**Family Promise of WNY**

**Volunteer**

**Manual**

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*Updated February 2018*

***Introduction***

**As a volunteer-driven organization, Family Promise recognizes that you are the backbone of our organization.** We cannot achieve our mission of helping families experiencing homelessness achieve independence without the countless hands and hearts who step up for our families each and every day. Every shift covered, meal provided, donation secured and conversation shared helps to provide a sense of security, compassion and hope to families in need. Your dedication humbles us each and every day!

Family Promise of WNY will do it’s very best to provide the necessary support to our guests and our volunteers to ensure our program runs as smoothly as possible. In our continuing effort to serve homeless families in an effective and compassionate manner, **we have developed this manual to ensure a consistent and streamlined approach for all volunteers**. We also hope this manual will help you feel empowered and ready to be effective as a volunteer.

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***What is Family Promise?***

Family Promise is a national interfaith hospitality program that helps homeless families regain their independence through a community-based response.

Family Promise organizes local stakeholders into Affiliates that provide emergency shelter and wraparound services to homeless and at-risk families. The model emphasizes sustainability and relies primarily on resources that are already available in the community. There are currently over 200 Family Promise affiliates nationwide.

***Our Stakeholders and Model***

Key stakeholders for the Family Promise of WNY affiliate include the Department of Social Services, the Family Promise Staff and Board of Directors, host and support congregations and independent volunteers.

* **Department of Social Services** - provides screenings and referrals
* **Family Promise Staff** - comprised of an Executive Director, a Case Manager and a part-time Driver, Family Promise of WNY’s staff works mainly out of our Day Center. The Day Center provides a “home base” for families with showers and personal spaces, where children catch the bus, families receive mail, do laundry or use the internet and parents work with our Case Manager to find housing and other resources.
* **Family Promise Board** - works to support the organization through oversight, strategic vision, fund development, outreach and financial health.
* **Host Congregations** - provide hospitality by offering a safe, home-like accommodations in their buildings, healthy, home-cooked food and personal, attentive support so that guests can maintain their dignity. We have 8 host congregations in our network and each host congregation has a “Coordinator Task Force” organizing the Family Promise program there.
* **Support Congregations** - provide additional meals, donations and volunteer support for host congregations. We have over 30 support congregations in our network.
* **Independent Volunteers** - add additional support to our network through assisting with operations at the Day Center, bringing meals, collecting donations, offering financial contributions, etc.

Our model rotates guests each day from the Day Center during business hours to our host congregations for evenings and overnights, making us truly a volunteer-driven organization and allowing us to achieve our mission at a fraction of the cost of a traditional shelter.

***Our Guests***

Being without a safe, warm place to sleep, eat and care for children; being without the security of familiar people; being stripped of your dignity and your agency--this is homelessness. **The loss of a home is a crisis for anyone, but especially for families.**  Parents must endure the heartache of being unable to provide a secure environment for their children. Families with young children now account for up to 40% of America’s homeless and its fastest growing segment.

**Low-income renters are often only one paycheck or calamity away from homelessness.** The loss of job, an increase in rent, the onset of sudden illness, the gentrification of a neighborhood, the absence of family support - any one of these can drive a family into homelessness and shelter. Family Promise of WNY runs a small-scale model with only three families at a time of up to 14 people. All families must have children - we accept single parents, biological parents, married parents, guardians and pregnant mothers. The majority of the people we serve are children.

Because we are a volunteer-driven organization, we screen families and do not accept persons with active substance abuse, serious untreated mental health illness or risk of domestic violence. If prospective guests are amenable to our program and deemed capable of participating in a family environment supervised by volunteers, they navigate through a long intake process that requires lots of paperwork, including signing our “Guest Guidelines”. The typical length of stay in our program is 62 days because finding an affordable apartment can be difficult in a city on the rebound with rising housing costs.

***Our Volunteers***

**Family Promise is staffed almost exclusively by volunteers** - they are the backbone of our organization and we could not achieve our mission without their help. Volunteers work hard to create a home-like environment where our guests feel respected and cared for and where they are able to maintain their dignity. We currently have hundreds for volunteers that comprise our “hospitality network.”

**The primary role of volunteers in our network is to provide for basic needs for our guests - shelter, safety and sustenance.** Many volunteers each play a small piece in the story of our guest’s successful transition out of shelter. It is important to remember that it is not the job of our volunteers to solve anything for our guests. At our Day Center, guests are working closely with our Case Manager to tackle major obstacles to their successful transition into permanent housing. Our volunteers receive people, they don’t rescue them.

