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Ben was born and raised in Grand Rapids. Moving back with his son Oliver to be with family was a homecoming for him and an exciting new start for Oliver. But when their home with family became unsafe, Ben says their "life was flipped upside-down."

Finding a new place became an emergency and a necessity in a hometown struggling to offer affordable options. Life moved fast through their housing crisis, as the family couch-surfed to keep a roof over their heads and stay together. "We couldn't stay with family, but we couldn't find a new place either." Running low on options and needing a safe place for Oliver, Ben reached out for help. He called 211, connected with Family Promise, and arrived at a Family Promise shelter in North Kent within a week.

"I wasn't sure how shelter was going to be, but it was so much better than I thought. I got to know all the people and they were all so nice!"

As they settled in, they found a routine, and a new normal - especially important for Oliver who is on the autism spectrum. It was hard for him at first - the break in routine, new faces all around, but as Oliver and Ben got to know staff and volunteers, they found other resources to help.

Childcare was the biggest hurdle. Family had planned to help but ultimately fell through. "He learns by playing. He takes a lot of time, and I understand that

that can be hard. We were waiting on the autism diagnosis for Oliver so he could get into a support program." With support from Family Promise, they found the right fit and a new job for Ben at the same time! "I started my new job and from there it was only a week or two. I found a new place, got the security deposit. When I found a good fit for his therapy and a good commute, I couldn't believe how fast it went."

Now Ben and Oliver have a place of their own, an apartment only a short trip from therapy and from work. "Me and my son have our own spot - it's ours. Somewhere comfortable to go home after school and work."

And Oliver's favorite thing? "We have internet," Ben smiles, "and he has a bedroom."

Now, Ben and Oliver look ahead toward horizons, big and small. This summer they're excited to get outside to explore a park near their new home. "We're hikers - Oliver loves to swim, and I'm trying to enroll in school for web development."

We wish them bright days ahead in their new place, with plenty of room to grow!

    
**Me and my son have our own spot - it's ours. Somewhere comfortable to go home after school and work. -BEN**

Dear Family Promise Friends,

As I say goodbye to one role at Family Promise of Grand Rapids, and hello to another at Family Promise National, I've been given a chance to reflect - on the time we've had together, the work we've done, the families we've seen thrive, and the growth ahead. In the last fourteen years, I've watched and celebrated as this community has given us the trust, capacity, and support to go from serving 50 families per year in 2009 to serving almost 1,000 families last year. That trust has allowed us to provide prevention, shelter, housing, and stabilization services to over 4000 families and over 10,000 children, ending their experience of homelessness and walking alongside them as they build a bright and sustainable future.



Family Promise of Grand Rapids was built by our community - by the dozens of faith communities that make up the Interfaith Hospitality Network, by the thousands of volunteers and donors that support this work every year, and by the thousands of families we've served. This community has given me the support to grow personally and professionally to do the work I feel called to do. I'm so proud of what we've accomplished and of the work we're growing towards as we change our name to reflect that growth in becoming Family Promise of West Michigan.

The Room to Grow campaign means the ability to provide robust housing resources, to grow in family and early childhood programming, to provide trauma-informed family stabilization services, and to scale our prevention work alongside our partners at Kent ISD and United Methodist Community House to ensure that a child never has to experience homelessness in the first place. The new work done through the community's support of this campaign will bring sustainability to Family Promise of West Michigan's ability to do this work for years to come. We could not do it without you.

As I leave this seat, I know that this work will continue to grow strategically, effectively, and compassionately. I'm excited and confident to leave it in the hands of the community who originated it and the collective Family Promise body who keep it marching forward. Thank you for being a part of this mission and for the tremendous impact we've had together in our work to end homelessness, one family at a time!

With an abundance of gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Cheryl'.

**Cheryl Schuch**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

The Room to Grow campaign means the ability to provide much needed family shelter rooms, robust housing resources, family and early childhood programming, trauma-informed family stabilization services, and to scale our prevention work to ensure that a child never has to experience homelessness in the first place. Check out our website to learn more.



## ~~~~~ Volunteer Highlight: Thank you T-Mobile! ~~~~~



For our partners at T-Mobile, community service is the core of their work! This local team serves causes across the community - Family Promise and beyond. They value empowering people with the tools they need to make essential connections in their work and through their volunteer time. Here at Family Promise, we've certainly put them to work with essential tools, with teams lead by Truck Store Manager, Cortney Wirick, and Sales Manager, Jason Marlowe,

conquering everything from painting to clean-up to furniture assembly through our Partners in Housing program. Through their time and elbow grease, these incredible volunteers have helped to get 3 homes ready for families moving out of emergency shelter by creating safe, comfortable spaces!

