



INTERFAITH CONNECTION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

HELP US FULFILL OUR FAMILY PROMISE

Many parents have special rituals prepared for their child's first day of school, including a good night's sleep. For families experiencing homelessness, finding a safe place for their children to sleep is a challenge. We know that a growing number of children going to school in Whatcom County this fall will be dealing with housing instability. The domino of negative effects will begin. What can we do?

Establishing a local Family Promise affiliate will enable us to serve more families in need and directly engage congregations in this work. Family Promise is a national organization that has helped faith groups directly serve homeless families in over 200 communities nationwide. Faith communities use their buildings and



resources to provide temporary shelter, meals, and companionship to homeless families. Each site only hosts four weeks each year, and the responsibility is shared between at least thirteen congregations and many additional support congregations and groups.

We already have ten of the thirteen host congregations needed, and several support congregations committed to Family Promise: Thank you to:

- Center for Spiritual Living
- Christ Lutheran Church (Ferndale)
- Christ the Servant Lutheran Church
- Church of the Assumption Catholic Church
- First Christian Church
- First Congregational Church of Bellingham
- Garden St. United Methodist Church
- Hope Lutheran Church (Lynden)
- Northlake Community Church
- Roosevelt Community Church
- St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church
- The Firs Retreat Center
- United Church of Ferndale
- Zion Lutheran Church (Ferndale)

As we did thirty-five years ago with the founding of Interfaith Coalition, we will join hands and hearts and work together for the good of our neighbors in need. We have a shared faith that together we can end family homelessness.

LET'S KEEP THIS WORK GOING!

Our staffing and overhead costs are small, so most of your financial gift goes directly to helping make a better life for children and families struggling in Whatcom County. You CAN make a genuine difference in the lives of your neighbors! Please consider making a generous donation and help us end family homelessness and poverty.

PROGRAMS ARE POWERED BY CARING VOLUNTEERS

Interfaith Coalition exists because compassion and empathy is richly present in Whatcom County. Each time a family is housed, the hungry are fed, or a child's needs met through an Interfaith program, hard-working volunteers make it happen. With only three-and-one-half full-time staff, the work of Interfaith would otherwise be impossible.



Before families move into an Interfaith home, volunteers clean and restock the homes and prepare them for the next family. **Linda Blackwell, Marta Hand, Sandy Hall, Mary Pardue, Holly Whittle, Thad Allen, and Jill Peck**, and their **turnaround teams** spend over 120 hours on the homes, and hundreds of hours are contributed by volunteers who do yard work and home maintenance.

The Holiday Joy Drive and the Winter Warmth Drive programs gather gifts and winter clothing to help bring joy and warmth to others. Coordinators **Diane Becker and Michele Gordon**, and many other volunteers, spend over 300 hours each year to bring holiday gifts to over 80 families, while volunteers in Bellingham, Ferndale, Blaine, and Deming collectively work 700 hours each year to collect, sort, and distribute warm winter coats. **Sydney Koss**, a coat drive volunteer from United Church of Ferndale, says "Helping a diverse group of people of all ages find something warm that fits their personalities and makes them feel good, makes me feel good."

Project Warm Up, under the leadership of **Ronalee Kinkaid**, motivates community knitters and crocheters to spend over 3,200 hours making over 1,200 warm hats, scarves, and baby blankets for those in need.

Kid Need Books (KNB) coordinator **Joe Nolting** and a team of volunteers distribute over 10,000 books each year to children from low income families through pop-up food banks in Bellingham, county food bank programs, and through Hope Lutheran Church of Lynden's outreach to county migrant workers. Joe and his team spend over 1,500 hours each year collecting, sorting, and distributing the donated books. Joe's motivation? "Knowledge is power, and reading is a gateway to knowledge. And it's a gateway in some instances to more choices and a better lifestyle. So, my goal is to make this knowledge available to everyone, especially those most in need."

