County, Ohio, through the Pleasant View Church of the Brethren. In fact, Pastor Mark was the one who suggested the organization to George Bowers and other ministers during a clergy Bible study as they discussed ways to help the homeless in our county. Lesley is also a co-coordinator with Libby Rocco at host church Wakemans Grove Church of the Brethren.

Lesley had quite the exotic upbringing! Born in England, she grew up on a series of boats in England and the Mediterranean. She attended school in New Zealand for several years and ended up in the Caribbean living on her own sailboat until a hurricane devastated the area and her boat was wrecked. Time to move the family to Ohio!

“Homelessness is an issue that is dear to my heart - taking care of our FPSC families is a true mission,” Lesley said. She also commented, **“Everything is going swimmingly- our community really responded well!”**

Day Care Desert Soon to Have Oasis

As we noted in our December 2018 newsletter, there is **very little childcare available in Shenandoah County - much less affordable childcare**. FPSC has encountered this situation many times as we see how lack of childcare plays into homelessness and the ability to get and maintain a job.

Yvonne Frazier, executive director of Healthy Families, has found the same dilemma as she works with young families in Shenandoah and Page Counties. Healthy Families offers in-home services to families with children under the age of 5 (when they enter Head Start or preschool). The nonprofit assists parents in overcoming barriers so that they can become the best parents and people. In this process, parents have been able to find jobs but no childcare (or no childcare that fits in their budget). This is a big hurdle for them to overcome in continuing to improve their lives and family situations. Yvonne says she has seen this same concern over and over again in her 35 years of social service work in the area.

Yvonne put together a group of concerned community members to look at the needs and opportunities. FPSC director, Sherry Arey, has participated in the process as well as many others. Out of these brainstorming sessions and the enthusiasm of Yvonne Frazier and others, the beginning of a solution has evolved: **Community Care and Learning Center**. The mission is: **To provide accessible, quality child care that supports parents' ability to maintain stable employment knowing their children are in a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment**. New Market is one of the towns in Shenandoah County with no full-day childcare center. New Market draws employees from both Shenandoah and Page Counties. With this in mind, this group set out to find a place – they found one (the previous site of an antique shop) at 189 E. Lee Highway near Pack's Frozen Custard stand. But that was just the beginning of the process!

The group is currently applying for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status with the Internal Revenue Service. They have navigated their way through building code restrictions for childcare facilities as well as Health Department regulations and the Virginia Department of Social Services licensing process. An engineer has drawn up functional use plans for the 1,300 square foot space, and the landlord is assisting in making the necessary renovations. It has been a real balancing act to get all of this organized, and it has come with a price tag including licensing fees, liability insurance, renovations, etc. The goal at the moment is to **gain support and donations to cover start-up expenses to open the doors, when fees and tuitions will cover the majority of operational costs**.

The plan is to begin providing care at the end of the 2018-2019 school year. CCLC will provide childcare from 6 am to 6 pm, Monday through Friday and will accept children from the age of 2-1/2 to 12 years. As a nonprofit, they will offer sliding-scale tuition based on the family's ability to pay, and scholarships will be available. The group needs community involvement in the form of donations and work teams in order to make this dream a reality – **Children are our Future!**

The board of directors (Yvonne Frazier, Peter Hughes, Teresa Taylor, Pam Uhl, Debbie Davis, Tim LaPierre, and Tony Cooper) welcome your interest, support and donations. Community Care and Learning Center has a GoFundMe.com account where you can donate online, or contact them at cclcenter.nm@gmail.com. The group sees this opportunity as a great start and envisions their services could expand to provide childcare for second shift workers and believes this could be a model for opening other childcare centers. Keep your eyes open for their new website which should be posted soon, thanks to students from James Madison University who are developing the site.

Diane Pence

Celebration of Gratitude



The evening of February 17th turned out to be a very special time as volunteers, host church coordinators, donors, pastors, board members, staff, singers and other folks joined together to **celebrate Family Promise of Shenandoah County's first three years of ministry**. The Holy Spirit was certainly with us as well! The Ambassadors of Joy shared their musical talents as folks gathered. The group also opened the service with special selections. George Bowers, Sherry Arey, and Mark Bowyer spoke about "Where We've Been" (see the "Did You Know" box), "Where We Are" and "Where We Are Going". Host churches, coordinators and staff were recognized. Alex and Amanda (former guests) shared their stories and thanks to FPSC – there was barely a dry eye in the house! The Vesper Singers from New Market shared beautiful music and were joined by a community choir to close out the celebration. Afterwards, everyone lingered to continue the conversation about FPSC, share stories and enjoy refreshments. It was truly a blessing.



Case Manager's Corner

This month I write about a subject that is close to my heart – single mothers. According to coabode.org there are almost 11 million single mothers raising over 20 million children by themselves. In the United States most single mothers are separated, divorced or widowed; they work more hours but have a higher poverty rate than other high-income countries. "Single-parent families are among the poorest in the nation and as such, are extremely vulnerable to homelessness. Among all homeless families nationwide, over three quarters were headed by single women with children." The single parent household typically comprises a mother in her late 20's with 2 children.

