



# FAMILY PROMISE OF WNY

## 2024 Annual Report



# Family Promise

OF WESTERN NEW YORK

*Celebrating over 25 Years of Keeping Families Together*

## OUR MISSION

### **We keep unhoused families together**

by offering emergency housing and compassionate support as they work to find their way back home.

#### **WE KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER -**

We are one of just two emergency family shelters in Erie County



#### **SMALLER IS BETTER -**

Because we serve just 6-8 families at a time, we keep things personal for our kids- who make up 75% of our guests



#### **WE ARE ACCESSIBLE -**

Our shelter is ADA accessible, features spacious rooms ideal for larger families and allows parents to cook for their kids



#### **WE SERVE ALL FAMILIES -**

We can shelter single moms and single dads, two-parent families and multi-generational families



**Family Promise of WNY, 75 Hickory Street, Buffalo NY 14204  
716-771-3007 • fpwny.org • facebook.com/fpwny**



# Family Promise

OF WESTERN NEW YORK

*Celebrating over 25 Years of Keeping Families Together*

## WHAT WE DO

**We help families stabilize** by working on the following priorities while they are living in our emergency shelter. Additionally, we tailor goals to each family in our program.

### WE HELP FIND HOUSING -



From Day #1, we work to find safe and affordable housing so families can quickly find their way back home

### WE HELP MEET BASIC NEEDS -

To stabilize a family, we make sure they have enough food and clothing, critical documents and working cell phones



### WE LINK TO MEDICAL CARE -



Healthy families are stable families. We link to primary, pediatric and specialized medical providers

### WE HELP PARENTS FIND JOBS -

We know that affording rent is hard. A stable apartment requires a stable income



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## Note from the Director

As we wrap up 2024, I can't believe that Family Promise of Western New York is heading into our fifth year as a static-site shelter!

Since we opened as a static shelter back in September of 2020. . .

# Family Promise has served 750 people and helped over 80 families move back home into permanent housing!

We have grown so much in the last five years as a program and continue to strive to be better each and every day! Below are some of our top insights from 2024:

## #1

**The main reason the families in our program cited as what triggered their homeless event this past year was due to “family breakup”, which is most often the result of the sickness or death of a partner or a parent.**

25% of our families cited this as the reason they were homeless. The #2 reason was eviction.

## 3

**The number of months on average it took a family to successfully work our program and graduate into permanent housing.**

Beyond housing, we are also stabilizing every family we work with. 92% of the families who exited our program in 2024 did not re-enter the homeless system.

## 32

**The number of families we served in 2024.**

This included 119 children - the fastest growing segment of the homeless population is children ages 0-5. Our program provided almost 10,400 bed nights in 2024, which was a 1,000 increase over last year.

## 41

**The percent of our families who were employed.**

We had a 46% increase from the number of families entering our program with employment to the number of families exiting our program with employment! We know securing employment is a strong indicator for successfully finding housing and we have focused on this benchmark this year.

**“I am grateful that a place like this exists. Because so many people have no one. I have not one person who me and my children could stay with during a time like this. For me, **my two options were a motel or a car.****

**Family Promise provided me with a much better option.** Homelessness can have a profound negative emotional effect on children and adults. For my kids, Family Promise made it more of an adventure for them than the reality of homelessness. Providing shelter, support, comfort and family time activities was a welcome distraction from reality.”

*Miss T. and sons*

## **Family Promise has received a lot of love from our community this past year!**

In particular, we've won two major grants that have helped to build capacity in our program! This past Spring, Family Promise of WNY won the competitive 21st Century Fund Grant which served as a catalyst in our efforts to find a second shelter location! This award was critical to allowing us to pay the developers, architects and lawyers to guide us in the predevelopment stages of locating a possible second shelter site in advance of trying to apply for New York State funding for this project. **THANK YOU TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE 21st CENTURY FUND FOR THIS CRITICAL SUPPORT!**



**And this past Fall, we secured the biggest grant in our history - a KeyBank Foundation Impact Grant - that will provide \$300,000 to Family Promise over the next 3 years!**

This grant was targeted to help with two needs:

**First, decreasing success rate in housing families**

We have noticed the following concerning trend over the past five years - our ability to successfully graduate families has dropped by 39%! We attribute this to multiple factors, including increasing complexity of the families we are serving, most notably in CPS involvement and trauma baseline index scores. We are addressing this need with the help of the KeyBank Foundation with the hiring of our **new Housing Coordinator**, who is 100% focused on finding housing, negotiating with landlords and getting our families signed landlord statements! And it is working! **In the first 2 days of 2025, we housed 3 families!**

**Second, increasing capacity needs as we expand our ability to serve more families**

**There has been a 200% jump in family homelessness over the last 5 years in Erie County!** Family Promise has been trying to meet this need by pursuing the possibility of opening a 2nd small family shelter. We have explored several sites and at the close of 2024 are still in the pre-development phase of this project. We have a goal of more than doubling our services by jumping from serving six families to fourteen families at a time. Below is a rendering of what our new 2nd shelter could look like:

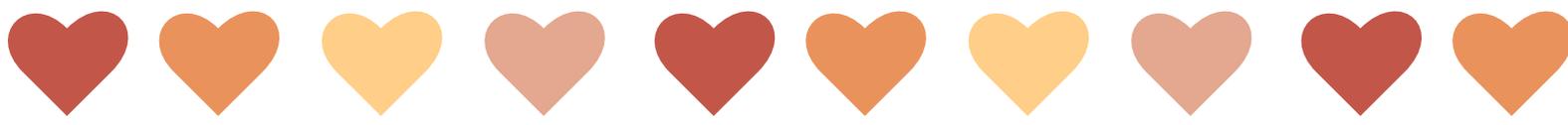


**Thank you to the KeyBank Foundation for helping us grow!**

As we close out this year, we continue to be grateful to our network supporters who are helping in so many ways to keep our organization strong and thriving so that we can do the important work of helping families find their way back home!

Sincerely,

Luanne Firestone, *Executive Director*



# 2024 at a Glance

**119**

Children Sheltered

**32**

Families served

**3**

Average number of months it took a family to successfully move back home

**41%**

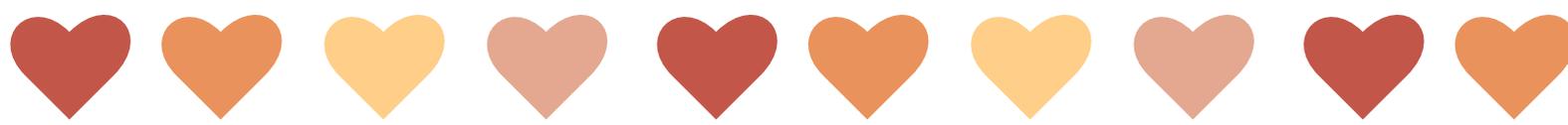
Families employed upon exiting our program

**47%**

Families who were homeless for the first time

**92%**

Families who did not reenter the homeless system after participating in our program



# 2024 Children's Engagement

15

Field trips enjoyed

33

Families who received Christmas gifts through our Giving Tree Program

34

Birthdays celebrated

46

Friday night bingo games played

56

Youth who participated in our after-school partnership at the Old First Ward Community Center

135

In-house weekend volunteer activities hosted

136

Hours of summer camp provided



## Meet our Leadership Team



**Luanne Firestone,**  
**Executive Director**  
Oversees shelter team and operations



**Roberta Pickens,**  
**Shelter Supervisor**  
Supports shelter staff and operations



**Jenn Kegler,**  
**Youth Program and Outreach Manager**  
Coordinates outreach and children's programs



**Susan Andersen-Strait**  
**Family Case Coordinator**  
Helps guests achieve their goals while in shelter



**Akela Allums,**  
**Shelter Manager**  
Keeps our shelter running smoothly



**Alicia Jackson, Weekend Assistant Manager**  
Supports the team on the weekends



**Isohie "SoSo" Ogiugo,**  
**Stability Case Worker**  
Runs PayDay Program



**Susana Breese,**  
**Development Director**  
Finds us the money



**Roni Courton**  
**Housing Coordinator**  
Helps families find housing

# Meet our Board of Directors and our Advisory Board

## Board of Directors

### Officers

- **President: CJ Van Note, CPA, International Tax Manager, Aprio**
- **Vice President: Melissa Keith, Vice President of Media, Abbey Mecca**
- **Treasurer: Kaylei Russell, CPA, Controller, Beyond Support Network**
- **Secretary: Clara Moran, Executive Director, BISON Children's Scholarship Fund**