Volunteers are organized by the “Coordinator Task Force” - the team from the host congregation spearheading scheduling and management of volunteers during the host week. Volunteers are usually needed for two main roles:

1. **Meal Volunteers** - Meals volunteers prepare hot, home-cooked meals for 10-15 people, typically ahead of time in their own kitchens. They bring the meal to the congregation and dine with guests at 6:00pm for dinner. They remain to clean up and help engage families as appropriate with homework or play time. This shifts runs from 5:30-8:30pm.
2. **Overnight/Weekend Hospitality Volunteers** - Overnight hospitality volunteers arrive at 8:30pm and stay overnight until 7:00am the following morning. Their role is to make sure our families are in by curfew and that our lights-out policy is observed so that families can sleep. Overnight hospitality volunteers are encouraged to sleep but they are there in the event of an emergency. Weekend volunteers shift out all weekend long, being a loving presence for our families and providing enrichment activities.

Other volunteer opportunities at congregations include setting up and tearing down the spaces families occupy, grocery shopping, laundering linens, coordinating donations and planning activities for the children. Volunteers also assist at our Day Center, staffing the building, sorting donations, offering office support or performing light housekeeping. Volunteers support the organization on a larger level by networking, organizing fundraisers, serving on board or committees and making financial contributions to our program.

***Overview of Typical Host Week***

**Friday: Guest moving day.** Guests should arrive between 4:45-5:30pm on our van or in their own cars and attend an Orientation by the Coordinator.

* Volunteer Shifts: Dinner shift (5:30-8:30pm), Overnight Shift (8:30pm-7:00am)

**Saturday and Sunday: Downtime on the weekends.** We encourage our families to relax on the weekends – they can sleep in, do errands or nurture healthy relationships with family and friends through visits. Meals are self-serve and volunteers can plan fun activities for our families to engage in.

* Volunteer Shifts: Morning shift (7:00am-12:00 noon), Afternoon shift (12:00–5:30pm), Dinner shift (5:30-8:30pm) and Overnight shift (8:30pm-7:00am)

**Monday – Thursday: School Days.** The FPWNY van will arrive at your congregation by 6:45am to pick up our guests so that all volunteers can be out of the building by 7:00am.

* Volunteer Shifts: Dinner shift (5:30-8:30pm), Overnight Shift (8:30pm-7:00am)

**Friday: Guest Departure Day.** Guests pack up all their belongings and leave at 6:45am on the van to the FP Day Center.

***How Can I Help? Questions for Discussion***

1. Why do you want to volunteer in this program?
2. What is difficult about first meeting guests? What impression should we be trying to make when you first meet a guest?
3. Why is it important to learn the names of the guests in the program?
4. What types of questions should you ask and should you avoid when talking to guests who are already overwhelmed? What is the value of listening to guests over driving conversation?
5. What is the significance of privacy and personal space to someone who is homeless? How can you still find value in your volunteer service even if families just want to be alone?
6. What are the limits to volunteering with Family Promise? What can’t you do or control? What will guests teach you?

***I Can Help By. . .***

1. **Understanding my Role and my Limits.** Volunteers are not there to solve problems, but to offer small acts of kindness
2. **Seeing beyond Stereotypes and Withholding Judgement.** Develop relationships with our guests that help you see the humanity in and complexity to homelessness.
3. **Striving for Understanding**. Our guests are in trauma. People deal with trauma in many ways and may express a range of emotions or behaviors. Please be sensitive to this.
4. **Being a Good Listener.**  Truly paying attention to guests and hearing them out can be empowering!
5. **Respecting Privacy.**  Guests are not there to entertain volunteers and have a right to privacy.
6. **Focusing on Strengths**. Empower guests to see their strengths. Compliment our parents! Notice when children are helpful and acknowledge this!
7. **Adopting the Hospitality Code.** This code helps volunteers treat our guests with dignity.

***Volunteer Best Practices***

**Two Volunteers Per Shift**

Two volunteers per shift is a requirement of all Family Promise affiliates and is best practice for a number of reasons:

* It is a better experience for volunteers who can support one another
* It allows veteran volunteers to train new volunteers
* It complies with county and state child safety regulations
* It protects volunteers from the liability of any accusations of misconduct
* It allows for a better coordinated response to emergencies

**Donations**

We ask that donations be given to the host coordinator or to Family Promise staff to distribute so that all families receive what they need.

**Volunteering with Children**

We encourage volunteers to engage children in the experience and find that this is a particularly unique and rewarding part of our program! We ask volunteer parents to be responsible for their children at all times. The children of our guests often come from traumatic backgrounds and may display language or behavior that would be deemed inappropriate by volunteer families. Adult supervision helps to keep interacts at a level where everyone is comfortable.

