



Family Promise of Ontario County News

March 2024

FPOC to Open Family Homeless Shelter

With support from the **Molly and Ed Shill Cares Foundation**, Family Promise of Ontario County (FPOC) plans to open a family homeless shelter at 495 North Main Street, Canandaigua. The shelter will occupy **Cobblestone Manor**, a Greek Revival building that was constructed as a residence in the early 1830's, modified in the Colonial Revival style in the early 1900's, and then updated to include a one-story residential and office wing in the 1980's. Cobblestone Manor has most recently served as a medical clinic and a residence for older adults. It is included in the National Register of Historic Places. FPOC will renovate the interior to create six to eight family bedrooms, staff offices, cooking and dining spaces, meeting rooms, and recreational spaces while preserving the building's cobblestone exterior and interior charm. A playground and lawn are planned for part of the current parking lot.

The Backstory:

In 2018, FPOC began sheltering homeless families in churches and synagogues around the county. Up to four families would spend a week at a time in different houses of worship. Every evening, families dined with their host volunteers and slept one family per room. Each morning, they woke early for a quick breakfast then traveled by 14-passenger van to a "day center" in Geneva or Canandaigua, where they would work with their case manager. Families returned to their host congregation after their children returned from school in the late afternoon. Every Sunday, the families would "rotate" to a new congregation.

When Covid hit in early 2020, FPOC paused that "rotational program" and, with help from federal pandemic relief grants, began renting apartments to use as emergency single-family shelters.



Initial architectural rendering of the future Family Homeless Shelter.



Historic Cobblestone Manor, viewed from North Main Street, will become Ontario County's first shelter for homeless families.

By early 2023 FPOC could host as many as eight families in these emergency apartments, but by that time pandemic funding was slated to run out. FPOC stepped up its search for what the Family Promise national organization calls a "static site" – a single building that can provide family bedrooms for several families, along with staff offices, cooking and dining facilities, classrooms, and recreation space. FPOC considered several buildings around the county in early 2023 and identified Cobblestone Manor as the ideal location for a family shelter, but the cost was prohibitive.

In the fall of 2023, the Shill Cares Foundation began working with the FPOC staff and board to consider ways to greatly expand their capacity to serve homeless families in Ontario County. With experience spearheading major expansions for nonprofits as diverse as Lollypop Farm, Willow Domestic Violence Center, The Golisano Children's Hospital, The Wilmot Cancer Center,

(continued on page 2)

Inside:

From Homelessness to Home Ownership: One Family's Journey

*Knock Down Pins to Lift Up Families
Family Homelessness Fact Sheet*



Family Homeless Shelter Opening in Canandaigua

continued from p. 1

and Meals for the Homeless, this new foundation saw an opportunity to make a significant difference in the community by partnering with Family Promise. They purchased the Cobblestone building, helped FPOC connect with an architect and screen potential contractors, and supported our successful applications with various city regulatory bodies. When renovations are complete, they will donate the facility to FPOC.

This new shelter will be the next step toward eliminating family homelessness in Ontario County, but it's only the beginning. Future initiatives will include greatly expanding FPOC's

homelessness prevention program, finding and maintaining additional single-family emergency shelter apartments, and creating one or more additional multi-family shelter facilities in other parts of the county.



Left: **Molly Branch Shill and Ed Shill**, whose foundation has purchased a building that will serve as Ontario County's first homeless shelter.

Ontario County Family Homelessness Statistics

During the 2022-2023 school year, Ontario County school districts documented 280 *school-aged* children who were homeless for at least one night. Since half of homeless children are age 5 and under, an estimated 560 children experienced homelessness in our county last year.

According to the Ontario County Department of Social Services, homelessness for single adults has increased by 37% since 2020, but **family homelessness has increased by 300%**.

Lack of affordable housing is a primary cause of homelessness in families.

- Housing is considered affordable when rent (or mortgage) plus utilities is no more than 30% of a household's gross income.
- 10,500 Ontario County Households struggle with housing cost burden.
- 43.2% of Ontario County *renter* households are cost burdened.
- 20% of Ontario County renter households are *extremely cost-burdened*, paying more than 50% of their income in rent. These families are at the greatest risk of homelessness.
- 7% of Ontario County households live below the *poverty level*.
- An additional 23% live above the poverty level but fall below the *ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)* threshold. These families are employed but cannot keep up with everyday expenses.



Family Promise of Ontario County

BOWL-A-THON

Saturday April 13th 2024

Roseland Bowl
4357 Recreation Drive
Canandaigua, New York 14424

Knock Down Pins to Lift up Families
Join Family Promise of Ontario County for bowling, dinner, 50/50 raffle, prizes, and a whole lot of fun.

Cost

\$40 Single Player	\$200 Team of 5	Includes 2 games of bowling, dinner, soft drinks and great fun!

4 pm - 7 pm

585-943-0205

<https://givebutter.com/QH6N1t>



Thank You Eileen Tiberio

FPOC Board President **Eileen Tiberio** is stepping down after almost eight years of dedicated service. Eileen helped establish Family Promise of Ontario County, and has provided steady leadership ever since. We will miss her heart, compassion, and commitment.



