



INTERFAITH CONNECTION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

FAMILY PROMISE HELPS FAMILY BUILD A FRESH START

By Cheryl Stritzel McCarthy

“I tried not to cry in front of my kids,” recalls Jennifer. The Whatcom County mother, her husband and four children slept outside and in their car when they became homeless last summer. Daytimes, if they had gas, they took the kids to the parks. “I tried to make it seem like we were having fun,” Jennifer says now (name has been changed).

But reality was harsh.

“My husband and I would feed the kids what we could and go to sleep hungry ourselves.”

-Family Promise guest

“It was hard to find places to park,” Jennifer says. “The food bank could only provide junk food since we had no way to cook. My son is in a wheelchair; we had trouble finding a bathroom for him. My young daughter regressed and began acting out. At night, my husband and son had to sleep in the bushes in the park, to make room in the car for our daughters and me to sleep. My husband and I would feed the kids what we could and go to sleep hungry ourselves.”

The Opportunity Council led them to Interfaith Coalition’s Family Promise program. Family Promise works by housing local

families in available spaces in participating congregations. Three or four families stay a week in each place. Volunteers provide meals and other support.

Finding Family Promise was the best thing Jennifer could have done for her family, she says now. “Family Promise is for people who want to help themselves. You have to make goals. I got our daughters to bed at 7:30 p.m. We were up early to go to the Family Promise day center, where everybody has stuff to do. It was motivating! My son was motivated to go back to Bellingham Technical College. He was inspired by the energy.



Family Promise volunteers from St. Paul’s Episcopal Church prepare a hot meal for guests.

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CAST PROGRAM FINDS NEW HOME NEAR LIBRARY

This past fall, Interfaith made a difficult decision to put CAST (Coffee and Sandwiches Together) on hiatus because of the need to find a better, more supportive and centrally situated location. A Task Force of CAST volunteers organized to work on this goal, and we are thrilled to announce that, thanks to the City of Bellingham, we have a new location at the Arches of Healing and Reconciliation behind the Bellingham Public Library!

The City has committed to their support of this program by agreeing to install lighting at the site. Task Force volunteers have spent countless hours looking for a new

site that meets our many special requirements, and are busy visiting neighbors in this area to educate about CAST, answer questions, and invite them to come out and join us and see what we are doing.

Resumption of meal service depends on the installation of the lights. In the meantime, if you are interested in volunteering for CAST please contact us: info@interfaith-coalition.org.

Huge thanks go to task force volunteers Mary Ann O'Hara, Gregg Heyne, Brenda Riseland, Jael Komac, Karin Jones, Dan Larguier, Diana Heiman, Ivana Grace, and Interfaith staff member Janie Pemble.

"We are truly blessed but haven't always been and being able to give back is a wonderful feeling. Volunteering with CAST restores my faith in humanity."

-CAST volunteer



"My whole day just got better because you are here."

-CAST guest

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"I picked up good habits at Family Promise. I taught my kids to clean up after themselves. I kept a schedule and organized my life. Those are things I do now."

Seven weeks in Family Promise gave Jennifer the ability to seek longer-term housing, and the family now has an apartment. "The kids were so excited!" Jennifer says.

"My husband is now looking for work. I'm going to go to school; I've registered for winter quarter."

Family Promise is entirely funded by local donors. Jennifer is grateful to those donors, whom she says are luckier than they know. "It would be awesome," Jennifer says softly, "to be able to help."



AUCTION

**SATURDAY,
MARCH 28
5:30 P.M.**

Join us for a fun and inspirational evening. Our biggest fundraiser, with a silent and live auction, raises one-third of our annual budget. The evening of fellowship and fun provide opportunities to donate auction items, put together a table of friends, and bid for unique experiences and items, all to benefit our neighbors in need.

Tickets: Buy your tickets now by completing the form below or order them online at www.interfaith-coalition.org or call the office at 360-734-3983

Donate Auction Items: Consider donating an auction item, especially experiences, such as vacation getaways, island, ski or resort hotels or cabins, sports or theater tickets or gift certificates. Please contact the office with your ideas and donations.

Sponsors: We are grateful to the following businesses as partners in our work and sponsors of our 2020 Hope Auction.

DIAMOND SPONSORS GOLD SPONSORS SILVER SPONSORS BRONZE SPONSORS

				
				
				
				

INTERFAITH COALITION HOPE AUCTION TICKET ORDER FORM

Please complete all of the information below. Or purchase tickets at our website : www.interfaith-coalition.org

\$70 - INDIVIDUAL **\$100 - GOLD LEVEL** - includes additional contribution to Interfaith Coalition. Please indicate the desired number of tickets in the appropriate box above. Please mail or return your check for the total amount (no cash please) to the Interfaith Coalition office at **910 14TH STREET, BELLINGHAM, WA 98225**

I'M UNABLE TO ATTEND SO I AM SENDING A CONTRIBUTION

Name:

Phone:

Address:

Email:

City:

Zip:

Preferred Seating:

Standard Dinner (GF) Vegetarian Dinner



**INTERFAITH COALITION
OF WHATCOM COUNTY**

910 14th St.
Bellingham, WA 98225

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SAVE THE DATE:
Hope
AUCTION
SATURDAY,
MARCH 28
5:30 P.M.

More info inside!

SAVE THE DATE: INTERFAITH COALITION MUSIC FESTIVAL 2020



Interfaith Coalition
**Music
Festival**

Sunday, February 23 at 3 p.m.
First Congregational Church of Bellingham
2401 Cornwall Avenue

Join us for an eclectic and uplifting program of choral and instrumental spiritual music from diverse congregations throughout Whatcom County, ending with an exuberant grand finale involving all singers!

A good-will offering will be taken for the Interfaith Coalition.

**LIKE INTERFAITH COALITION
OF WHATCOM COUNTY
ON FACEBOOK!**