**Tips for Meal Volunteers**

* **Cook as if everyone is coming -** Our guests move in and out of shelter and we continually strive to fill all beds. Guest headcounts are ALWAYS subject to change so best practice would be to cook for a full house (10-12) plus volunteers.
* **Keep it simple.** This is not the time to prepare elaborate meals, only to be disappointed when families may not be available for dinner or not like specialty foods. Our guests prefer healthy, basic meals - think fried chicken, spaghetti and meatballs, pulled pork sandwiches, pizza. We suggest providing a main meal, a starch (pasta, bread, potato) and a vegetable/salad.
* **Minimize sweets.** With so many children as guests, sweets can get out of control. Please minimize sugary drinks and desserts.
* **Take leftovers home**. Because days are spent at our Day Center and a new meal is prepared for them every night, our families do not have time to eat leftovers. If all families have eaten a meal, we encourage volunteers to take leftovers home to enjoy.
* **Breakfast and Lunch** - breakfast and lunch are self-serve. On weekdays guests focus on getting out of the building. On weekends they sleep in or attend to their business. Volunteers are welcome to make special breakfasts and lunches on the weekend, but ask first if there is interest as we do not have the same expectations that guests will be present for these meals.

**Tips for Overnight Volunteers**

* Know the names, contact info and emergency numbers of the guests, all located on the “Family Profile Sheet” given to coordinators ahead of a host week. This allows volunteers to contact guests who may have missed curfew or to respond quickly in the event of an emergency.

***The Family Promise Hospitality Code***

Practicing Hospitality is at the core of the Family Promise model and invites volunteers to help guests feel safe, welcome and respected. The following hospitality code has been adopted by the Family Promise network as guideposts for volunteer engagement:

1. It’s nice to hear your name, so learn the names of our guests, too.
2. Labeling people creates invisible barriers.   Remember that guests are guests, not the "homeless."   Labeling – whether spoken, or printed on a posted sign – creates divisions and can foster an "us" and "them" syndrome.
3. Personal questions can be tough to answer, so don’t put guests in awkward positions by asking personal questions.   If guests need to talk, give them the chance, but don’t pry.
4. We all like to keep some things to ourselves.   All information about guests is confidential.  Don’t discuss guests’ situations with other people.
5. Everyone can use a little privacy.   Our congregations become temporary homes for our guests. Help them feel safe.   Do not enter a guest’s room except for an emergency.
6. The Family Promise model continually puts our guests in the presence of new volunteers which can be exhausting.   Respect guests’ needs for alone time.
7. We all have bad days.   Depression, sadness, and hopelessness may come.   Allow guests the space to deal with their emotions.   Be prepared to forgive outbursts without judging guests ungrateful.
8. Parenting is a sensitive topic and there are different styles of disciplining. We understand and care for our children - allow guests to do the same.   Avoid contradicting guests’ instructions to their children and let them parent.   Always ask parents’ permission before giving things to children.
9. Parents need a break.   Offer to tutor, play with and plan activities for interested children while their parents take a break within the area where the activities are taking place.
10. Adult guests should be treated like adults.   Although our guests are in situations that may make them temporarily dependent on others, remember that they are adults who are capable of making their own decisions.

***Best Practices for working with Guests***

**Adopt a flexible, calm and positive attitude.**

This is our number one piece of advice for any volunteer in our program. Our Guests are in crisis. Acknowledging that fact will help volunteers understand their behavior and priorities. People under stress are often not their best selves. Sometimes their decisions are not ideal or not even in their best interest. Please remember that:

* When people grow up in generational poverty, they have a higher tolerance for anger, yelling, & aggression
* When people have little control over their lives, they will seek it in other areas – e.g. TV, washer/dryer, food, seat in van, chores, etc.
* All guests undergo background checks before entering FPWNY and are screened for active substance abuse, mental health concerns and domestic violence.
* Conflicts that require intervention are rare.

Volunteers who can meet our guests with a flexible, calm and positive attitude can provide the kind of hospitality that we are known for.

**Be Familiar with the FPWNY Guest Guidelines**

There are the guidelines to our program which guests sign upon intake. Violation of these guidelines can result in a guest being dismissed from our program. The better volunteers know our guidelines, the more clear and consistent the expectations are for both our volunteers and our guests.

**Minimize Misunderstandings**

Please leave any valuables (purses, wallets, laptops, etc.) in their car or securely locked before coming to volunteer. This reduces the chances of misunderstandings.

**Report Guest Violations**

Volunteers should report guest violations to their Coordinator and Coordinators should report these violations to FPWNY staff. Family Promise will discuss the incident with our guests. Regular violations become warnings in a guests’ file, and three warnings results in dismissal from our program.

**Outline Specific Housekeeping Expectations**

Guests are expected to share in light housekeeping. To be fair to guests, please be as clear as possible about your expectations (e.g. scrape family members’ plates, load dishwasher, sweep kitchen, pick up toy room, keep personal space tidy.)

