

Vol I: Settling into Summer



Summer Should Be Fun For Everyone

For many people, summer is synonymous with relaxation and fun. It's a time for vacations, beach trips, barbecues, and outdoor activities. Schools are out, making time for family and friends. Many use this time to unwind, travel, and enjoy nature. For those experiencing homelessness, summer is far from a carefree season. Instead of relaxation, summer brings new dangers and challenges. The intense heat and sun exposure can be life-threatening for those who lack access to shelter or cooling centers. Dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke are common risks as staying cool and hydrated becomes a constant battle. While many enjoy the pleasures of summer, for those experiencing homelessness, the season is full of hardship, underscoring the stark disparities in experiences and the urgent need for supportive measures and resources.



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Casino Night Recap

On May 16th, 200 people filled the Conservatory at the Sussex County Fairgrounds to raise money for Family Promise of Sussex County. The sold-out Betting on a Better Future: All-In to End Homelessness Casino Night event brought agency supporters together to help individuals and families in our community who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Guests enjoyed an evening of casino-themed activities and games. Winners received coupons that could be used to enter to win prizes. DJ Ray Sikora supplied the soundtrack for the night and led enthusiastic guests in several rounds of karaoke, with dancing and a lively conga line.

A buffet dinner was catered by Dominick's with coffee and desserts donated by Holland American Bakery, Starbucks, and Clove Brook Market. Krogh's Restaurant & Brew Pub donated the champagne toast that started the evening and provided a cash bar.

At the end of the night, Family Promise of Sussex County raffled off prizes valued at over \$10,000, which were donated by area businesses.

The event was sponsored by Thor Labs, Custom Wood Furniture, Purnell Family Giving Trust, Visions Federal Credit Union, Salon Fig, Junior Women's League of Sparta, Fredon Animal Hospital, DeBoer's Auto, Cornerstone Title & Settlement and many others.

The funds raised at our Casino Night event will go to support our neighbors in Sussex County who are experiencing a housing crisis and help bring an end to homelessness in our community.

Thank you to all who attended and helped make this event a great success. We can't wait to see you all again next year!



FPSC at a Glance

Shelter and Transitional Housing



Impact
9 households

Housing Programs/Services



Impact
61 households

CEDD (Comprehensive Eviction Diversion Defense)



Impact
98 households

Mobile Outreach



Impact
103 households

LIHEAP



Impact
527 households

in the first 6
months of 2024

Community Corner

Free Pop-up Thrift Shop with:



On Saturday, June 22nd, Family Promise of Sussex County and Nick's Hope co-hosted our Free Pop-Up Thrift Shop at the First Presbyterian Church of Newton on High Street. The spacious church gymnasium was completely transformed into a boutique where visitors could browse through rows of neatly organized clothing racks. This event, accessible to the general public, provided a unique opportunity for individuals and families to browse and take home items that met their needs. FPSC and Nick's Hope plan to host another Free Pop-Up Thrift Shop on November 23rd. Hope to see you there!



Supreme Court to Decide if Homelessness Can be Treated as a Crime

The Supreme Court's decision in *Grant's Pass v. Johnson* has implications for how the unsheltered are treated across the country.

By: Laura Busch

For the first time in decades, the issue of homelessness has reached the country's highest court. The Supreme Court recently heard arguments on April 22nd in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, and the court's final decision in the case could have national implications on how states and cities regulate their homeless populations and encampments.

Grants Pass is a small city in Oregon that, like many across the country, has a shortage of affordable housing and, in their case, also has no permanent shelter. The city prohibits sleeping in public and enforces this law with costly fines and 30-day jail sentences. This type of law isn't uncommon. In fact, according to the National Homelessness Law Center (NHLC), 15 states have similar laws and per NPR, Tennessee goes so far as to treat public sleeping as a felony punishable with up to six years in prison.

The issue for the Supreme Court is, are these laws in violation of the Eight Amendment which protects against cruel and unusual punishment? Many lower courts have concluded that people should not be prosecuted or punished for a situation that is more a consequence of a lack of affordable housing and high barriers imposed for securing any adequate housing that may be available. It becomes a "human rights" issue when someone's unsheltered status alone could make them criminal.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition found in 2023, "a national shortage of 7.3M affordable and available rental homes for low-income renters." These renters are defined as having income that is 30% of their area median income. This same organization cites New Jersey as having only 30 available and affordable rental units for every 100 extremely low-income renters seeking housing.

Instead of local and state governments investing in more affordable housing development, many are choosing to arrest and incarcerate people experiencing homelessness. Per NHLC, between 2006 and 2019, there was a 92% increase in citywide bans on camping, a 103% increase in loitering bans and a 213% increase in bans on living in vehicles. This trend toward criminalization is a decision that is costing taxpayers \$83,000 per person annually according to an article published by Vera.

Regarding the Court's decision, a New York Times article noted "the court appeared split along ideological lines in the case," with some feeling that the justices are leaning in support of Grants Pass. With the Court's term winding down, their decision in Grants Pass is expected to come at any time.

**Since the article was written, The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Grants Pass. This decision will allow towns to arrest individuals for sleeping in a public place even when there are no other adequate shelter options provided.

Hear Their Stories



Luke, a 31-year-old male, lived in his car after losing a limb in a lawn mower accident. Not only is he healing from the loss of his limb, but also from the trauma of not having a place to recover. Through our programs, FPSC sheltered him through our transitional housing program and intensive case management with a case manager. After being stabilized, Luke can now focus on his recovery and is beginning to learn to walk with a prosthetic while we search for housing that meets his needs.

