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**PROMISE HAVEN**

**COORDINATOR HANDBOOK**

**2025**

ABOUT FAMILY PROMISE

Family Promise is the leading national organization helping low-income families achieve lasting independence. We help families accomplish this goal by providing shelter, meals, and support services for homeless families and through programs designed to address the underlying causes of homelessness. Family Promise is founded on the belief that Americans are compassionate people who want to make a difference. Our promise has been to link those in need with those who want to help. More than thirty years and 200,000 volunteers later, our pledge is ever broader and deeper.

Over the past three decades, Family Promise has continued to expand our scope and our reach. Today, we comprise more than 200 Affiliates across 43 states and are the leading national nonprofit addressing the issue of family homelessness.

Family Promise allows communities to develop comprehensive, holistic solutions for families facing homelessness.

Families come to us in crisis; our approach of coordinated compassion helps them rebuild their lives with new skills and ongoing support to prepare them for a successful future.



*Dear Friend,*

*Thank you for taking a leadership role as a coordinator for Family Promise of Gwinnett. As a coordinator, your gift of service, your guidance and support, are not only to guest families but also to members of your congregation.*

*With your help, volunteers from youth to seniors will find their roles in your congregation’s participation. They may choose to prepare meals, talk with guests, play with children, help with homework, organize activities, or coordinate donations.. Through all these activities, your volunteers will participate in an outreach to help families experiencing homelessness achieve independence.*

*This Family Promise Gwinnett Guide for Volunteer Coordinators will help you implement and manage the program with your congregation. This guide, together with the Family Promise Guide for Volunteer Hosts, addresses the Family Promise National policies and procedures, and promotes the spirit of hospitality in which the work of a mission partner is accomplished. Experience, along with the information presented in these Family Promise publications, will help you provide a program that benefits both guests and volunteers.*

*Welcome to the growing family of Family Promise of Gwinnett’s mission partners. We thank you for your commitment to mobilize your congregation to help end homelessness one family at a time.*

*Sincerely,*

*Shape

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*Carol Love*

*Executive Director, Family Promise of Gwinnett*

I. The Role of Volunteer and Coordinators

The success of Family Promise of Gwinnett’s shelter program at Promise Haven depends, in part, upon the efforts and enthusiasm of hundreds of volunteers. The volunteer who organizes the other volunteers and manages the program during their host week at Promise Haven, is called a the volunteer coordinator. The coordinator takes overall responsibility for ensuring that the host week at Promise Haven runs smoothly.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteer Coordinators are the liaison between Family Promise of Gwinnett County and the organization they represent. They interact with volunteers, guests, clergy, and the Affiliate Executive Director, Community Engagement Coordinator, Promise Haven House Manager and staff. Good communication skills, flexibility, and diplomacy are essential for the job. Additional responsibilities include the following:

* Attending training provided by Family Promise of Gwinnett staff and subsequent annual training by the Affiliate
* Reading Family Promise’s Guide for Volunteer Coordinators
* Attending Family Promise Volunteer Coordinator meetings.
* Recruiting volunteers from their organization.
* Communicating with the Executive Director and Community Engagement Coordinator
* Handling responsibilities such as scheduling, meals, supplies, activities, donations
* Communicating policy, procedures, and other information to volunteers, ensuring guest confidentiality, and addressing any issues concerning congregation volunteers
* Ensuring all supplies are donated at Promise Haven for the week (cleaning, diapers, detergent, etc.)
* Ensure volunteers have submitted their application to Family Promise of Gwinnett.

We encourage groups to have more than one volunteer coordinator; thus, responsibilities are shared. It allows the group more flexibility in case one coordinator is not available for the host week. We recommend that coordinators serve for two to three years to encourage wider participation in leadership roles.

The Volunteer Coordinator Committee

The Volunteer Coordinator Committee is composed of the primary coordinator of each host group and the Affiliate Executive Director or other staff.

The Volunteer Coordinator Committee’s purposes are as follows:

* Build consistency in the program
* Disseminate information among all Family Promise participants
* Address issues of concern
* Share best practices

The Volunteer Coordinator Committee meets bi-monthly on the 3rd Tuesday.

In person meetings: January, March, September, November

Zoom meetings: May and July

At meetings, members will do the following:

* Share successes
* Identify issues that need to be addressed
* Work together to solve problems
* Foster program continuity and community
* Work on various Affiliate needs, such as special events, fundraising, and volunteer training
* Hear from Affiliate staff issues of importance

Highlights of the Volunteer Coordinator Committee meetings are recorded and distributed to all members. A committee secretary should be appointed annually for this task.

