



Family Promise®
of Greater Phoenix

Building communities, strengthening lives.



Hosting Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to Family Promise

Dear Volunteers,

I just wanted to take this time to welcome you to Family Promise. I appreciate all of you for taking time out of your busy life to serve and be an encouragement to our families. Volunteers are what make the Network effective. And without you there would not be an Family Promise. We count on you giving of your time and talents to make this organization a success.

I realize that you all have busy lives, so please work with your congregations coordinator on times you can volunteer to cook, spend the night or spend time fellowshiping with the families.

Even helping the families by reading to the children in the evening so the parents can have a little time to themselves is helpful.

As you well know, these families are going through some rough times. I ask that you be patient (I have to tell myself that everyday) if there are any problems please let the coordinator, director or case manager know. This however is not an excuse for any of the family members to be rude or disrespectful to any of our volunteers or staff.

Thank you again for all your help, may GOD Bless you for your service to Family Promise of Greater Phoenix.

Ted Taylor
Executive Director

Family Homelessness

Being without a safe, warm place to sleep, eat, and care for children; being without the security of familiar people and belongings-this is homelessness.

The loss of a home is a crisis for anyone, but especially for families. Parents must endure the heartache of being unable to provide a secure environment for their children. Without a home, children are deprived of one of the most basic resources required for healthy development. This is the saddest statistic of all-one out of every four homeless people is a child.

Until recent years, many people believed that only alcoholics or severely mentally ill people could become homeless. These stereotypes never did accurately portray the homeless population and definitely do not reflect today's reality. Families with young children now account for up to 40 percent of America's homeless, and they make up its fastest growing segment.

There may be many individual reasons for a family's homelessness, but the root cause is the lack of affordable housing. Hundreds of thousands of American families have found themselves caught in the growing gap between family income and the cost of a home. Low-income renters are often only one paycheck or calamity away from homelessness. The loss of a job, an increase in rent, the onset of sudden illness, the gentrification of a neighborhood, the absence of family support-anyone of these can drive a family into homelessness.

Fortunately, there are many thousands of people who believe that homelessness is unacceptable-especially in one of the world's wealthiest countries. And there is much that one person can do-especially in concert with others. Through the Family Promise Network program, many Americans are assisting homeless people and working together toward permanent solutions.

Volunteer Responsibilities

We are Seeking Happy Positive Volunteers!!

Setup and Takedown. (3-5 people for each)

Volunteer teams set up the accommodations on Sunday morning/afternoon. This includes blowing up the beds, making them, and arranging the rooms for the families. Likewise, when the families leave, the following Sunday, volunteers take down and repack all the beds. The takedown crew is usually responsible for transporting the beds to the next hosting congregation.

Dinner Volunteers (2-4 people each night)

Dinner is a hot meal and can be prepared at volunteers home and brought in or at the church (what ever your church may allow) or take out can be brought in as a treat. The volunteers are encouraged to sit and eat in order to fellowship with the families. The key is to prepare 'COMFORT FOOD', as apposed to fancy or exotic meals. Our families simply can't handle exotic food every night.

Activity Hosts (optional) :

These volunteers may be a part of the dinner time and arrive early if they like to socialize with the families. After dinner you may want to conduct activities with the children such as crafts, board games, popcorn and a movie, pampering, sports games, help with homework, etc.

Overnight Hosts (1-4 people per night)

The overnight host(s) can spend time in fellowship with the families as well as helping with homework or assisting the families with any needs they may have, but is primarily there for emergencies. Some congregations prefer to have two overnight hosts. The absolute maximum is 4 overnight hosts. The overnight host will also wake the families up in the morning at 5am M-F, and 7am Saturday and Sunday, to get ready to catch the Van or Bus back to the Day Center.

On weekdays few families will eat breakfast. However, the overnights should provide access, Monday—Friday, to juice, milk, and some kind of breakfast snack right after awakening the families. Most families will wait until they get back to the Day Center to eat any breakfast. On the weekend (can be decided by coordinator) you may let the families sleep in on Saturday and fix a more formal breakfast, like bacon & eggs, pancakes etc. This may take a larger volunteer group for the special meals.