### Board Members

- **Dawn Askew, MBA, Equal Opportunity Specialist 2, New York State Insurance Fund**
- **Matthew Becton, Senior Manager of Learning and Development, Verizon**
- **Jim Connolly, retired**
- **Marissa Desidario, LCSW, Senior EAP Clinician & Training Coor, Child and Family Services**
- **J. Christian Hoffman, Director of Communication, Community Missions of Niagara Frontier**
- **Margot Knab, JD, Senior Associate, Colligan Law LLP**
- **Shannon Fagan, Director of Therapeutic Services, Brylin Hospital**
- **Richard "Ryall" Ledyard, Real Estate Salesperson, Cushman & Wakefield / Pyramid Brokerage Company**
- **Danielle Maurice, Social Worker, Erie County Court System**
- **Michael Murak, Commercial Real Estate Financing Team Lead and Senior Relationship Manager, Evans Bank**
- **Kelly Ann Toy, Lawyer, U.S. Development Finance Corporations**

## Advisory Board

- **Kevin and Cathy Barron, Admin, Cardinal O'Hara Retirement and Pastry Chef, NCC**
- **Ilia Beecher, Paws for Love SPCA**
- **Steve Blass, Advisor, Vision Financial Group**
- **Kelli Cavo, Human Resource Manager, Northwestern Mutual**
- **Frank Cammarata, Executive Director, Erie County Office for People with Disabilities**
- **Rita Capezzi, Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church**
- **Pat Crowley, Special Events Advisor**
- **Eric Ensminger, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Marketing Technologies of WNY**
- **Justin Eveland, Senior Vice President, M&T Bank**
- **Gigi Jankowski, Agent, Nichol City Realty**
- **Rob Hackford, Journalist, WGRZ-TV Buffalo**
- **Joe Heary, Executive Director, Friends of Night People**
- **Kathy and Bob Hayes, Community Coordinators, Saint Vincent De Paul Catholic Church**
- **Paula Hunt, Buffalo House of Hope**
- **Rev. Joan Montagnes, Retired Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church**

# 2024 In-Kind Donations

\$ 2,100	Baby
\$ 1877	Birthdays
\$ 13,310	Apartment Essentials
\$ 5,205	Shelter Supplies
\$ 5,540	Gift Cards
\$ 3,350	Bedding
\$ 6,255	Children's Programming
\$ 6,203	Clothing
\$ 12,245	Groceries
\$55, 935	Holiday Gifts

**\$112,020**

**TOTAL  
IN-KIND  
SUPPORT**

- 21.64% increase over last year
- 9.7% of our operating budget



# Snapshot of a typical family in our shelter in 2024

## Single Mother.

63% of the families we served were led by single mothers.

## First time homeless

Nearly half of all families we served in 2024 were experiencing homelessness for the first time

## African-American

77% of the families we serve identify as people of color

## Has 2 children ages 0-5

36% of all children in our shelter this past year were ages 0-5

## Was displaced from her family home

25% of the families we served were homeless due to “family breakup”.

## In our shelter program for 12 weeks

The shortest stay for a family was 3 weeks. The longest was 7 months.