## 

## Permit Smoking

Please designate a specific area for guests who smoke & permit them to access this area, as needed. Smoking is a common coping approach for guests in crisis and while not healthy, the time in shelter is probably not a realistic time to quit.

## Medications

All congregations should have a basic medical kit on hand. Do not recommend medications to guests. Give guests their options and let them make their own decision. Follow the “Medical Emergency Protocol” in the event of an emergency.

## Spiritual Nurturing

We are a non-sectarian organization. Although we partner with faith communities to achieve our mission, we offer our services free from any religious ties. We ask volunteers not to proselytize to our guests. Please only talk about spiritual matters if guests invite and ask for this first.

## Confidentiality

Our guests have the right to confidentiality. Volunteers at times have access to personal details about our families. Please be discreet and do not talk about the particulars of our families outside our program.

## Parenting Concerns

It is a parent’s right and responsibility to parent and there are many different strategies for that. Report any concerns about child abuse or neglect to your Coordinator. If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police.

***Case Studies: What Would You Do?***

**Case Study #1: Volunteer Disappointment**

Another volunteer loves to cook gourmet meals and has prepared a full-course dinner for 16 people - our guests and the other volunteers on duty. When she arrives at the congregation with the meal she learns that only three of the guests will be there for dinner. One family is looking for an apartment and another is transporting a daughter to therapy that evening. The volunteer is visibly disappointed and begins to speak angrily (in earshot of the guests having dinner), saying things like, “These people don’t appreciate anything. . . why should our church go through all this trouble?” What do you do?

* *Emphasize the bigger picture - you are providing a safe and loving space for these families, regardless of whether your meal is eaten or not.*
* *Encourage her to not take it personally - the families in the program are under stress and taking care of the business they need to attend to in order to find stability.*
* *Save leftovers for when families come back by curfew.*

**Case Study #2: Surprise Family**

A family who was scheduled to be absent from the host site because of an illness suddenly shows up with kids in tow. What do you do?

* *Welcome them*
* *Stay flexible*
* *Make sure they have food and personal space.*
* *Brief volunteer coordinator about incident*

**Case Study #3: Guest is absent from the host site**

A family fails to show up at dinnertime. Volunteers hold the meal for a while and finally give in and eat. The Coordinator calls Family Promise and staff is not aware of the family’s whereabouts. Soon curfew is approaching and the family has site not showed up. . . What do you do?

* *Call guest on cell phone provided on Family Profile or ask coordinator to call*
* *Lock door at curfew time, leaving a sign on the door for guest with a phone number. Go to bed. Late-arriving guest can call volunteers to identify themselves & request entry*
* *Brief volunteer coordinator about incident*

**Case Study #4: Guest Complain about food provided at host site**

After preparing a lovely meal, one family in particular is not interested in eating. The children complain loudly about the meal and eating “broccoli casserole”. The mother tells the volunteer they are all going out to the McDonald’s down the street instead. What do you do?

* *Volunteers are not expected to be short order cooks*
* *Host sites should stock their kitchens with food alternatives, budget-permitting*
* *Guests are not prisoners and are allowed to spend their money how they choose*
* *Brief volunteer coordinator about incident*

**Case Study #5: Infectious Disease**

A guest’s child shows signs of Chicken Pox. Another guest with an infant is very concerned about her baby’s health. What do you do?

* *Call the Family Promise Emergency On-Call Number*
* *FPWNY will invoke the Communicable Diseases Protocol and put the family in an emergency support home or a motel until the illness has resolved.*

**Case Study #6: Parenting Issues**

A guest is upset with their child’s behavior and spanks the child in public. The volunteer on duty cringes. What do you do?

* *Spanking is not allowed in our shelter*
* *Brief volunteer coordinator about incident*

**Case Study #7: Handling Conflict**

Two mothers (Mary and Janice) are arguing over the conduct of one mother’s children. Mary is complaining that Janice’s kids have gone through her children’s belongings and taken a toy. Janice denies the charges and starts to scream at Mary, “Mind your own business and keep your kids away from mine!” The tension mounts . . . what do you do?

* *Diffuse the situation by separating guests*
* *It is not the volunteer’s responsibility to solve the conflict*
* *Offer to be a sounding board for individual guests to vent*
* *The goal is to get through the night & to avoid terminations*
* *Brief volunteer coordinator about incident*

**Case Study #8: Stolen Property**

A volunteer cannot find her wallet and accuses a guest of taking it when she set it down to fill up the water pitchers. She approaches you in hysterics. What do you do?

* *Notify the Coordinator immediately.*
* *Coordinator should call the Emergency On-Call Number*
* *FPWNY staff will arrive to try to mediate the situation*

**Case Study #10: Guest is Abusing Alcohol**

A guest (John) shows up at 9:00pm at the host congregation. John smell of alcohol and is slurring his speech; however, he is apologetic for missing dinner and not calling. John quickly disappears into this room with his family and promptly goes to bed. At dinner that evening, another guest (Bill) told the host (Susan) that he had seen John drinking in his car on several occasions. Susan calls you, the Coordinator, to report on the incident and get your advance about what to do. What do you say?

