

Purpose

To consider the potential of renovating and using the facility at 1628 County Highway 10 NE to create a space run by Family Promise in Anoka County to provide shelter for 5-7 families experiencing homelessness in our community.

Overview

Family Promise in Anoka County (FPAC) seeks renovate and use the property at 1628 County Highway 10 NE to create a Family Promise Guest House, a family shelter that will allow 5-7 families to stay on-site while working through our case management process to achieve permanent financial and housing stability.

For the past 10 years, Family Promise, through our Interfaith Hospitality Network, has offered shelter and services to families experiencing homelessness in Anoka County through a network of faith communities. These communities offer their facilities and volunteers for a week at a time to provide meals, hospitality, and overnight shelter. While this rotational shelter system has served the community well, it has several limitations. The new Guest House would allow for improvements in the program delivery, efficiency, and outcomes in the following ways:

- By allowing families to stay in one place, the Guest House will help families stabilize without moving every week. This change will lower the barriers for work, allowing for broader work hours, more sleep, and increased success in school for guest families.
- The Guest House will allow Family Promise to double the number of families we serve and to increase impact in the community.
- The facility will be designed using trauma-informed principles to minimize stress and improve outcomes for children and parents alike.

Our vision for the Guest House is one that creates a welcoming, safe space where guests, staff, and volunteers can feel comfortable and secure as they work to change the trajectory of the lives of children and families experiencing homelessness in our community. For the families, the Guest House will include private sleeping rooms, bathroom facilities, a kitchen and eating area, laundry facilities, children's playroom, and quiet workspace. The Guest House will also include staff offices, storage, and reception areas to allow Family Promise to move all current program operations into one space. Significant renovation will be needed at the property to add the necessary bathrooms, security, and other services needed for the program to thrive.

Existing Operations

Family Promise in Anoka County serves families with minor children who are experiencing homelessness work toward permanent housing stability and a sustainable future. Family Promise currently serves 18-24 families per year in our rotational shelter program, with 3-4 families in the program at a time. Due to the nature of the community living, families entering the program may

not have any members who have active, untreated chemical or mental health issues, sex offenses, or recent violent felonies.

Families participate in the Family Promise shelter program for up to 90 days, with case-by-case extensions if necessary. As part of the agreement they make when they join the program, families are expected to find work or increase their income, children of school age are expected to attend school, and all guests are expected to work diligently toward stable housing and economic sustainability. Throughout their stay, guests work in concert with the Family Promise case manager on three primary goals – make money, save money, and find sustainable housing. Once a family graduates from the program, we offer continued support to ensure they maintain stable housing and do not return to homelessness.

Family Promise Participant Profile

While transitioning from a rotational shelter program in congregations to a static-site for families will significantly alter the current operations of Family Promise, we will continue to serve the same community – families experiencing homelessness in Anoka County. To participate, families must have minor children, be connected to Anoka County, and pass criminal background checks. The Family Promise program is primarily behavior-based, so families who are not following the guidelines or cause potentially dangerous or illegal situations will be removed from the program.

The average Family Promise guest family consists of four people, at least one of whom is under the age of six years. One parent is working at least one job but not making enough to afford an apartment on their wages. They have previously been evicted from housing, most likely for an inability to pay rent, and as a result are unable to get into housing quickly even once their financial situation has improved. If the family has a car, it is likely not something they can rely on long-term and the family needs to utilize public transportation. The average guest family has exhausted their personal and family resources prior to coming to the program and has no legal, viable place to live if not for the Family Promise program.

Summary

The needs of families experiencing homelessness in our community is great. The Family Promise Guest House will increase the number of families served through the Family Promise shelter program. The guest house will reduce trauma and disruption experienced by those staying in our shelter program to improve outcomes for the 5-7 families served at a time, allowing them to achieve economic and financial stability. We are seeking approval from the City of Spring Lake Park to move forward with this project at 1628 County Highway 10 NE.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



David Frei
Executive Director
Family Promise in Anoka County