The Volunteer Coordinator Committee is invaluable to the members and to the ongoing development of the Family Promise program. All volunteer coordinators (or their alternates) should attend each meeting and participate as fully as possible.

II. Volunteer Management

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Organizations that partner with Promise Haven commit to supporting our families by providing meals, snack supplies, essential needs, and a hot dinner. This support plays a vital role in helping families achieve their program goals of saving money and securing housing within 90 days. By volunteering to provide dinner, you can make a direct impact. Additionally, there are opportunities for volunteers to offer fellowship and hospitality, creating meaningful connections while making a difference in the lives of families in need. This is a wonderful way for your community to come together and create lasting change.

|  |  |
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| A heart on a plate with a fork and knife  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  *Make a meaningful impact by serving as a Dinner Host for families at Promise Haven! This volunteer role involves preparing or providing a meal and creating a warm, welcoming environment for families during dinner time. Your hospitality can bring comfort and encouragement to those in need.* | Responsibilities:   * Prepare or provide a nutritious dinner for families (for up to 11 individuals). * Set up the meal and ensure it is ready by the designated time. * Engage with families in a friendly, respectful manner, fostering a sense of community.   Time Commitment:   * Shopping and cooking the meal at home or picking it up from a restaurant. * Dinner will be delivered by 6:15PM. Dinner is served at 6:30PM * Fellowship with the families until 7:30PM (We encourage our dinner hosts to stay and eat with our families; however, we understand if you are only able to drop off the meal. |
| A logo of people holding a heart  AI-generated content may be incorrect. | As an Evening Fellowship Host at Promise Haven, you’ll help create a warm, supportive environment for families. Share a hot meal, assist with homework, play with children, and offer encouragement through meaningful connection. Your presence fosters community, hope, and a sense of belonging. Join us and make a difference, one evening at a time.  Time Commitment: Arrive between 6:15PM and 6:30PM and leave around 7:30PM. |
| A hand giving a heart to another hand  AI-generated content may be incorrect. | You play a vital role in ensuring that families in our care have access to essential meals and basic needs. Your generosity and support help ease the burdens of families experiencing challenging times, offering them nourishment, encouragement, and a sense of stability.  Responsibilities:   * Provide breakfast, snacks, and lunch items for families staying in our shelter. * Supply basic needs, such as toiletries, cleaning supplies, or baby items, as needed. * Donate or coordinate the collection of gas cards or grocery gift cards to assist families with transportation and grocery expenses.   Time Commitment:  Flexible, based on your availability and the needs of the program. |

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are needed as dinner and evening hosts each host week. Other volunteers may be needed to help with supplies, plan activities for children, organize donations, but the majority of the work for the host week is performed by the hosts and meal preparers.

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A light bulb with rays of light shining through it

AI-generated content may be incorrect.RECRUITING IDEAS

Family Promise of Gwinnett offers a brochure specifically designed for congregation. This brochure details what it looks like to serve at Promise Haven during the week. It’s a great way to inform and prepare your members for their volunteer experience.

Here are some techniques for recruiting volunteers for your host week:

* Sponsor a Sign-up Saturday or Sunday one month before host week. Describe the program and announce the sign-up event in your congregation’s newsletter. Enclose a flyer about sign-up in the worship service bulletin. Place a sign-up board in a central location for sign-up after services.
* Announce the upcoming host week from the pulpit. The clergyperson or primary coordinator can encourage participation by making this announcement and by drawing attention to the notices in the bulletin and newsletter.
* Phone and e-mail people who have already expressed interest in the program or who have volunteered previously.
* Ask volunteers to deliver testimonials about their positive volunteer experiences or to make announcements during worship services.
* Encourage groups such as women’s circles, Bible study groups, and youth groups, to participate in the program by working together to prepare meals, help with setup or takedown, or organize children’s activities.
* Keep a list of volunteers from the first host week. One month before hosting again, e-mail each volunteer a blank schedule with time slots for each job. Ask volunteers to return the schedule or call the coordinator with their time preferences. Then post a schedule with the remaining time slots that need to be filled.

Keeping the Family Promise program visible throughout the year will help with recruiting volunteers. The clergy-person’s ongoing support, through public recognition of the work of volunteers and the program, is vital. Stories about Family Promise in the congregation’s bulletin or newsletter can help to maintain interest in the program. Family Promise of Gwinnett sends out a monthly newsletter, please forward this to all volunteers, clergy and staff members.

Be sure to send the volunteer application link to all of those interested in serving.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Once recruited, volunteers will need training materials to be comfortable and successful in their roles. Volunteer training includes information about Family Promise of Gwinnett and guidance in host/guest relationships and further helps increase their understanding of homelessness. Things to supply to your volunteers.