Laundry (10 families)

Each congregation handles laundry in their own way. However, each host church is responsible for providing clean bedding for our families during their hosting week. A common way for many congregational members to participate is in cleaning the laundry after the week of hosting. Some congregations place all the bedding, for each bed, in the pillowcase and have congregational members pick up the bags, take them home to launder and fold, and return to the church for the next hosting.

Supplies:

Each week, the congregations contribute to breakfast and lunch supplies for the families, at the Day Center. Normally, the Program Coordinator will communicate breakfast and lunch supply needs, like milk, cereal, lunchmeat, bread, etc., at the beginning of the week. All supplies should be sent back to the Day Center on the Van/Bus.

Total people necessary for the week: 35-50

Family Promise Hospitality Code

It's nice to hear your name, so please learn the names of our guests, too.

Labeling people creates invisible barriers. Remember that guests are guests, not "the homeless." Labeling-whether spoken, or printed on a posted sign-creates divisions and can foster an "us" and "them" syndrome.

Personal questions can be tough to answer, so don't put guests in awkward positions by asking personal questions.

If guests need to talk, give them the chance, but don't pry.

Our mission for volunteers is not to solve but to serve. We need to be good listeners and please remember if our guest should open up to you about any personal information, that it is also confidential information and is not to be shared with anyone else. If you see that something that was shared with you could be a potential problem, then please speak only to the director or case manager with your concerns.

We all like to keep some things to ourselves. All information about guests is confidential. Don't discuss guests' situations with other people. Also please do not push religion or denominations on the guest. If they ask, by all means share your testimony with them. We are here to show them the love of GOD and that alone can make a huge statement in itself.

Everyone can use a little privacy. Our houses of worship become temporary homes for our guests. Knock before entering a guest's room or restroom.

Sometimes we need to spend time alone. Respect guests' needs for quiet times alone or with family.

We all have bad days. Depression, sadness, and hopelessness may come. Allow guests the space to deal with their emotions. Be prepared to forgive outbursts without judging that guests are being ungrateful.

We understand and care for our children. Allow guests to do the same. Avoid contradicting guests' instructions to their children. Always ask parents' permission before giving things to children.

Parents need a break. Offer to tutor, play with, and plan activities for interested children while their parents take a break.

Adult guests should be treated like adults. Although our guests are in situations that may make them temporarily dependent on others, remember that they are adults who are capable of making their own decisions.

How Can I Help?

How Can I Help? By understanding my role ...

We all want to know the best ways to help. Family Promise volunteers help most when they understand their roles: As members of a host congregation, they have offered their congregation's facility as a temporary home. As hosts, they support homeless families on their paths to independence. Although volunteers cannot solve all the guests' problems, the volunteers' small acts of kindness make a difference in the lives of the homeless families they serve.

How Can I Help? By providing a temporary home ...

Homelessness disrupts life beyond all measure. Host congregations invite guests to use their facilities as their temporary home. During host week, when volunteers enter their house of worship, they are entering their guests' home. By experiencing their congregation's facilities in this way, volunteers identify with the needs of guests.

How Can I Help? By seeing beyond stereotypes ...

Family Promise's success lies in the ability of its volunteers to put a human face on the tragedy of homelessness and to develop relationships with guests based on mutual respect.

How Can I Help? By striving for understanding ...

Volunteers need to understand that Network guests are going through what may be the most severe crisis of their lives. Each person deals with this trauma in a different way. Some individuals are optimistic and open about their situations, while others feel ashamed, humiliated, and alienated. However guests cope with their displacement, they find themselves dependent upon others to support their basic needs and the needs of their children. Many homeless people feel helpless and frustrated and may express these feelings by withdrawing or acting in an angry manner. Some may find it difficult to accept the goodwill of volunteers or to show appreciation. Volunteers need to recognize and be sensitive to the frustration and anger that guests may feel.

How Can I Help? By not judging ...