* *Brief volunteer coordinator about incident*
* *Coordinator should report the incident to FPWNY on-call staff. However, as there is no immediate danger, the family does not need to be discharged from the program that night. Guest will be subject to regular alcohol testing and in danger of being removed from the program the following day.*

***FPWNY VOLUNTEER MANUAL***

***APPENDIX***

***FPWNY Guest Guidelines***

*Each guest family is provided with a copy of these rules for reference after they sign*

We welcome you to Family Promise of Western New York!  We are happy to be your temporary home until you find permanent housing. You are not a prisoner here. You are free to come and go, attend to your business and visit your family and friends as you work towards permanent shelter. We have a unique shelter model that you need to understand to be successful in our program:

**Our Model**

Our model rotates families between our Day Center and different Host Sites. Host sites are faith communities that are volunteering to help support our families while they are in our program.

**Day Center**: We run a Family Resource Day Center at 75 Hickory Street. Participants will be at our day center from 7:30am-4:30pm, Mondays through Fridays. Families can use the day center a home base from which to receive mail, send their children to school, look for apartments, meet with our case manager and access other resources to keep them steadily progressing towards independent housing.

**Host Sites:** We partner with faith communities across Erie County to help us feed and shelter our families in the evenings and on weekends. Participants will be transported in our van at 4:30pm each weekday evening to the host site and transported back to our day center at 6:45am each weekday morning.

A map of all the host sites in our network is on the walls of our day center to help you orient yourself.

**Our Case Management Guidelines**

The goal of our program is to move you to permanent housing. The following guidelines are required to keep that process moving effectively. Each family’s participation in our program is approved for 45 days.  After 45 days an extension may be granted by staff and approvals are influenced by compliance with these guidelines and progress.

**REQUIRED MEETINGS:**

* I understand that my family’s participation is approved on a week-by-week basis by DSS. If I am showing no progress, I will be removed from the program.
* I am required to meet regularly with the Case Manager and at least once a week to discuss my progress. I will cooperate with the recommendations given.
* I will provide Staff with correct information. If I choose to withhold information or not be honest, I understand this may limit Staff’s ability to offer options that may better the chance of progressing forward.

**REQUIRED SEARCHES**

* I will seek housing, financial assistance, and/or employment and I will provide documentation of my efforts.

**FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS:**

* I will be accountable for documenting all income including, but not limited to, employment income, public assistance, social security, child support and food stamps.
* I am expected to apply for all entitlement programs for which I am eligible.
* I am responsible to pay any per diem payments the Department of Social Services mandates.

**PHYSICAL HEALTH:**

* I am responsible for securing a primary doctor for myself and my family within the first month in this program if I do not already have one.
* All prescription medication must be kept out of the reach of children.
* It is my responsibility to refill my prescriptions before they run out.
* I will not share medication of any kind with other clients of Family Promise of WNY. I understand that doing so may result in immediate removal from the program.

**Our General Guidelines**

We are concerned about the comfort and safety of everyone and have developed the following guidelines to help ensure the experience of all of our guests is positive.

Please read the guidelines carefully. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action ranging from a verbal warning, written warning to immediate dismissal. All adults must sign on behalf of families and are responsible for guaranteeing that each family member is following these guidelines while in our program.  As you continue to review these guidelines, let us know if you have any questions. Each Host Site may have additional rules that apply to their site only. Please follow their guidelines as you would any Family Promise guideline.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE:** *Results in immediate dismissal from program*

* Alcoholic beverages and/or drugs will not be permitted.  If I am under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, I will not be admitted to the host site or day center.  I will cooperate with drug screens and alcohol tests.

**SAFETY:** *Results in immediate dismissal from program*

* No weapons are permitted anywhere.
* Violence of any form is not permitted.
* Gang involvement is strictly prohibited.

We reserve the right to deem any other issue a safety concern to our guests, staff or volunteers

**RESPECT:**

* **I WILL BE COURTEOUS AND RESPECTFUL TO OTHER GUESTS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS.**
* I will not engage in language or behavior that is disrespectful, profane or untruthful.
* I will respect the property of Family Promise of WNY, other guests and the host sites and will teach my children the same respect.
* I will not ask the volunteers for money, items or transportation.

