

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Between

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis,
Inc. ("Family Promise")

and

("Partner Congregation")

Effective March 1, 2023

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each party as they relate to participation in the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) operated by Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, Inc. ("Family Promise"). IHN is a group of Partner Congregations that support the Apartment Shelter Program (ASP), a scattered site emergency shelter for families experiencing homelessness.

2. Mission Statement and Family Promise Program Information

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis is a partnership of congregations and community organizations responding to the crisis of children and their families who are homeless. We work to eliminate homelessness in Greater Indianapolis.

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has operated in Indianapolis, IN since 1994, collaborating with faith-based organizations to provide emergency shelter, meals, and support to families in crisis. It does this through support of the IHN, a group of congregations that add hospitality to the shelter experience of the ASP.

The ASP is a scattered site emergency shelter. Family Promise master leases apartments from private landlords around Indianapolis, furnishes them through donations and volunteer labor, and then moves in guest families when they call requesting shelter. If a family secures income, they can often apply to takeover the lease from Family Promise, earning for themselves a permanent home and keeping all furnishings, housewares, and linens. If a guest family moves out, staff and volunteers clean the unit, replace missing/used items, and move in the next family that calls for shelter.

Family Promise Day Center located at 1850 N. Arsenal Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46218, houses administrative offices. It houses the housewares and linens for the Apartment Shelter Program (including laundry machines), and space for case managers to work with families or on their behalf. Furniture for the ASP is provided by Mustard Seed of Central Indiana, a nonprofit furniture bank in Fishers, Indiana.

Family Promise's name indicates the promise to keep a family together during their hardest time, regardless of the makeup of the family. Family Promise does not define what a family is, but accepts the definition of the family that applies for shelter.

Furthermore, Partner Congregations participate in the IHN recognizing that the ASP strives to be a low barrier shelter, recognizing that many families going through homelessness will have obstacles to employment and/or housing from either previous mistakes or current conditions requiring support. Shelters that are exclusionary in their acceptance of families can at times perpetuate homelessness instead of helping resolve it. Family Promise seeks to as accepting as possible of a shelter program while still maintaining safety of guest children, parents, volunteers, staff, and property.

Last, Family Promise is interfaith. Family Promise relies on congregations of many different faiths to be members of the network serving together. Even though congregations, staff, and volunteers are often motivated in large part by their individual faith, congregations and volunteers do not proselytize to the families in the programs. Participation in any prayer (e.g., before meals) is always optional.

3. Responsibilities of Host Congregation

- Engage one or more Volunteer Coordinators to manage IHN activities that relate to the Congregation, including, but not limited to, scheduling volunteers for meal delivery, organizing housewares and linens drives, coordinating efforts with Family Promise Staff.
- Prepare and deliver meals for at least two guest families in the ASP for three months of the year (minimum 24 meals). The months of participation do not have to be sequential (i.e., one after the other). Optional: The Coordinators may choose to use the meal delivery introductions as invitations for greater engagement as agreed upon between the guest family and Congregation (e.g., holiday celebrations like Trunk or Treat, birthday outings like miniature golf, festivals, etc.).
- Conduct a housewares and linens drive to furnish an apartment shelter in the ASP, including storing items until the next available unit is ready to be set up. If a congregation wishes, it can be teamed up with one or two other congregations to furnish an entire apartment (approximate value of \$2,000 of items). If a unit is not ready in a reasonable time frame, coordinate with Family Promise staff to deliver items to the Day Center, borrowing Family Promise's cargo van if/as necessary. Recruit and coordinate volunteers to set up the unit with the donated items.
- Sign up the Partner Congregation for meal delivery months and housewares/linens drives by December 1 of each year, utilizing the online sign-up created and shared by Family Promise staff.
- Communicate with the congregation via newsletters, bulletins, and other appropriate methods, to keep them "in the know" about the Interfaith Hospitality Network activities.
- Promote and support Family Promise volunteer trainings and workshops by encouraging congregation participation, including attendance by one or more of the Volunteer Coordinators at three of the four quarterly Congregational Coordinator meetings.
- Support Family Promise financially each year at a level determined by the Congregation Mission Team. Support can be a congregation collection, a sponsorship of a Family Promise event, or other support that helps take responsibility for the operating costs of the program.

4. Responsibilities of Family Promise

- Provide Congregation orientation, volunteer training, participation guides, and other assistance as necessary to support Partner Congregations in fulfilling their mission.
- Orient guest families to role of Congregation volunteers, including what they will and will not provide. Manage a Family Assistance Fund for guest family assistance to alleviate burdens from volunteers.
- Create an annual online Congregation Sign-up Form, shared with the members of the IHN by October 1 each year to ensure Congregations have at least three months to sign up for their participation.
- Provide timely and responsive communication to Coordinators, including at least week two-week notice of meal delivery assignments (including guest family contact information, family makeup, addresses, food restrictions) and one-month notice of housewares/linens drive beginning. Support during volunteer coordination as needed.
- Conduct background checks on Congregation volunteers for any additional engagement with guest families. Provide resources to support additional engagement activities (e.g., Family Promise van for transportation).

- Thoroughly screen prospective guest families for program eligibility in accordance with Family Promise’s Acceptance Policy. Provide case management, ongoing assessment, and intervention with the goal of helping families achieve and maintain permanent housing.
- Provide timely information to Congregations and Volunteers via newsletters, bulletins, and other appropriate methods, to keep them “in the know” about Family Promise activities.

Partner Congregation agrees to partner with Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, in the role described above. Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis and Partner Congregation agree to work together to the best of our abilities. We will work with other faith traditions within the Interfaith Hospitality Network with love and cooperation.

SIGNATURES

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Family Promise and Partner Congregation have executed this Agreement in Indianapolis, Indiana on the dates subscribed below.

(“Partner Congregation”)

Signature: _____

Print: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

FAMILY PROMISE OF GREATER INDIANAPOLIS (“Family Promise”)

Signature: _____

Print: Michael D. Chapuran

Position: Executive Director

Date: _____