## Family of 5

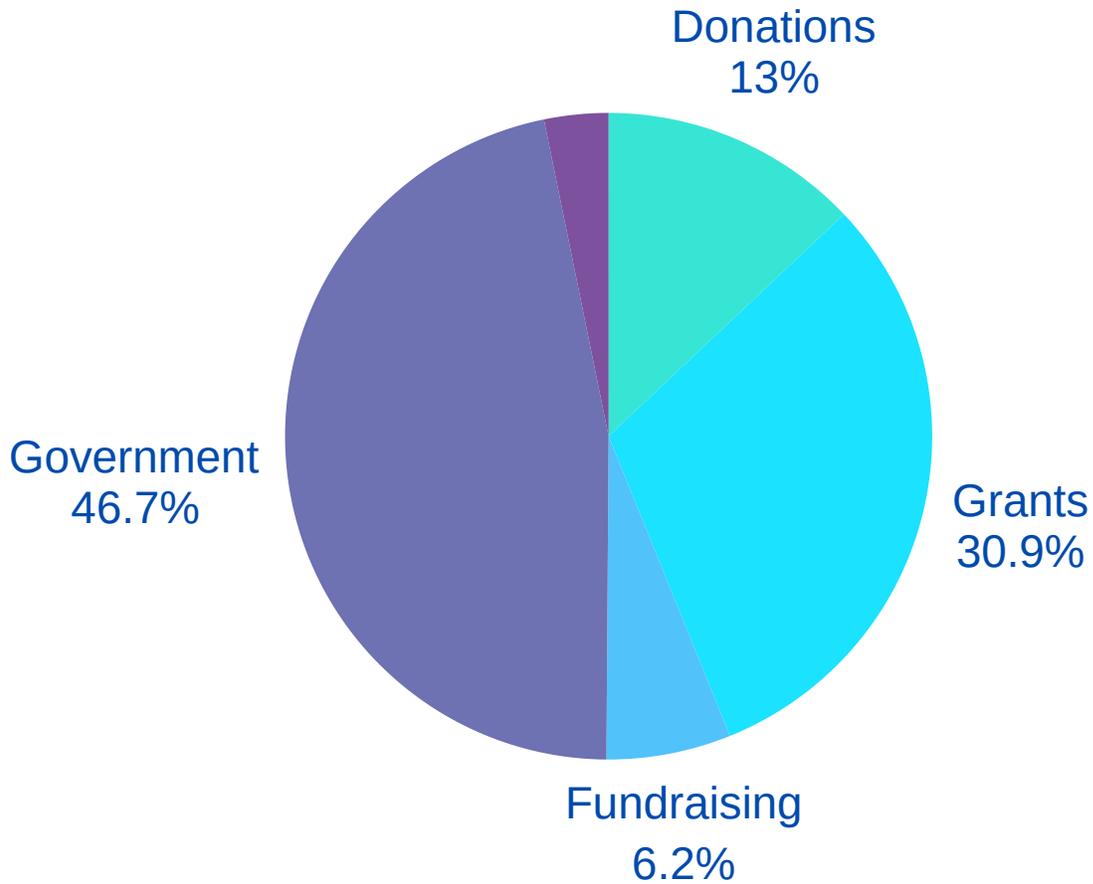
The smallest family we served in 2024 was a family of 2. The largest was a family of 9.

