



INTERFAITH CONNECTION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

WORK TOGETHER AND LIFT EACH OTHER UP

Recently I listened to an interview with Brian Greene, a professor of physics and mathematics at Columbia University. Dr. Greene spoke about how humanity is comprised of a collection of particles that come together in astonishing ways and provide humankind with the ability to think, feel, and create. All humans, in this “particle” way, are the same, and that has me thinking.



I am a person of faith. It's common for me to speak and think about all people as being children of God, and as such we are siblings across race and culture. Yet, I have found myself seeing only differences. I see in our nation vast chasms between people and a propensity to dismiss the “other” as not worthy of respect or engagement.

If we are honest, there are times each of us has failed to see our common humanity, our shared particles, our identity as siblings in this world.

Interfaith Coalition and Family Promise of Whatcom County hold us accountable to our siblings. Our work of sheltering and supporting families experiencing homelessness is done because we understand we are in this world together and our community will be better when everyone is respected, honored, and has equitable opportunity. Again, as a person of faith, I believe humans are meant to be in relationship. And as we are in relationships, we will better see our common humanity, our particles.

None of us can do life alone. As we work together in community, we will create positive change with our siblings.

Blessings,

Deanna Wildermuth
Executive Director

“We are in this world together and our community will be better when everyone is respected, honored, and has equitable opportunity.”

TIPS FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- Remember that they are deserving of dignity and respect
- Be respectful of their belongings
- Don't assume that you know what they need
- Start your conversation the same way you would with anyone else
- Let them know you wish them well

Source: Whatcom Homeless Service Center

A SWEET SURPRISE FOR OUR FAMILY HOUSING COORDINATOR

A crisis is not scheduled. It happens without notice and never at a good time. This summer a young family of four moved into one of our transitional homes. This



family experienced homelessness while the mom was in her last term of pregnancy. They thankfully survived the June heatwave while living out of their car.

Sometime this summer the family was directed to

Opportunity Council. Opportunity Council in turn connected the family to us. At move-in, Interfaith Coalition and their partners, which included Habitat for Humanity and Fresh Start Ministries, provided beds, basic home furnishings, a fully stocked kitchen, bed and bath linens, and some hygiene and house

cleaning supplies from Interfaith's emergency shelter donation stock.

"No one has ever done this for me."

While waiting in line at Habitat for Humanity for some items with the dad, our Housing Coordinator observed him rubbing his eyes a little and heard a sniffle. When asked how he was doing with the move-in, he said, "All of this is great. I mean, no one has ever done this for me."

This family is housed and safer thanks to your generous donations and our great volunteers and housing team.

Create more moments like this for families experiencing homelessness in Whatcom County.

Scan to donate today ———>



INTERFAITH SERIES: CONVERSATIONS ON HOMELESSNESS

Contending with homelessness is often one step forward, two steps back, whether working with an entire family or one individual. But work is being done for homelessness in our community, often quietly, behind the scenes, by organizations like ours. We're showing what our fellow local nonprofits, such as Lydia Place, Lighthouse Mission Ministries, Northwest Youth Services, and the Whatcom Homeless Service Center, are accomplishing with homelessness, ways in which their work intersects with Interfaith Coalition's, and the complexities of eliminating homelessness. Work together and lift each other up.

"I have a responsibility for what happens next."

— Emily O'Connor, Executive Director of Lydia Place

"I am hopeful that Bellingham will make that substantial impact of stopping homelessness, and the stigmas around it."

— Jason McGill, Executive Director of Northwest Youth Services



Scan to read more



SINCE 2018, FAMILY PROMISE OF WHATCOM COUNTY HAS SERVED 53 ADULTS AND 92 CHILDREN.

39 OF THOSE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN UNDER THE AGE OF 5.

89% OF THE FAMILIES WE HELP HAVE MOVE INTO STABLE HOUSING OF THEIR OWN.

FIVE PEOPLE, FOUR WHEELS, ONE BED!



4th Annual Family Promise BED RACE

Sunday, September 26, 2-4 P.M.
Civic Field Parking Lot, Bellingham

Interfaith Coalition's Family Promise of Whatcom County Bed Race will deliver wacky fun for a great cause from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 26 at Bellingham's Civic Field parking lot. The 4th annual race, open to all, starts with a parade of costumed teams showing off their decorated and newly mobile beds. The goal is to have at least 15 teams of five people each—four pushing, one riding atop—will compete for fastest bed, best theme, and most funds raised.



“It’s a blast!” said Konrad Kocsis, bed race coordinator and leadership team member of Family Promise of Whatcom County. “The themed costumes and decorated beds are really cool. We use an applause meter to measure audience cheers. The decibel level decides which team wins best theme.”

The event, free to attend, attracts more spectators every year, Kocsis said. This year’s goal is to raise \$20,000 to help children out of homelessness in Whatcom County.

Family Promise of Whatcom County, a program of Interfaith Coalition, works with local families to get them into emergency housing first, where they can work toward self-sufficiency. With shelter and food provided, staff focuses on each family’s strengths, needs, and values to help them move toward health, employment, and financial stability.

Since its launch in 2018, Family Promise has helped 53 adults and 92 children—39 of them under 5 years old—out of homelessness. Eighty-nine percent of Family Promise families move into long-term, stable housing.

“Each family member is an important part of the work,” said Carolyn Roy, Family Promise director. “We help them tap into their own skills and know-how to build good habits for long-term self-sufficiency.”

Local volunteers help provide meals, plus whatever is needed: car repair, tools for a construction job, a ride to a job interview.

Once in Interfaith’s Family Promise housing, the family can start saving for an apartment security deposit plus first month’s rent. “That’s the hardest thing, to get that first couple of thousand saved so they can get into their own home,” Kocsis said. “Without that, if they have to continually spend on food or car repair, they can never get ahead.”

This year’s Bed Race also welcomes virtual teams, which involve fundraising but no actual bed. “Participate in a team, or find a team to donate to,” Kocsis said. “We make children a priority. We can’t change their past, but we can change their present, and their future.”

Get info to register a team, form a virtual team, or sponsor a team by scanning the QR scan to the right or by visiting interfaith-coalition.org/familypromisebedrace



Scan for Bed Race info



**INTERFAITH COALITION
OF WHATCOM COUNTY**

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START YOUR... BEDS?

Hone those bed-racin' skills and help local families and children get out of homelessness and into stable housing.

Compete in the the Family Promise of Whatcom County Bed Race and fundraiser on September 26, 2PM!

interfaith-coalition.org/familypromisebedrace

SURROUNDING FAMILIES WITH SUPPORT, ONE BLANKET AT A TIME



When we move a new family into our housing, we bundle up and gift blankets with a thoughtful “Welcome!” card. This simple gesture signifies the comfort we hope to provide parents and children on their journeys out of homelessness.

Recently we presented these gifts to two new families who entered our program, both of whom include expecting mothers! The circle of support these parents and children receive from Interfaith Coalition partners, such as donors, volunteers, congregations, Habitat for Humanity in Whatcom County, and First Congregational Church’s Fresh Start embellishes their housing experience with an extra touch of love and encouragement.

These families will no doubt face challenges throughout their time with us and we want them to know that they have an entire community of warmth and support surrounding.



Please note: Details in this newsletter are subject to change. Visit our site for the most up-to-date information: interfaith-coalition.org



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