**CHILDCARE:**

* **I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONDUCT AND SUPERVISION OF MY CHILDREN AT ALL TIMES.** I will not rely on staff or volunteers to watch my children.
* Children are to be disciplined non-violently and are not to be cursed or yelled at.
* **CHILDREN NEED TO BE IN SCHOOL, ON TIME, EVERY DAY SCHOOL IS IN SESSION.** Failure to keep children enrolled and attending school regularly is cause for calling Child Protective Services.
* If I am watching another guest’s children I must be with those children at all times and assume full responsibility for them during that time.
* I understand that Family Promise of WNY is legally required to report suspicions of abuse and neglect.

**FOOD:**

At the Day Center, breakfast and lunch is up to you and the kitchen in our Family Day Center is there for you to use. There is a communal refrigerator in the main common room with leftovers for everyone and personal space in the kitchen for your own dry and cold items. You will be given a labeled bin in the refrigerator and a labeled cabinet to store personal food.

* **I WILL KEEP ALL FOOD IN THE KITCHEN OR DINING AREAS** (and not in bedroom areas).
* I will not eat other guest’s food that is stored in their personal labeled spaces or labeled clearly with their name on it.

At the host sites, kitchens should be stocked when you arrive with food for you and your family. If you don’t see something you need, please request it and the site will make every attempt to stock it for you.

* **MY FAMILY AND I WILL SIT DOWN TO DINNER AT THE HOST SITE OR DAY CENTER AT 6:00PM EVERY NIGHT.**Family Promise guests and volunteers eat together family-style at a common table.  The food is purchased and prepared by volunteers who are motivated by their faith to be of service.  To honor their hard work, unless you have spoken with our Case Manager about another obligation, you and your family are expected to join everyone at the table for dinner.

**CLEANING:**

* I will keep my personal space tidy (clothes folded, bed made, garbage off floor) and understand that there will be weekly room checks to ensure this.
* **I WILL WASH MY OWN DISHES.**
* **I WILL PERFORM DAILY CHORES** that I am assigned at the Day Center or host site, including but not limited to sweeping, vacuuming, wiping down surfaces, doing dinner dishes and picking up common rooms

**TRANSPORTATION:**

Family Promise provides transportation between host sites and the day center.

* **IF I AM TAKING THE FAMILY PROMISE VAN, I WILL BE AT THE DAY CENTER MONDAY-FRIDAY BY 4:00PM IN ORDER TO CATCH THE VAN.**
* All children must be transported in age appropriate child safety seats.
* Eating, smoking or cursing is not permitted on the van.
* I will notify the Case Manager if I use other transportation to get to a host site.
* I am responsible for finding alternate transportation if I miss the van (this does not mean asking a volunteer or staff).

I am permitted to use my own car once I file a driver’s license and insurance certificate with Family Promise of Western New York.  Family Promise assumes no responsibility if I choose to use my own vehicle. If you have a car:

* **I WILL BE A THE HOST SITE BY 5:30PM EVERY DAY UNLESS I HAVE MADE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE FAMILY PROMISE STAFF.**
* I will leave the host site each morning the same time as the van.

**IN AND OUT**

You are free to come and go as you please as long as you remember:

* I need to sign in and out when entering or leaving the day center or host facility.
* Return at the agreed upon time and be in communication with staff/volunteers if anything changes.

**CURFEW:**

At night, everyone needs to be in the building so that doors can be locked and alarms set and volunteers can sleep for the night.  Please respect the following guidelines:

* I need to be in the building by 9:00pm Sunday-Thursday and 10:00pm Friday-Saturday.
* Lights out in sleeping areas by 10:00pm Sunday-Thursday and 11:00pm Friday-Saturday.  I do not have to be asleep, but I have to be quiet to allow those who wish to sleep to do so.
* **IF I NEED TO LEAVE THE BUILDING AFTER CURFEW, I WILL TALK TO THE VOLUNTEER ON DUTY SO THAT I DO NOT SET OFF ANY ALARMS.**

**LATENESS / ABSENCE:**

* **IF I NEED TO BE LATE FOR DINNER OR CURFEW, I NEED TO NOTIFY FPWNY STAFF BEFORE 3:00PM THAT DAY.**
* If any of my family will be spending time out of the program on the weekend, I need to notify FPWNY staff before 12:00 noon the Friday before.

**LOST OR STOLEN PROPERTY:**

* Family Promise and host congregations are not responsible for lost or stolen items.  Please carry all valuables with you at all times or lock them with the padlock given to you upon entry in the program.

**LAUNDRY:**

The washing machine and dryer are available at the Day Center for your use.

* I will not leave laundry unattended or in the machines overnight.

**COMPUTER USE:**

Adults are able to sign out a laptop to search for employment, educational and housing opportunities.

* To protect against viruses, do not download or install any programs.
* Children are not permitted to use computers.
* Pornographic material is not to be viewed, downloaded or printed.

**SMOKING:**

Smoking is allowed outside the day center or in designated areas at host sites.