**Send your Volunteers the following information:**

1. Volunteer Application:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CoiLwCYnrWSaKQPakyvMXHWr2hWCVGxfktQIGwGibDU/edit>

1. Volunteer Host Handbook. This serves as an essential resource for understanding how to interact with our families. The handbook offers guidance on communication, expectations, and tips for making the volunteer experience as meaningful and supportive as possible.
2. Family Promise Introduction Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmtY2T08ynw&t=2s>

1. Why YOU should volunteer with Family Promise Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WulJjnY4YzM&t=218s>

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

You can support your volunteers by addressing challenges they might experience. It is best that you address these to your volunteers the week before your host week. These will also be included in the Volunteer Host Handbook.

**Parenting** **Challenges**

Family Promise guests, like all other people, have a wide range of parenting styles and skills. Some volunteers may have difficulty observing what they consider (or what indeed is) poor parenting. Parents are responsible for their children while the family is a guest with Family Promise. You might remind volunteers they can assist parents by engaging children in enjoyable activities, with the parents’ permission and in their presence. Sometimes parents just need a break.

Of course, witnessed or suspected child abuse must be reported immediately to the FPOG staff for appropriate referral.

**Volunteer** **Expectations**

Volunteers may be disappointed or angry if guests do not behave in a manner volunteers find appropriate. Sometimes volunteers become upset if guests do not express appreciation for what the volunteers provide. At times, a guest may be discourteous to a volunteer (or vice versa). It is important for volunteers to recognize the tremendous stress guests are under. Many will be tired and discouraged. You may need to reassure volunteers that discourteous behavior is not directed at them personally. If a guest is ever disrespectful to a volunteer or another family in the program, please inform the Community Engagement Director and Family Advocate by the following day via email.

Occasionally, there may be fewer guests than anticipated staying in the program, causing some volunteers to feel they are not needed. Help volunteers understand they are important and needed no matter how many guests are being served. Sharing some of the reasons for low numbers can be helpful: sometimes guests have appointments in the evening or are visiting family; the number of families needing shelter varies with the time of year and other factors; and sometimes a family graduates or leaves without notice and the space is not filled immediately. In any case, help volunteers by reminding them to be flexible and to offer their hospitality to the families who are in the program

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Family Promise of Gwinnett recognizes volunteers each year with an annual appreciation event. It is also important for congregations to acknowledge the important work of volunteers. Not all recognition has to be tangible. The important thing is that volunteers feel noticed and appreciated for their willingness to offer their time and talents.

Here are some ways you may like to recognize volunteers:

Hold an annual celebration dinner in your congregation to recognize the work of your volunteers.

Send thank-you notes to volunteers from the clergy and primary coordinator once a year.

Ask a particularly effective volunteer to help with the next volunteer training session or to write an article for our newsletter.

Present meaningful tokens of appreciation, perhaps a copy of a guest child’s artwork that has been laminated and framed.

Ask your clergyperson to acknowledge volunteers, either formally in front of the congregation or informally one-on-one. This acknowledgement can be especially meaningful if the clergyperson is also a volunteer.

A purple person on a podium with hands

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PREPARING FOR HOST WEEK

All the hard work and organization of the coordinators will pay off during host week. Preparing for host week will become routine as the congregation gets used to the schedule and requirements for hosting guests. Ask if your pastor would allow a staff member or board member from Family Promise Gwinnett to speak during your service.

The following schedule may be useful in preparing for host week. The volunteer coordinator can adjust the timeline as well.

**SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS BEFORE HOST WEEK:**

* Schedule and sponsor a Sign-Up Day.
* Put notices of host week dates in bulletin and newsletter.
* Pursue recruitment of volunteers, if necessary.
* Schedule the volunteers in the roles and times. (Signup Genius is a useful tool.)
* Plan training session, if necessary.
* Continue sign-ups.
* Ensure all volunteers have completed their background checks.

**MONDAY BEFORE HOST WEEK:**

* FPOG staff contacts coordinator with number and composition of families expected and other information needed by coordinator; for example, mom with two children, ages 3 and 6, single mom with 2-month-old baby. Allergies and food restrictions will be sent as well.
* Coordinator speaks with assistant coordinators to review the number of guests and make appropriate preparations.
* Coordinators call or email volunteers to remind them of scheduling and duties.
* FPOG staff informs coordinator of any special items needed by the families and supplies needed at Promise Haven. (See the full supply list needed for the week on the following page.)

**FRIDAY BEFORE HOST WEEK:**

* Verify, as needed, additional information or changes with FPOG staff member.
* Verify, as needed, the menu plan and additional last-minute information from hosts.