Mary Ann O'Hara and over 130 volunteers faithfully feed the hungry four nights each week through the **CAST program**. Over 6,500 hours are spent each year making and serving the food, and over \$6,000 in in-kind support is provided by St. John's Lutheran Church and Interfaith Coalition. The \$12,000 in food/supply costs is provided through the generosity of donors. "Every time I volunteer at CAST it transforms my day and my life by this connection with people I might otherwise never know or meet. I feel that the human connection



I am so thankful that I am blessed with a stable home and loving family, I want to make sure others have that chance in their lives."

Linda Anderson,
Interfaith volunteer and board member

we make is the heart of the program. Whether I am making sandwiches with other volunteers or helping serve the food, I feel that I am doing." (CAST Volunteer)

Thank you to every who chooses to spend a little time, donate, or in some way reach out to someone in need. Together, you are changing lives!

PARTNERSHIP BRINGS BOOKS TO COUNTY KIDS

Donors to Kids Need Books (KNB) have already enriched the lives of children in Bellingham. Now your generosity is reaching even more children in need!

With an abundance of available books, KNB is working to get books to children from low-income families in the county. This summer, KNB collaborated with Hope Lutheran Church of Lynden to enrich their “Reading for the Summer” program that serves county migrant worker camps. Pastor Marjorie Lorant writes: “Twenty-two percent of all children in American under the age of 18-years are hungry. We at Hope Lutheran believe that education will help these children move out of poverty and into sustainable living. Since Hope is located in an agricultural region, each summer there are lots of children of migrant workers that arrive in the area. Their parents work long hours, making it impossible for them to take their children to the local libraries to borrow books. It is important that the children have books so that they won’t lose the educational gains they’ve made during the school year.”

Joined by bilingual members of Iglesia Hispana de Lynden who translate when necessary, Hope Lutheran visits smaller camps in the Lynden, Everson, Sumas, and Nooksack areas where other services aren’t reaching. “In the past we just loaned the children the books for a week. Now we are able to give the books to the children.”

Pastor Marjorie adds: “It has been such a blessing to us that other projects have trusted us to join them in blessing the children who are so often forgotten. Working with them is truly a delight.”

Hope Lutheran is an Interfaith Coalition member, and has also volunteered to be a host congregation for Family Promise.



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Pastor Marjorie Lorant, Hope Lutheran





**INTERFAITH COALITION
OF WHATCOM COUNTY**

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Bellingham, WA 98225

Return Service Requested

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SAVE THESE DATES!

BED RACE TO END HOMELESSNESS!

October 1, 2017 from 2 – 4 p.m., Civic Field Parking Lot

Help us bring Family Promise to Whatcom County so we can serve more children and their parents experiencing homelessness. Join us for a fun event that raises awareness and funds for a serious need. A bed race competition involves teams building or renovating something into a bed that can be pushed on a race course. Companies, congregations, and individuals can sponsor beds for the race. A bed race team has five members. On race day there is a parade of beds before the event. Winners get trophies and bragging rights!

For more information, go to the website FamilyPromiseBedRace.com

ANNUAL HOPE MEETING & CELEBRATION

**Tuesday, October 17 at 7 p.m., Trinity Lutheran Church,
119 Texas St., Bellingham**

Join us for our Annual Hope Meeting & Celebration – a meaningful evening of fellowship, inspiration, and an opportunity to transform lives. Hear from volunteers who share stories of compassion and hope. Learn how you can help us serve additional homeless families through Family Promise. Be part of an active community of individuals and congregations dedicated to our neighbors in need.

WINTER WARMTH DRIVE COMING IN OCTOBER

Interfaith Coalition’s annual Winter Warmth Drive provides warm outerwear for everyone from babies to seniors. Donations of gently-used winter coats, jackets, gloves, scarves, and hats are needed. Interfaith will distribute these to people in four locations across Whatcom County in October. If you are a knitter, handmade hats and scarves are also cherished. For many of our neighbors, this program means they won’t need to spend limited income on a winter coat, or do without. Thank you for sharing the warmth.

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