* There is no smoking allowed in any of the buildings or on the van. Smoking is allowed outside.
* There is no smoking after curfew and often alarms are set which will sound if outside doors are opened.

**VISITORS:**

* To protect the confidentiality of others, I need prior approval from the Social Worker to have friends or family visit at the day center.

Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in the appropriate application of the agency’s termination policy. This includes specific host site guidelines as well. If you have a question about a guideline please speak to the Social Worker. The Social Worker will contact the volunteer coordinators with any concerns you may have.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Emergency Phone Numbers***

**EMERGENCIES - Call 911**

If there is an incident in which you would typically call the fire department, ambulance or police, call 911 and then notify Family Promise of WNY immediately.

\*\* Calling 911 from a landline instead of cell phones allows emergency operators to

automatically trace the address of the call

\*\* All congregations should identify the number of their local police and post it

**Serious Incident – Call FPWNY Emergency On-Call #: 716-771-3007 and press “0”**

Coordinators should call the FPWNY Emergency On-Call # if you need immediate assistance in handling any incident or need to report an emergency.

* Luanne Firestone, Executive Director
* Denise Morse, Case Manager

**Daily Questions/Concerns: Call Host Coordinator**

For everyday questions and concerns or to report behavioral issues by our guests, volunteers should call their Coordinator. If the situation is not critical, coordinators should wait until business hours to report the concern.

**FPWNY Van**

If you need transportation information and our office is closed, call the FPWNY van driver, Paul Flammer.

**Contacting Guests**

At times, coordinators and volunteers need to be in touch with our guests. In advance of a host week, all coordinators receive a Family Profile for each family which includes the direct contact information for guests and the emergency contact information for guests.

**Liberty Cab**

Family Promise has a contract with Liberty Cab for crucial transportation situations, such as non-emergency medical transport and rides to work, school or apartment tours.

* + Volunteers call 877-7111 (Call our office to access the Family Promise Account and Pin numbers)

**Helpful Resources:**

* **Poison Control:** 1-800-222-1222
* **24-hour Crisis Services:** 716-834-3131 **(**for personal, emotional or mental health emergencies)
* **24-hour Erie County Domestic Violence Hotline:** 862-4357
* **24-hour Kids Helpline:** 834-1144

***Medical Emergency Protocol***

Medical emergencies will arise in FPWNY and the following are guidelines on what to do:

\*\***When calling 911**, use the address of Family Promise so that clients get billed instead of your congregation: *Family Promise of WNY, 75 Hickory Street, Buffalo, NY 14204*

**If a parent needs to go the hospital:**

* Call 911 for an ambulance or make arrangements with Liberty Cab for non-emergencies
* Call FPWNY Emergency On-Call #
* If there is a second parent, children are the responsibility of that person
* If there is no second parent, children should remain with the volunteers on duty until FPWNY staff arrives.
* The guest’s emergency contact should be notified immediately to begin arranging for children to be transported to the care of that person.
* FPWNY staff will meet the parent at the hospital to decide on a best plan forward before coming to the congregation.

**If a child needs to go to the hospital:**

* Call 911 for an ambulance or make arrangements with Liberty Cab for non-emergencies
* Call FPWNY Emergency On-Call #
* Parent and child will go to the hospital. If there is a second parent, other children are the responsibility of that person. If there is no second parent, other children should remain with the volunteers on duty until FPWNY staff arrives.
* The guest’s emergency contact should be notified immediately to begin arranging for children to be transported to the care of that person.
* FPWNY staff will meet the parent and child at the hospital to decide on a best plan forward before coming to the congregation.

**Communicable Disease/Infection Control:**

Sometimes our guests contract highly contagious diseases that can be dangerous to other children or elderly volunteers, such as Chickenpox or Scarlet Fever. If this happens,

* Call FPWNY Emergency On-Call # as soon as disease is identified
* FPWNY will work with guests to attempt to make arrangements to temporarily place them with their emergency contacts
* If this is impossible, FPWNY will move guests to a motel until they have recovered.

**Non-Emergency Protocol:**

If a non-emergency medical situation arises, encourage guests to call their primary care doctor. Most doctor’s offices have after-hours on-call physicians to answer medical questions. In addition, all host sites are encouraged to keep a stocked medical kit on site complete with over-the-counter generic medication for children and adults. This medical kit should be in a lock box on a high shelf. Congregations should let our families know where the medical kit is located and that they can access it as needed by asking a volunteer to open the box. Let parents choose the medication in the lock box and remind them that they can always go to a pharmacy to ask for help deciding if they are unsure which medication is best. Volunteers are not permitted to advise parents on which medication to choose or provide them directly with medication at any point.