**HOSTING WEEK BEGINS**

Communicate with hosts and FPOG staff, as needed, throughout the week if there are issues or concerns.

SUGGESTED MEAL PLAN

The meal plan has suggested dinners for you to prepare. You are welcome to create your own menu; just please stick to the meat selections for the day you have chosen to serve. Please stick to the meal plan so we are not serving our guests pasta every night! If possible, we would like for there to be salad/vegetables and fruit available for those who may be vegetarians.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| Chicken | Meat | Pasta | Chicken | Pasta / Pizza | Meat | Pasta |
| Veggie | Veggie | Salad | Veggie | Salad | Veggie | Salad |
| Fruit | Fruit | Fruit | Fruit | Fruit | Fruit | Fruit |

**Please limit bringing desserts to two or three days during your serving week.**

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| **Sample Menus** | |
| **Poultry**  BBQ turkey on buns, coleslaw, and corn on the cob  Caesar salad w/ grilled chicken & chicken nuggets with mac and cheese  Roasted chicken with baked beans, biscuits  Taco bar, rice, refried beans, tortilla chips and salsa  Chicken casserole, veggie/fruit tray  Fried or grilled chicken, baked potatoes, corn on the cob, pasta salad  Turkey chili and rolls  Soup and sub sandwiches | **Meat**  Beef roast, mashed potatoes, and carrots  Taco bar, rice, refried beans, tortilla chips and salsa  Grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, pasta salad, watermelon  Tortilla soup and cheese quesadillas  Soup and sub sandwiches  **Pasta**  Pizza with salad and chicken fingers  Spaghetti, garlic bread, salad  Lasagna, steamed veggies, salad |

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| **SUPPLY NEEDS THROUGHOUT THE WEEK** |
| * Food staples such as bread, lunch meat, and cheese, breakfast cereal, fruit, and snacks * Coffee and tea, sugar, creamer, salt, pepper, ketchup, mustard, mayo, peanut butter, jelly * Cling wrap and foil, lunch/sandwich bags, food storage containers, paper lunch bags * Trash bags, small (bedroom, bathrooms) and large kitchen bags * Cleaning supplies and mops, dust clothes, rubber gloves, laundry detergent * Facial tissue, paper towels, toilet paper * Toiletries (shampoo/baby shampoo, soap, toothpaste, deodorant, feminine products) * Diapers, wipes, baby food, baby formula |

III. Appendix

STAFFINVOLVEDWITHTHEPROMISEHAVENPROGRAM

Community Engagement Coordinator

The Community Engagement Coordinator communicates directly with the Volunteer Coordinator during host weeks. The Community Engagement Coordinator also provides training and answers questions as they relate to the volunteer slots and hosting responsibilities.

Promise Haven House Manager

6:00 PM – 8:00AM (Sunday – Friday morning)

Promise Haven House Assistants

Overnight Assistants 6:00 PM – 8:00AM (Friday – Saturday)

Saturday Daytime Assistants 8:00 AM – 6 PM

Success Coach

The Success Coach communicates all information needed for the host week as it directly relates to the guest families. The Success Coach provides case management services to all participants, including development and monitoring of a plan for gaining employment and housing, and meets weekly with participants, usually during the evening.

Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for administration of all programs of Family Promise. He/she is reports to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director may provide on-call services for emergencies at designated times.

COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

Working in social services is a high-stress environment, and clear communication is essential to ensure smooth operations and the well-being of everyone involved.  
  
Our hours of operation are from 9 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday. During these hours, our staff is available to check emails, return calls, and respond to texts. Please be aware that Saturdays and Sundays are off, and non-emergency communications will be addressed during regular business hours.

# Best Practices for Volunteer & Guest/Client Relationships

Volunteers provide hospitality and support to Family Promise guest families. Volunteers help ensure the safety and well-being of all participants. Volunteers must recognize the inherent power imbalance in their relationships with guests. Homelessness adds to guest vulnerability, automatically putting the volunteer in a position of power, and the guests know it.

