

A Season of Growing

New Happenings at Family Promise of Sussex County

A new year means opportunities for renewal and growth. We have started 2023 with renewed motivation and focus on how to best serve our clients and how to most effectively get our message out to the community. Our staff is working very hard to increase our engagement with our community partners as well as facilitate new partnerships.

As Family Promise of Sussex County has had an increase in requests for services, our staffing and location needs have grown as well. We are excited to announce that FPSC has opened a computer lab in a new location! You can read more about where our new space is and see photos, in this newsletter.



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FPSC at a Glance



The mission of Family Promise of Sussex County is to secure housing stability and sustainability for those in crisis... because everyone deserves a home.

Our approach involves prevention services before families become homeless, shelter to help families experiencing homelessness, and housing stabilization programs once families have secured housing. *We have been serving the community for 25 years!*

Housing Programs

Prevention

Preventing families from being evicted and entering homelessness is an essential element of the Family Promise mission and the most cost-effective way to proactively address this crisis. Prevention costs a fraction of what sheltering a family costs.

Prevention includes formal shelter diversion programs that provide rental assistance and landlord mediation, and utilize a community-based approach that keep families housed.

Stabilization

Stabilization supports families exiting shelter to secure and maintain housing. The goal is not simply getting families into housing; it is keeping them in housing. Key to this is tapping into the diverse resources our community provides.

Through intensive case management, housing specialists create the basis for stability that lifts families from poverty and permits them to aspire to the future every family deserves.

Housing Navigator

Housing Navigators work towards building relationships and making connections with New Jersey landlords to connect them with potential renters and help navigate Housing Voucher programs. Housing Navigators also match renters with landlords to help connect them with local housing opportunities.

Utility Assistance

Utilities such as electricity, water, and heating are fundamental to ensuring a home is habitable. Especially in the winter months, heating costs can increase significantly, causing strain on a family's income. Home Energy Assistance Programs (LIHEAP/USF) help keep families safe and healthy by assisting families with energy costs associated with home energy bills, heating, and water bills.

Family Promise of Sussex County can help individuals and families apply for these federal programs to help minimize the financial burden of high energy costs.

In 2022

1,895
Households



Received Housing and Support Services

674
Households



Received Housing Stabilization Services

705
Households



Received Utility Assistance Services

516
Households



Received Other Supportive Services

Events at FPSC

In January, FPSC participated in the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count. PIT counts began in the early 2000s, through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to understand how to address homelessness in communities by counting individuals/families experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. A survey is conducted by trained staff or volunteers, which allow unsheltered individuals to record their needs and housing status.

In conjunction with other county agencies, FPSC staff headed out, carrying kits of blankets, hats, gloves, toiletries and information with them, into local areas where unhoused individuals have been known to reside. Knowing how many people in a community need services/shelter is important. This information will impact future funding and influence federal, state and local policies. Results of PIT surveys will also influence the ways and the types of services community agencies provide.



In February, our staff had a training event provided by The Center for Prevention and Counseling on Narcan and opioids. We learned that 22 million Americans have a substance use disorder and that the United States consumes over 80% of the world's opioids, despite only being 4% of the world's population. The statistics tell us that we all know someone who battles addiction, so it is best to be prepared and educated. We now feel very prepared to respond to an overdose and know how to administer a possibly life-saving dose of Narcan. If you, or someone you know, needs help contact the Sussex County Recovery Helpline at 844-SC-CLEAR, call or text 24/7.

On Saturday, March 18th, an enthusiastic group of FPSC staff and their families marched with other Newton businesses and groups at the Newton St Patrick's Day parade. It was a cold, but great day to get our message out to the community!



Sparta Computer Lab

Introducing Our New Location

Our brand-new Computer Lab is located in the First Presbyterian Church of Sparta. The Computer Lab is a space where our clients can search for jobs, apply for other means of assistance, work on resumes and other ways of stabilizing their current circumstances. We have three full-time staff working in this new space.

The Sparta Computer Lab was funded, in part, by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for our Shelter Diversion Program.

The Shelter Diversion Program keeps those at-risk of homelessness from entering shelters or becoming homeless. A recognized best practice of preventing homelessness, Shelter Diversion is the most cost-effective and has the best results (strategiestoendhomelessness.org).



Those who are at risk for homelessness are people who are facing imminent eviction, have already lost their housing, are staying with friends or family, or do not have stable housing and are running out of places to stay. The program provides financial assistance, as well as case management.

