

St. Elizabeth's Outreach Ministries

Grantee: Family Promise of Bergen County (formerly Interreligious Fellowship for Homeless Families)

Website: <http://www.bergenfamilypromise.org/bfp/>

Family Promise Network is a shelter and support program for homeless families with dependent children. Local congregations host the families overnight on a weekly rotating basis. Volunteers from host congregations, as well as neighboring support congregations, provide meals, sleep areas, and other support including educational and employment assistance. Families have access to a day center from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm to pursue employment opportunities. Case management is available to prepare the families for re-entry into the community and is a key element of this program.

Currently, 21 host congregations and 70 support congregations throughout Bergen County receive families in this program. The goal of this organization is ultimately to facilitate families' re-entry to a more traditional and stable home environment in-tact, and hopefully end the cycle of homelessness and desperation. Below is a brief snapshot of the programs and resources available:

- **New Leaf Transitional Housing**—Program where families are provided with living space for a period of 12-18 months as they transition from homelessness to independent living.
- **Break the Cycle Scholarship Fund**—Financial assistance provided to individuals who seek higher education or vocational school.
- **Walk-In Dinner**—Every day of the year, a congregation prepares and serves dinner to approximately 150 people at the Bergen County Housing, Health, and Human Service Center in Hackensack.
- **Camp Lots of Fun**—Provides a fun-filled, educational 2-week, end-of-summer day camp experience for 30 children currently or formerly in any of the organization's sheltering programs.
- **Weekends**—Allows the participants in the Family Promise Program to stay at the Day Center on Saturday, Sunday, and holiday mornings.
- **Financial Mentoring**—Families are matched with a trusted and nurturing mentor. They work together to develop money-management skills while prioritizing and achieving financial goals.
- **Infant and Child Daycare**—Provides financial support for daycare. This enables parents to maintain full-time employment.
- **After School Care**—Offers a safe, secure environment to children from the time school lets out until the van leaves for the Host Congregation. Volunteer teachers and students provide homework help and enrichment opportunities weekdays from 3:30 until 5:30 pm

Family Promise is heavily dependent on volunteers in order to provide many of the services. Approximately 4,500 volunteers contribute their time and talents to ensure success of the client families.

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