Eileen at the Sept. 2023 Golf to End Family Homelessness Tournament.

One Family's Journey

From Homelessness to Home Ownership

by Jay Garrett-Larsen

For families who are just getting by, owning a home is far more affordable than renting. 46% of renter households are cost-burdened, compared with only 20% of homeowner households.

Pathstone Housing and the **Geneva Housing Authority** have programs to help families transition from renting to owning. For parents with commitment, discipline, tenacity, and luck, such a program can change their lives for the better.

Ashley and her seven children, ages one through seventeen, had been doing well enough in a rental apartment in Geneva, where they'd lived for several years. She was working full time as a CNA, participating actively in the life of Jericho Faith Ministries, and looking toward her firstborn's high school graduation. She was working with Pathstone Housing to procure a Section 8 subsidized mortgage which would allow her to purchase a home and dramatically improve her children's lives. She was just about to submit the application. Things were looking good!

Then one day in the autumn of 2022 everything came crashing down. Ashley came home from work to find her apartment flooded, the ceiling and walls soaked, and water everywhere. "One of the landlord's workers had been working in the bathroom, and he didn't reconnect a fitting properly," she said. "Water poured in for ten hours, and when I got home the place was a disaster." Ashley called the landlord in a panic, and the landlord responded by blaming her for the damage, serving her with a notice to vacate the apartment, and threatening her with eviction if she failed to leave. Overnight, the family went from secure housing and plans for home ownership to legal peril and homelessness.

The landlord informed the Geneva Housing Authority that Ashley was responsible for \$7000 in damages. Since the family's Section 8 subsidy was contingent on positive feedback from the landlord, the Housing Authority withdrew their housing voucher. Without a Section 8 voucher, the family could not afford to rent an apartment large enough for her family, and her plans for purchasing a home were dashed.

Ashley reached out to Legal Assistance of Western New York (LawNY). They helped her contest the eviction and advocated on her behalf with the Housing Authority. Sarah Simson, Ashley's advocate at Pathstone who had been helping with the Section 8 purchase program, encouraged her to call **Family Promise**.



Above: Ashley signing the closing paperwork. Right: The kids feel at home in their own house!



"When I got the call from Jasmine that you were admitting our family into the program," Ashley said, "I felt like a prayer had been answered. With LawNY's help the Housing Authority found that I was not responsible for the damage to our old apartment and restored our benefits."

Ashley finally found an ideal home in a nearby town - a charming late-1800's house with plenty of bedrooms, an above-ground pool for her kids, and friendly neighbors. She and the kids moved into their new home in mid-November, and for the first time celebrated Thanksgiving with the extended family in their house! At Christmas, Family Promise showed up with a van-load of gifts from three different families and congregations. "Oh my goodness it was lovely having Christmas here," Ashley said with a grin, "and then you blessed us with all those presents. The kids were running around crazy with excitement."

Today Ashley's future looks bright. She is taking online classes through the Radiant School of Worship, and leading youth and women's ministries at her own church. Her CNA work continues to go well. Her oldest daughter graduates from high school this June. With Pathstone's help, she got her mortgage reduced to around \$1000 a month, and with Section 8's subsidy included, she only pays about \$450 for her mortgage, including insurance and taxes. "I don't foresee any barriers to keeping this house long term," Ashley says. "Even if I start earning more money and no longer qualify for Section 8, it will still be affordable."

About Family Promise, Ashley says this: "I felt like you guys were a blessing. You were like God in disguise. I prayed, and you guys provided. You stood up for me."

Yes, I want to help Ontario County children and families secure sustainable housing.

Bill my credit/debit card: Visa Mastercard Discover Other: _____ (circle one)

____ \$50 Name (as it appears on card) _____

____ \$100 Card # _____ expiration date _____ CIV/SEC# _____

____ \$250 email _____ Phone _____

Other amount: \$ _____

____ **Give online at familypromiseontariocounty.org.**

____ **Mail a check to 185 N Main St., Canandaigua, NY 14424**

____ I would like to make this gift in memory of/honoring: _____

____ **Please make this a recurring gift of \$ _____ per month.**

Charge my debit/credit card on the _____ (1st, 15th, etc.) day of the month beginning in _____ (month), 2024.



Thank You!

Family Promise of Ontario County Inc., is a 501©3 Federal tax-exempt charity. Donations are deductible as allowed by law. EIN#81-4353748.

NYS Charities Bureau Registry §46-21-43: a copy of the most recently filed financial report can be requested from the Charities Bureau Registry on the New York Attorney General's [website \(www.charitiesnys.com\)](http://www.charitiesnys.com) or by contacting them at (212)416-8401. NYS Attorney General, Dept. of Law, Charities Bureau, 28 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10005.



Family Promise of Ontario County
185 N Main Street
Canandaigua, NY 14424



Family Promise of Ontario County plans to open a **family homeless shelter** at 495 North Main Street, Canandaigua. This will be the first homeless shelter in Ontario County. See inside for details!

To donate or learn more, visit
familypromiseontariocounty.org,
scan the QR code, or reach out us at
Family Promise of Ontario County, 185 N Main St.
Canandaigua, NY 14424 (585) 905-3988

