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Family Promise Opens New Day Center in Evanston



By Betty Stebbins Yesterday at 4:59 p.m.



Scout Sam Shepard and crew help renovate the new Family Promise Day Center

Family Promise recently opened its new Day Center in the heart of Evanston at the Church House of the First Congregational Church of Evanston on Hinman Avenue. The new location offers expanded space and services for guests of Family Promise, a local not-for-profit organization that provides families with young children, who are homeless or at risk for becoming homeless, with a supported pathway to self-sufficiency.

The new Day Center offers numerous improvements, including an enhanced family room where parents have access to quiet work areas, computers, and phones necessary to secure employment and seek permanent housing.

The new facility also provides expanded washrooms for men and women, additional space for families to read and play together, space for training, office space for administrative staff and volunteers, and access to additional areas in the building including a multi-purpose room/gym for children's recreation.

The centrally located neighborhood is conveniently close to public transportation, making it very accessible for guests and volunteers. There is also a park and playground nearby for the children of guest families to play.

Family Promise Network Director Tracy McKeithen is thrilled with the new location. "The new space has been really great. Our staff and guest families love it!"

Board member Brek Peterson led the relocation and renovation project and, thanks to some great work by many volunteers, Family Promise was able to move into the new space at the end of March on schedule.

Local Boy Scout Sam Shepard, of Troop 9 in Wilmette, selected the Family Promise Day Center renovation for his Eagle Scout Project. Shepard, with support from his father Aaron, members of his troop and other volunteers, rebuilt and painted walls for the shower, bath and laundry areas. Additionally, Shepard raised more than \$1600 in cash for the project plus an additional \$300 in Home Depot coupons that he used for materials.

Several volunteers from Habitat for Humanity Lake County, led by Bruce Andersen, provided their time and talent to help with the renovations as well. Current and former guests of Family Promise also contributed their time to assist with the renovation so that more families in need can benefit. And numerous volunteers from Family Promise's network of congregations provided additional hands to complete painting, flooring, moving and a myriad of other jobs.

Family Promise launched a Capital Campaign in March to fund the costs of the Day Center renovation, including plumbing and electrical work that needed to be done by licensed professionals, as well as materials and supplies to complete the project.

Board President Laurel Tyler, in announcing the new Campaign stated, "In just a few years, Family Promise has brought together an amazing group of generous congregations to support our families, an incredibly dedicated board, and a vast network of volunteers, all of whom have made this program a success. Now, we are thrilled to move into a wonderful building, which offers our guests warm, inviting spaces and an environment conducive to receiving professional services. Here, families can care for their kids while they work to find a home."

According to Tyler, "Our goal is to raise \$21,000 by July 31 as well as use this opportunity to raise awareness about our wonderful, unique program. The board and I look forward to working together with the community to meet our goals."

Save the Date!

Join Family Promise to officially open the new Day Center on Sunday, May 6, 2012, from 4 to 6 p.m., at 1417 Hinman Avenue (the Church House of The First Congregational Church of Evanston). Please come to tour our new space and learn about Family Promise up close and personal.

Family Promise is a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit with a mission of helping families in homeless situations return quickly to permanent housing. It is the only organization on the North Shore to provide emergency housing, meals, job search assistance and other support services for families, while working to address the causes of their homelessness and assist in finding housing.