Family Promise National states the three top reasons for family homelessness are lack of affordable housing, unemployment and poverty. As a case manager with Family Promise of Shenandoah County, I work with these single mothers (as well as other parents of our guest families) to find housing, jobs, child care and other assistance through local agencies and other nonprofits. Some of the organizations we work with are the Dept. of Social Services, Shenandoah County Schools, Dept. of Health Women's Infant Children program (WIC), Shenandoah County Pregnancy Center, Catholic Outreach, Shenandoah Alliance for Shelter and A Small Hand. For many of our single parents, achieving these goals can be difficult and may keep them in the program longer than a two-parent household.

Most of the single parent guests in FPSC do not have the necessary support from family members. Many have burned the bridges within their family support systems for a variety of reasons and are alone when it comes to parenting their children. Coming into a homeless shelter like FPSC is difficult in itself, and trying to establish any type of routine can be difficult. The staff provides support by offering parenting skills, 'motherly' advice and tough-love when necessary. Sometimes we actually refer to ourselves as "The Aunties"!

Once a family graduates from the program, we try to stay connected with the family, allowing them to return to the center to do laundry and obtain additional toiletries or household items. We can continue case management assistance if needed. For many of our families, whether single or two parent households, knowing they have this extra "family support" can mean the world to them. Thank you for being a part of what we do at FPSC.

Diane Wittreich

American Woodmark Foundation Presents Grant Check

FPSC has been working with American Woodmark Foundation since last year to obtain a grant for guest emergencies. We met with the grant team earlier this month and received a \$5,000 grant. The American Woodmark Foundation supports many charities within their geographical footprint. They say, "Caring is a part of their culture. With roots in neighborhoods across America, we're closely involved with our communities. We have a long history of outreach programs focused on sustaining our communities, helping charitable organizations fulfill their missions and simply being good neighbors." We are honored and thankful for their support and look forward to a continued working relationship with them.



*Love isn't a state of perfect caring. It is an active noun like "struggle."
To love someone is to strive to accept that person exactly the way he or she is,
right here and now. Mr. Rogers*

Thanks for accepting our guests as they are and for all you do!

Sixth Year in A Row!



Charity Navigator released their newest ratings in February. For the sixth consecutive year, Family Promise was awarded four stars, the top rating from America's largest independent charity evaluator. "We are proud to announce Family Promise has earned our sixth consecutive 4-star rating," said Michael Thatcher, President and CEO of Charity Navigator. "This is our highest possible rating and indicates that your organization adheres to sector best practices and executes its mission in a financially efficient way. Attaining a 4-star rating verifies that Family Promise exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in your area of work."

Source: familypromise.org



Did You Know?

In the first three years, FPSC has:

- Sheltered 44 families (153 individuals, 93 children, 53 under age five)
- Provided 7,644 nights of safe shelter (estimated at \$50 per room per family) valued at \$102,550
- Had almost 700 volunteers provide over 50,000 volunteer hours; at minimum wage of \$7.25/hour, valued at \$362,000!
- Hosted veterans, pregnant moms, single-parent families headed by moms, single-parent families headed by dads, single-parent families headed by a grandmother, as well as two-parent families
- Opened the Family Center
- Transported families in a donated van
- Supported families through Case Management
- Offered one apartment for transitional housing; another coming soon.
- Has had no government funding from federal, state or local levels
- Participated in community discussions regarding childcare, public transportation, and affordable housing
- Networked with individuals, churches, businesses, nonprofit & civic organizations
- **Seen God's hand at work**

Wish List

Dryer Sheets
Clorox Wipes
Toilet Paper
Swiffer Liquid Floor Cleaner & Pads
Laundry Baskets
Twin Sheet Sets
No-Spill Sippy Cups
Body Wash (men & women)
Body Lotion
Inexpensive Craft Kits
55 Gallon Trash Bags
Tall Kitchen Garbage Bags
Gently Used Strollers



Thank You!

FPSC Welcomes Our First Intern!



We are excited to have Jane Lim join our team this semester. Jane is a student at James Madison University working on her degree in Social Work. Jane hales from Northern Virginia and after graduating in June, she hopes to attend graduate school in the fall.

Jane began interning with us in January and shares her time between FPSC and Healthy Families. She can be found at the Family Center on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. She helps out in many ways and has learned a great deal during her time with us! She has shadowed our Executive Director at a number of meetings and assisted our Case Manager with the intake process for three families. She has also helped out with grant writing and is working to develop a reunification plan for one of our families. She is a whiz with technology and has done a great job posting to our Facebook page. Her timely and entertaining posts have increased the number of views and comments and we have become more connected to our supporters. It is wonderful to have her working at FPSC. On Wednesday afternoons, she goes to North Fork Middle School in Mount Jackson to facilitate a YMCA Reach & Rise therapeutic, mentoring group of 6 students.

In her spare time (which she hasn't had much of lately), Jane enjoys working out and going to the gym. She is taking advantage of her last semester of undergrad by being with friends.



▶ **Grandparents as Parents Meeting**, Monday, March 11th, 6:30-8pm, FPSC Family Center, 781 Spring Parkway, Woodstock. Guest speaker: Debbie Brown, Hand to Hearts: Life Relationship Coach.

Cardboard City, September 6th, more information to come!!



Website:

www.shenandoahfamilypromise.org



Contact:

540-459-4599



Email:

shenfamilypromise@gmail.com