FPSC will assist individuals and families within Sussex County who are currently unhoused or will be in the next 14 days. Our goal is to secure stable and sustainable housing for everyone and the Sparta Computer lab is another way to help more of the at-risk population in Sussex County.

Pathways to Progress



Sandra had been residing with her sister, but after a disagreement, Sandra was no longer welcome and at high risk for becoming homeless. FPSC used mediation to come up with a plan that both Sandra and her sister agreed upon so she could move back into the sister's house. FPSC was also able to provide the client's sister with utility assistance until more stable housing could be secured.



Pat had left her abusive spouse and was starting over. When she tried to set up utility service in her new residence, she found out her ex-spouse had kept all the bills in her name and did not pay them. She was now over \$3,000.00 in arrears, and payment would need to be made to continue utility services. Through the Universal Service Fund Fresh Start program, FPSC helped Pat avoid utility shut offs and get her payments back on track.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are **3** types of homelessness

- Chronic**
Shelters function similarly to long-term housing, typically utilized by older individuals often with disabilities or substance abuse problems.
- Transitional**
Shelters are used for a short time, typically by younger individuals who have become homeless due to a catastrophic event.
- Episodic**
Shelters are frequently used, typically by younger, chronically unemployed individuals with mental health and substance abuse problems.

Source: National Coalition for the Homeless

Matt and Ann were facing eviction due to an unhealthy living situation of their own making. With limited resources and nowhere else to go, they were at-risk of becoming homeless. Through FPSC's intensive case management services, Matt and Ann were able to get their apartment back to an acceptable state. After the landlord revisited the apartment, it was agreed that Matt and Ann could continue their lease. They would remain in stable housing and now had the tools to sustain it.



A couple who lost their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits needed to re-apply but were having trouble navigating the online application. Their case manager was able to guide them through the application and they were approved to receive SNAP again.





Practicing Mindfulness

Mindfulness helps us separate ourselves from our thoughts and responses, by interrupting our instinctive way of reacting to them. While this sounds very simple, it is not necessarily very easy.

The goal of mindfulness is not to achieve a state of superhuman peace, but to remain present in the moment while observing your thoughts and feelings without judgment. It is natural to feel your mind wander, perhaps to a current worry or future task, practice recognizing that and bring your focus back to the present.

As you spend time practicing mindfulness, you'll find the act of letting thoughts and feelings pass without judgment easier and more natural. You may even begin to feel kinder, calmer, and more patient. What they say is true, practice makes progress!



Source: www.mindful.org




What is Mindfulness?









Mindfulness is the state of being fully connected to the present moment, and a way to take a step back from autopilot to gain clarity and focus

“Mindfulness helps us awaken, and by reflecting on the mind we are enabled to make choices and thus change becomes possible”

Think of your automatic mind like a hamster wheel  The uncontrollable events of life and thoughts continue to push the wheel non-stop...  Mindfulness lets you get off the wheel, catch your breath and regain focus

The Benefits of Mindfulness

 LIVE IN THE NOW
FIND CALM
BE A HAPPIER PERSON

1. LEAVE THE PAST WHERE IT BELONGS 
2. YOU CAN'T CONTROL THE FUTURE 
3. TREAT THE PRESENT LIKE A GIFT 
4. QUIET YOUR MENTAL CHATTER 
5. BE YOUR BEST SELF 
6. THE POWER OF GRATITUDE 
7. DON'T DWELL ON NEGATIVES 
8. FACE YOUR STRUGGLES 

**Do all you can,
with what you have,
in the time you have,
in the place you are.**

-Nkosi Johnson



Did you know...

Gardeners & farmers have been gardening by the moon phases for ages?

The idea behind Gardening by the Moon is that the moon's phases affect plant growth.

Just as the Moon's gravitational pull has an effect on tides, it also affects moisture in the soil!

It is believed seeds will absorb more water during the full & new moons as moisture is pulled to the soil's surface. This causes seeds to swell, resulting in greater germination and stronger plants.