Donor Spotlight

Business

Thor Labs

For being a major sponsor at our Casino Night Fundraiser!

thank you

Individual

Dave Gardner and Kate Osenbach

For donating financial assistance to help pay rent for a family of 4!

thank you

In-kind

Trevor Christ

For donating to our food pantry!

thank you

Volunteers

Colleen Duffy & the FPC Youth Group

For hosting a supply drive

thank you

We appreciate
all that you do

From the Hearth

Blueberry Streusel Muffins

Prep time: 15 Minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Total time: 35 minutes
Yield: 10 muffins



For the streusel

¼ cup
unsalted
butter, melted

1/3 cup
granulated
sugar

2/3 cup all-
purpose flour

For the blueberry muffins

½ cup unsalted butter, melted
1 cup granulated sugar
2 eggs, room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 Tablespoons Greek yogurt
6 Tablespoons buttermilk
1 Tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 cups + 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Grease 10 standard size muffin tins and line with cupcake liners. Set aside.
2. In a small mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients for the streusel, using a fork or a pastry cutter to stir together until the mixture resembles wet sand.
3. In a large mixing bowl combine the melted butter and granulated sugar, beating until combined. Add the eggs one at a time. Add the Greek yogurt, buttermilk, and vanilla extract.
4. Add 2 cups flour, baking powder, and salt. Mix until it begins to come together (not fully incorporated). Toss the blueberries with the additional 2 Tablespoons of flour. Fold the blueberries into the batter, mixing only until combined. Batter will be thick.
5. Scoop batter into prepared muffin tins, filling about 3/4 of the way. You can use a large cookie scoop or a 1/4 cup measure to keep things consistent.
6. Sprinkle the tops of each muffin with about 2 Tablespoons of the streusel mixture, pressing the streusel gently into the batter so it sticks.
7. Bake for 5 minutes at 425°F, then turn oven down to 375°F and bake for an additional 15 minutes, until muffins are golden brown and spring back to the touch.
8. Remove from oven and allow to cool for at least 15 minutes before eating!

Local Seniors Face High Rents and Housing Insecurity

Seniors on a fixed income are struggling with increasing rent costs and rising inflation.

By Stephanie Glowatski

A rising number of seniors in northern New Jersey and across the nation are burdened by high housing costs, meaning they spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing. A 2023 study by Harvard University found 70 percent of seniors making \$25,000 or less spend 30 percent or more of their income on their monthly rent. For seniors with mortgages in the same income category, over 90 percent are burdened by housing cost. To put that into perspective, the Social Security Administration reports the average monthly Social Security retirement benefit as of January 2024 is \$1,907, which translates to only \$22,884 annually.

Additionally, income for seniors is covering less as cost-of-living expenses increase. A study by UMASS Boston found “the average Social Security benefit covers just 68% of basic living expenses of housing, food, transportation, and health care for a single renter in 2021.” The research also shows the “gap between Social Security benefits and what it takes to get by is especially problematic for older adults who rely largely or entirely on Social Security, including nearly a quarter of adults aged 65 or older who depend on Social Security for 90% or more of their family income.”

Seniors on a fixed income have also been facing a rise in rent prices. The Pew Research Center reported an 18 percent increase in rent between 2017 and 2022. Additionally, the current median cost of an apartment in Sussex County is \$1,900 a month according to Zillow. Availability of apartments is also limited, and current tenants often face rent increases from their landlords to keep pace with the market. Additionally, area waitlists for affordable senior housing are several years long.



Ways to Give



check out our website for more information on donating and volunteering!

WHAT'S NEXT?



At Family Promise of Sussex County



Family Promise of Sussex County's Summer Appeal

Your support can make a critical difference. Your contributions can provide essential resources and help Family Promise of Sussex County continue the mission of ending homelessness in Sussex County. Together, we can help ensure that everyone has a safe and supportive place to live, no matter the season...because everyone deserves a home.

Come See Us at the Fair!

Friday, August 2nd, 2024, 5:00pm - 10:00pm

Family Promise of Sussex County will be the nonprofit spotlight on Friday, August 2nd. FPSC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that helps those facing a housing crisis stabilize their housing. Make sure to stop by and learn about Family Promise of Sussex County and what we do!



Family Promise of Sussex County Hosts

Trivia Night at O'Reilly's Pub and Grill -

August 26th, 2024 Trivia starts at 6:00pm

Join us at O'Reilly's Pub and Grill and test your knowledge, enjoy delicious food and drinks, and support a great cause! Our trivia game is free to play. This month's trivia theme is Comic Con!

Don't forget your costume!



Summer to be You

Every Wednesday from 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Meet other LGBTQ+ teens from schools around the county, share stories and experiences, and make friends for the summer and beyond! Learn effective communication, coping skills, and partake in weekly support sessions with other LGBTQ+ high schoolers.

For more information call 973-579-1180

In Our Community



Boots, Bourbon & Barbecue

Saturday, August 24th, 2024,

Doors open at 5:00pm



Join the Fairgrounds for a night of farm to fair dinner, line dancing, live auctions, wagon rides, and more! Tickets are \$75 per person.



Sussex County Day -

September 15th, 2024, 12:00pm - 4:00pm

Enjoy a free family fun day celebrating everything wonderful about Sussex County! Enjoy the classic car show, children's activities, demonstrations, live music, cooking competition, exhibits, mechanical bull rides, food and more!

Follow us on Socials



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