Thank you T-Mobile for your hard work, your support, and your passion for seeing families move home!





**LUNCH  
&  
LEARN**  
2023

### Save the Date!

You're invited to lunch! Join us at our 516 Cherry St. location for good food, good company, and the opportunity to explore all the ways to stay engaged with Family Promise as we end homelessness one family at a time! Upcoming dates include:

Thursday, April 27, 12:00-1:00PM  
Thursday, August 17, 12:00-1:00PM  
Thursday, October 19, 12:00-1:00PM

Space is limited. Please RSVP to Kevin Peterson at [kevinp@familypromisegr.org](mailto:kevinp@familypromisegr.org). We'll get your lunch order and take care of the rest!



### A New Donation Center Opens for FPWM!

We are thrilled to share the opening of our new Donation Center housed in Buck Creek Community Church! Donations are accepted by appointment on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Help us gather and distribute key basic needs items like shampoo, diapers, sheet sets, and nonperishable food items to the families we serve!

Call 616-608-8917 to donate!



### Come Together as a Giving Circle!

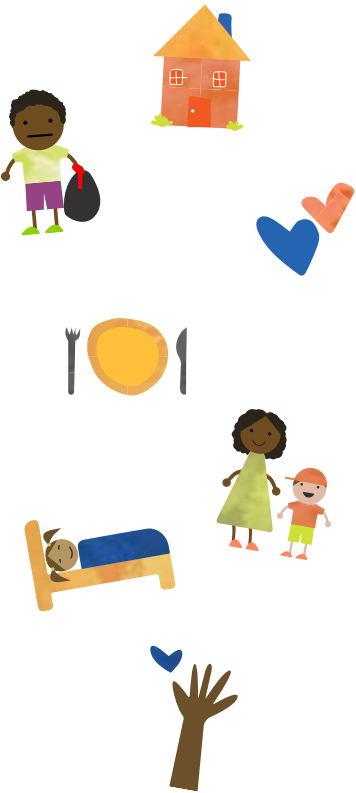
There's a new way to give! Join together with your friends, your bowling league, your Bible study, or your work team to create a conversation around housing in our community and maximize your impact on families experiencing homelessness by giving together. Your group can challenge themselves to raise a certain amount, commit monthly, or advocate for this mission.

Want to learn more about Giving Circles? Reach out to Lily at [lilyf@familypromisewm.org](mailto:lilyf@familypromisewm.org) or (616) 608-8917 for information and resources!



### Summer Family Fun!

This year's Family Frolic will be here before we know it and this year, it has a new home! Mark your calendars on **Sunday, July 23, 2023** at the Grand Rapids Children's Museum for an evening of family fun. This year's famous fundraiser will feature games, interactive exhibits, raffles, great food and, of course, our annual scavenger hunt. At this event we celebrate and raise awareness about the opportunity our community has to help families in West Michigan move home after experiencing homelessness. Save the date, tell your friends, and we can't wait to see you there!



## Room to Grow a Future for Families!

For 26 years, Family Promise of West Michigan has been *helping families build a stable future*. Our families need safe shelter, basic needs, and help finding a new home now more than ever! Your gifts make a difference. All gifts are tax deductible and are greatly appreciated. Make your gift online at [familypromisewm.org/donate](http://familypromisewm.org/donate) or use the envelope provided.

## In-Kind Donations

Considering a donation of items or organizing an in-kind donation drive to benefit our kids and families? We accept basic needs donations by appointment, and we love to learn about donation drives in advance so that we can support your efforts! Our highest needs at the moment are cleaning supplies, twin bedding, and nonperishable food items! Please contact Lily at [lilyf@familypromisewm.org](mailto:lilyf@familypromisewm.org) or (616) 608-8917 regarding these donations.



**Infants & Kids**  
Diapers  
Baby Wipes  
Pack and Plays



**Hygiene**  
Shampoo  
Conditioner  
Deodorant  
Toothpaste  
Toothbrushes  
Bodywash



**Small Appliances**  
Toasters  
Coffee Makers



**Kitchenware**  
Pots & Pans  
Dishes  
Cups  
Silverware



**Bedroom**  
Pillows  
Sheets (Twin & Queen)  
Air Mattresses



**Cleaning**  
Mops and Brooms  
Windex  
Multipurpose Spray  
Paper Towels



**Bath**  
Shower Curtains  
Shower Hooks  
Bath Towels



**Food**  
Mac and Cheese  
Cereal  
Canned  
Vegetables  
Peanut Butter  
Jelly  
Fruit Cup