To plant by the Moon, follow these guidelines:

- **Waxing Moon** (*moonlight increasing*): Encourages leaf & stem growth. Plant annual flowers, fruits & vegetables that bear crops above ground.
 - Corn, Tomatoes, Squash
- **Waning Moon** (*moonlight decreasing*): Encourages root, tuber & bulb growth. Plant flowering bulbs, biennial & perennial flowers, fruits & vegetables that bear crops below ground.
 - Onions, Carrots, Beets

Source: Farmer's Almanac



Roasted Mixed Potatoes with Spring Herbs & Burrata

from Half-Baked Harvest

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 4tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 2lbs mixed potatoes, chopped into similar size chunks
- 1 lemon, juice plus zest
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or grated
- kosher salt and black pepper
- 1/4 cup fresh dill, roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh chives
- 8 oz burrata cheese, torn

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F.
- On a large baking sheet, toss together 2 tbsp olive oil, potatoes, garlic, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Transfer to oven and roast for 20 minutes, toss and continue roasting another 20-25 minutes or until golden and crisp.
- Meanwhile, in a small bowl combine remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, dill, basil, chives, and lemon zest. Season with salt and pepper.
- Remove the potatoes from the oven and transfer to a serving plate. Break the burrata over the potatoes and then drizzle with the lemon herb mix. Eat!

VOLUNTEERS

HOSTING A SUPPLY DRIVE FAQ'S

Why should I host a supply drive?

Supply drives are effective because they meet a present and urgent need for our clients. When you collect supplies, we are able to use funds elsewhere to fulfill our mission to help those experiencing a housing crisis. Supply drives are also great service opportunities. Talk with your clubs, schools, scouting troops, youth groups, fraternities/sororities, neighborhoods, congregations, workplaces, etc!

How do you host a supply drive?

First, set a date, time, and location for the collection. This can be a one-day event, weekend, or continue over a period of several weeks. Then, you will promote your drive. Use social media and/or post flyers at your school, workplace, local business, place of worship, etc. Next, comes the fun part: COLLECT! Set out donation bins in lobbies of schools/local businesses or conduct porch pick up from donors' homes. Finally, deliver the collected items to our office.

What can I collect for a supply drive?

We can accept any BRAND NEW: Toiletries, hygiene products, socks, coats, blankets, gloves, hats and shelf-stable food items. After all donations are collected, make sure to check items before delivering them. All items should be unopened and without significant damage. If you are collecting any food items make sure they aren't expired.

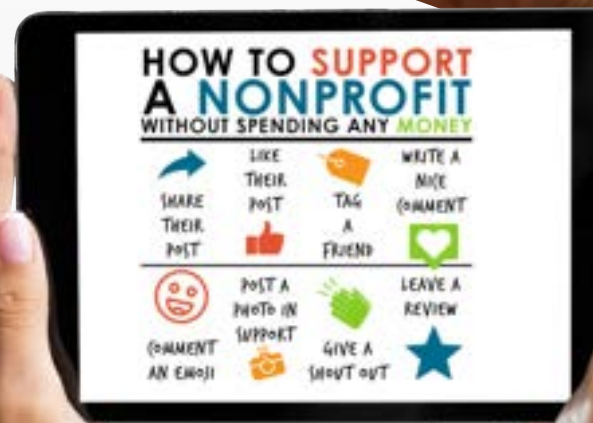
If you are interested in learning more or want to begin facilitating a supply drive, Contact Rachel at rgcampbell@familypromisesussex.org

Check out the FPSC page on the **POINT** app to see our upcoming volunteer opportunities!



No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

Charles Dickens





Major Donors



American Legion Post 86, Sons of the American Legion Post 86, and Band of Brothers for a donation of \$6,000.



German Christmas Market for their grant of \$3,500.



William & Mary Bennet for their donation of toiletries and shelf-stable food.

I cannot do all the good that the world needs, but the world needs all the good that I can do.
JANA STANFIELD



Newton Medical Center for their grant of \$5,000.

Thank You!



Family Promise of Sussex County

“Bid with Us to Build a Better Future” Online Auction Fundraiser



Online bidding will take place **May 31 at 12pm - June 2 at 8pm**
Live event will be held on **Friday, June 2, 2023, 5:30-8:30pm**



*Providing housing stability for over **25 years***

*Housing and Support Services delivered to **1895** households in 2022*

You can look forward to bidding on items such as:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Vacation home stays | Wine and Spirits |
| Designer goods and fine jewelry | Sporting and outdoor equipment |
| Event tickets and box seating | Electronics and popular gadgets |
| Gift cards to dining, spas, and travel | Classes, outings, fun experiences |

Look for exciting items to be featured on our social media pages!