***Disruptive Behavior Protocol***

Occasionally, the stresses of life catch up to our guests. Add to this tight quarters and constantly shifting spaces, and at times guests can end up in conflict with one another or with volunteers. When conflict happens please follow these guidelines:

**Conflict Management Guidelines:**

* Be respectful of guests & treat them with dignity
* Remain calm & avoid overreaction. Your tone and volume should be lower and calmer than those in conflict.
* Maintain physical distance of 6 – 21 feet from those in conflict
* Try to give guests choices in resolving conflict
* **DO NOT** use phrases like, “Calm down,” “Relax,” or “Knock it off.”
* **DO** **NOT** touch guests without permission, especially during conflict

Usually conflict situations are resolvable with a calm approach. Please report any resolved conflict situations to your Coordinator.

**If behavior becomes violent, call the Police.**

* For safety reasons, do not engage the guest directly.
* Then call the FPWNY on-call staff member who will arrive on the scene.
* Call your Coordinator.
* Guests will be discharged immediately into a motel for the night and then out of the program in the morning

***Additional Phone Numbers***

In order to safely post this manual to our website, we have removed:

* Cell numbers for the Family Promise of WNY Executive Director, Case Manager and Van Driver
* Cell numbers of our on-call Spanish speakers
* Liberty Cab code numbers to access the Family Promise of WNY account
* 2018 Host Congregation Schedule

**Call Family Promise directly for any of this information at: 771-3007**

***Transportation Protocol***

**Our protocol is that volunteers do not transport guests in their personal vehicles**, as it makes that volunteer, the host congregation and Family Promise of WNY liable in the case of injury to a guest. We also have a program model that is transportation-heavy and, at times, transporting guests is not only desirable but necessary. Please rely on the following protocol to help us transport guests safely:

* **For medical emergencies**, call 911 for an ambulance. Know that the guest will be charged a significant amount of money for this transport, so please use this for emergencies only.
* **For off-schedule guest priority appointments (work, apartment, non-emergency medical or pharmacy**), if guest do not have a personal vehicle or if public transportation is prohibitivecall Liberty Cab to arrange transportation**.** We understand that some of our guests work late shifts far from our host sites or at times need to visit the ER for non-emergency situations. Family Promise has set up a corporate account with Liberty Cab to handle these transports safely. FP staff or volunteers can call Liberty Cab to arrange transportation with the following codes:
  + **Call 877-7111 and provide Family Promise Account and Pin number** *(call the Family Promise office directly for these numbers at 771-3007)*

Please use this service only for critical transports, as FPWNY will be charged for this service. We receive a discounted rate of $2.25/mile, which for example translates as $35 for a one-way cab ride from Hamburg to Buffalo. No tipping is necessary with a corporate account transport.

* **For Enrichment Activities**, schedule the Family Promise van. Guests can be transported in the Family Promise van at any time by any driver cleared by Family Promise. If your congregation wishes to transport guests for a fun activity, please request our van. We can either provide a driver or a volunteer from your congregation can be cleared by Family Promise (the driver needs to have a clean driving record, be over 25 years old and under 65 years old and submit a copy of their driver’s license to FPWNY).
* **For everyday transportation needs**, guests should utilize public transportation.

***Photo Sharing Protocol***

Family Promise of WNY must protect the privacy of the guests in our program. Our guests are in vulnerable positions for a number of reasons. First, they are homeless and already marginalized. Second, the majority of our guests are children. And third, our guests for the most part will continue to live and work in our community once they leave our program. For these reasons, the Family Promise of WNY network must be careful in how we collect and use images of the families we serve. If you ask and receive permission from a family, feel free to take photos with our guests to remember your experiences or to print out and give to guests as keepsakes. However, follow the following guidelines when it comes to sharing those photos with a wider audience:

* **A family must have a signed Photo Release Form on file at our office.** Guests have the right to opt out of having their photographs shared in connection to our program. Call us to double-check on whether a guest has a form on file or not.

* **A family must not still be in shelter.** While in shelter, families are at a particularly vulnerable time in their lives and we need to make our priority protecting their privacy. Even after their leave Family Promise of WNY, some families are dismissed from our program and transition into another shelter. When considering sharing photos, we must be careful to highlight only families who are not currently in shelter.

* **A family must never be identified by name.** We share photographs to help us explain our volunteer efforts or tell the mission of our organization, which can always be done in a way that does not attach names or other identifying markers to our guests.

* **Share photos only to closed groups.**  When sharing photos, please be sure the group you are sharing to is limited - for example, an email list of other volunteers. DO NOT share photos with guests on social media venues like Facebook, which is too porous to protect the privacy of our guests. Family Promise of WNY staff choose photos carefully when posting to general audiences such as our website, mailings, etc.

Family Promise of WNY will send out regular updates about our program, including photographs, for Coordinators to share with their volunteers. If you are in doubt about what is appropriate to send, please wait for these updates.