All volunteers are required to follow these guidelines:

* Do not proselytize. Family Promise is a secular organization that partners with faith communities.
* Do not exchange personal contact information with guests, including but not limited to: phone numbers, home addresses, and email addresses. Do not “friend” or engage with guests on social media. Guests \* are not to visit volunteers in their homes.
* Understand that your own identity (including your gender identity, race, income level, etc.) may be different than that of a guest. Do not assume their experiences will reflect your own.
* Do not “friend” current or former guests on Facebook or other social media websites.
* Limit self-disclosure. And, do not probe for the guests to unnecessarily expose themselves.
* Do not take sides in arguments between guests.
* Show respect for guests’ time, property, opinions, parenting style, etc. Being judgmental is not hospitable, and further promotes the inequality that exists between guests and volunteers, highlighting the volunteer as an authority figure, and the guest as a subordinate.
* If involved with the shelter program, do not enter guest sleeping rooms without knocking or calling loudly and then receiving permission, unless absolutely necessary.
* For the safety of both volunteers and guests, volunteers are not to accept responsibility for children in the shelter. Children must remain under the supervision of their parents, and within their eyesight, at all times. Volunteers are never permitted to discipline guest children, change diapers, or assist children in the bathroom. This is the responsibility of parents. Therefore, guest parents are not allowed to leave the host property without taking their children with them.
* Unless the Family Promise or partner property is at risk or a person is in danger, volunteers should not comment or correct a guest’s behavior. Concerns about behavior should be discussed with the primary Volunteer Coordinator(s) or with the staff.
* Do not make personal gifts of money or things to guests. Do not lend valuable items to guests. Personal charity of this kind is generally enabling, not empowering, but more importantly, when a volunteer makes a substantial gift to a guest, the power relationship becomes even more unbalanced.
* Volunteers are encouraged to help find job leads, housing opportunities and other resources for guests; however, all such leads and connections must be offered through the Affiliate staff, not directly from volunteers to guests. The Affiliate Director is responsible for Case Management which includes goal setting, referrals to appropriate local resources, etc. It is important that volunteers respect this relationship and support the staff. Bypassing the staff undermines their authority and crosses appropriate guest/volunteer relationship boundaries.

Family Promise does not wish to quash generosity or stop volunteers from helping in significant ways. If you perceive a particular need, and want to help, please connect with staff. If appropriate, they will help you make the gift anonymously. They will also take care to handle the gift so that other guests are not made to feel unfairly treated.

Many volunteers develop personal relationships with guests that continue as the guests move into housing. Additionally, there may be formal mentoring programs. These are to be encouraged but volunteers should carefully assess the dynamics of the relationship and talk with the Staff/Executive Director to ascertain at what level a relationship with a former guest is best for all concerned.

Program Accommodations

FACILITIES

*Promise Haven*

Promise Haven is the housing facility used by Family Promise of Gwinnett to host families. Promise Haven is a four-bedroom home which can facilitate up to 11 guest occupants. There are three bedrooms upstairs that the families use and one bedroom downstairs that is used for our overnight volunteers. The house is located at 757 Moon Road, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046. The phone number for the house is 470-292-3943.

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*DAY CENTER*

The Day Center is used for our staff offices and has a space for the families to come during the day. Families have access to the day center between the hours of 7:30am and 6pm, while Promise Haven is closed. Families can use this address as their mailing address while in the program. Our Day Center is located at 3495B Sugarloaf Parkway, Lawrenceville, GA 30044 behind the First Christian Church of Lawrenceville. The Day Center number is 678-376-8950.

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**Family Needs Form**

**Promise Haven Guest Family Info**

**8/23/23**

**Total number of families: 2 3 adults 7 children**

Guest Name Family 1: (father name), (mother name), Child (13yo F), Child (8yo M), Child (7yo F) & Child (4 yo M)

Guests Name Family 2: (mom) , Kids: name-(f) 9yrs, Symone White-(f) 6yrs, Niko Fane-(m) 4yrs

**Sensitivities/Allergies:**

**Guest Family 1: Father does not eat red meat. The whole family does not eat pork. But see notes below under favorite foods.**

**GuestFamily 2: No food allergies**

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| **Favorite foods/meals (in no particular order):**  While father doesn’t eat red meat, the rest of the family does and would like dishes with beef. He said he can eat sandwiches when family has a beef dish.  Some favorites but they eat most anything.   * Chicken & rice dish * Veggies * Rice * Fish * A dish they like is Ackee and Saltfish * They love Jamaican food * Spaghetti & Meatballs | **Food & Beverage Needs/Wants for the week:**   * Sugar * Creamers * Milk * Waters * White bread * Lunch meat-turkey & ham * Sliced cheese * Frozen chicken nuggets * Frozen Pizzas-cheese /pepperoni * Frozen breakfast sandwiches * Frozen pancakes on a stick * Assorted fruits * Chips/Snacks (zebra cakes) * Juices-apple, grape &/or OJ * Cereal -Lucky charms, frosted flakes * Microwave oatmeal-fruit & cream   Personal items they requested  =======================  Promise Haven Needs   * Dryer sheets * Box of plastic utensils * Paper plates (for breakfast time) |