Volunteers should try to overcome the normal tendency to judge or criticize. Guests and volunteers may have different lifestyles and values; it is the volunteer's task to forego these differences and relate to guests as individuals worthy of trust, respect, and utmost courtesy. An ability to see life from another perspective is an especially useful attitude for all volunteers.

How Can I Help.....continued

How Can I Help? By being a good listener ...

While volunteers are not counselors, they do need to employ the listening skills of good counselors: reflecting back, clarifying, and summarizing what they hear. Good listeners don't assume that others think as they do; they listen more than they talk; they don't need to express an opinion on everything that's said. By becoming adept listeners, volunteers can help guests begin to work through the challenges they face.

How Can I Help? By respecting privacy ...

Guests will meet dozens of volunteers during their Network stay. For this reason especially, volunteers need to take their cues from guests. Volunteers should introduce themselves and be friendly, but not pry or hover. Guests who want to talk are not usually shy about it. Volunteers should respect those who don't.

How Can I Help? By focusing on strengths ...

As volunteers develop relationships with guests, volunteers become a helping force by focusing on guests' strengths and capabilities. This focus helps to create empowerment, or a state of mind in which an individual feels personal power as a result of confidence and self-esteem. As guests begin to feel empowered, they mobilize their own internal and external resources to take action and solve problems.

How Can I Help? By understanding my limits ...

At times, volunteers may feel helpless in the face of seemingly insurmountable problems in guests' lives. To temper any disappointment, it is vital that volunteers remain clear about their role. They are not counselors or professional problem solvers. At most, volunteers encounter guests a few times a week every two to three months. The role of volunteers is "not to solve but to serve." The goal of Network volunteers must be to provide a secure, homelike environment where guests can focus on their needs and take action to solve their problems. Network volunteers make many contributions to homeless families, but their greatest contribution is the kindness they offer.

How Can I Help? By adopting the Hospitality Code ...

Just as Network guests are asked to comply with a set of guidelines, volunteer hosts are asked to observe the Family Promise Hospitality Code. The code summarizes Family Promise's philosophy of treating Network families with dignity and respect. All volunteers should be familiar with the Hospitality Code and strive to live by it in their relationships with guests.

Rules & Regulations

Volunteers: Please check with the Program Coordinator before taking any of guest out of the church.

Please coordinate with your coordinator on times and needs for the host week. If you have never volunteered for a host week before, please make sure you attend any meetings prior to the host week, so that you have clear instructions on what you need to do. If for some reason you are scheduled and can not make it for your volunteering time (we know emergencies happen) please alert the coordinator immediately and try to get someone to take your place.

Please only allow families to eat & drink in the kitchen/fellowship hall area only. No food is to be taken into the rooms where the families sleep.

Please DO NOT give out any medications, such as Tylenol, Cold Medicine, or any other kind of meds to any member of the families.

Please wear gloves when bandaging cuts, changing diapers, cleaning soiled beds or cleaning up bodily fluids and or cleaning the bathroom areas.

Please do not give the guest money.

If there are family conflicts please notify the coordinator, director or case manager as soon as possible.

If there are any conflicts between volunteers please notify your coordinator, director or case manager.

We appreciate all our volunteers and your time but we ask that if you are sick, please just reschedule your volunteering time for another day. We all live in such close quarters that it is easy to pass around germs, So as much as we love to see you, please stay home if your sick.

Children are not allowed outside unless accompanied by an adult.

Please try to not show favoritism towards one family/child or the other.

Your coordinator will go over any rules and regulations your individual church may have.

This is a huge undertaking and it takes several volunteers to pull off a host week especially when we are full. So please just work very closely with your coordinator and each other. (It takes a village to raise a child it also takes a village to pull off a host week for Family Promise)

I ask that you please DO NOT use your own transportation for any of our guest at any time. In case of an extreme emergency please call 911 and then the Emergency Line (480-295-0674) to alert us of the emergency.

It is up to the individual congregations whether you take the families on outings and use your church van (if you have one). Consult with your Pastor & Coordinator for any outings and please let our office staff know. We may also have transportation available.

In case of an emergency please call 911