## Graduates successfully from our program

Between 55-70% of our families successfully find housing



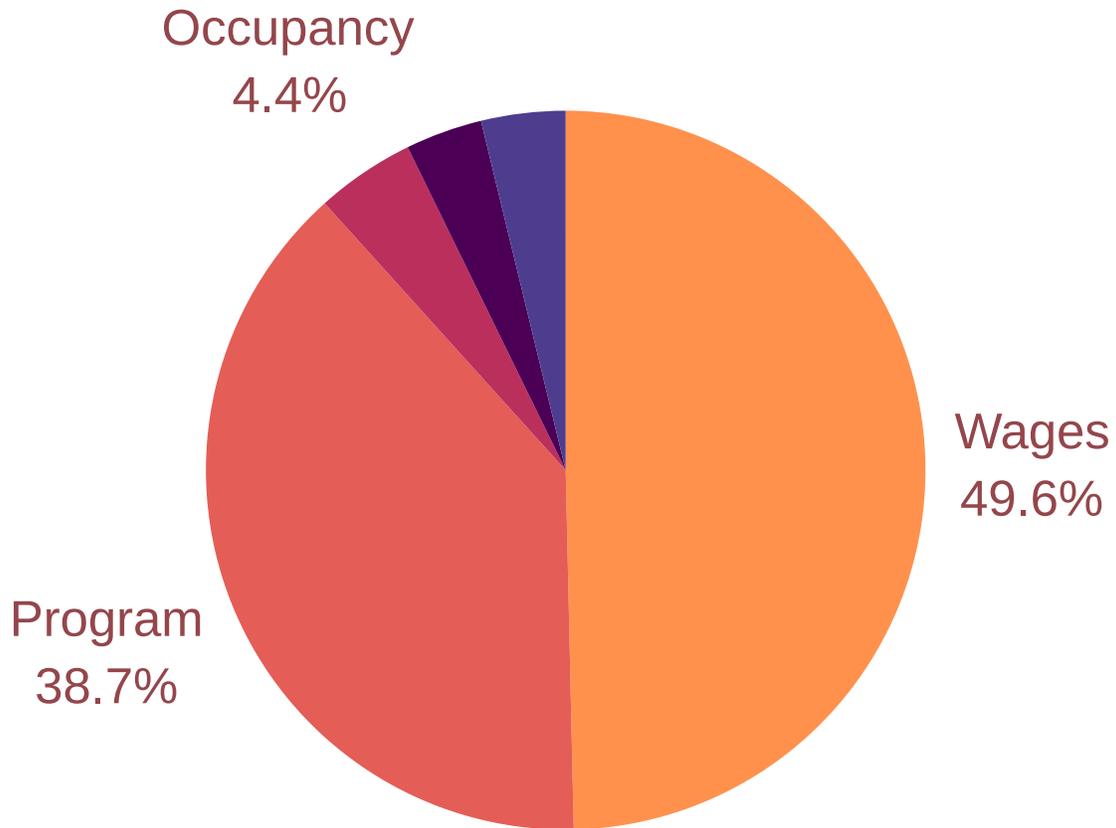
# 2024 Income



Fundraising -	\$71,596
Donations - (individual, corporate, club, congregation)	\$148,991
Grants -	\$355,297
Government -	\$536,555
Miscellaneous -	\$36,839

**TOTAL INCOME: \$1,149,278**

# 2024 Expenses



Fundraising -	\$38,363
Management -	\$42,051
Occupancy -	\$49,402
Program -	\$429,770
Wages -	\$551,662

**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,109,551**

## What our Guests are Saying

### Leaving soon?

Please take a moment to share with us what Family Promise has meant to you during your stay.

All of you guys Truly been family we had Good times, Bad times, sad times, mad times, but at the end of the day we will always be family, and come together to build towards greatness and strengthen each other in time of need. Our family are truly grateful for all the love and support we have received ~~to~~ from each and every staff member in our time of need. Please continue to remember your Jobs changes Lives it's up to you how!!

May we share your words anonymously on our website and with our network? YES NO 

### Leaving soon?

Please take a moment to share with us what Family Promise has meant to you during your stay.

When I first came to Family Promise I was kinda ~~scared~~ <sup>scared</sup> Because I never thought I would have to be in a shelter But now i'm grateful for me ~~to~~ coming here to get the help me and my kid need and making I stay Fokus and for guiding me on the right path and showing us love.

## Leaving soon?

Please take a moment to share with us what Family Promise has meant to you during your stay.

Thank you so much for ~~helping~~ helping my family and I feel whole again!!  
The staff made us feel very welcomed and not judged.

This place is a safe haven to finally be able to focus on a great transition. I really appreciate how nice and clean things are kept, and how friendly. I hope families can appreciate Family Promise!!  
Thank you Thank you Thank you  
Love and Light  for the "Gi-Gi"

## Leaving soon?

Please take a moment to share with us what Family Promise has meant to you during your stay.

It has meant everything, a second chance, <sup>when</sup> ~~you~~ though all was lost, it is a bright light in the world that cannot be extinguished.

# 2024 Donors

## Gifts of \$100,000+

KeyBank Foundation

## Gifts of \$50,000-\$99,999

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo  
The John R. Oishei Foundation

## Gifts of \$20,000-\$49,999

City of Buffalo ESG  
Bueler, Bob

## Gifts of \$10,000-\$19,999

Sengupta, Elizabeth & Sourav  
The Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation  
Orchard Park Presbyterian Church  
Monsignor Richard S. Amico Memorial  
Charitable Trust  
The Galasso Foundation

## Gifts of \$5,000-\$9,999

Sokody Sales Team  
St. Johns Lutheran Church  
John Newman Mission Community  
The Marks Family Foundation  
Baxter, Kevin  
HDE Electric Inc  
Aprio Foundation  
Beardi, James & Linda  
Children's Foundation of Erie County  
J.M. McDonald Foundation  
Josephine Goodyear Foundation  
Neumeister, Janette  
The Kamis Family Ministries Fund

## Gifts of \$1,000-\$4,999

Rotary Club of Amherst East Foundation  
Niland, Eileen and James  
Betschen, Richard  
The Riefler Fund  
Gar223 Fund for Lutheran Organizations  
Evans Bank  
Leo, Jack & Luanne  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo  
Evans, Stanley & Anne

Lions Clubs of District 20-N 2  
Evans-Devereux Memorial Fund  
Hybrid Building Solutions  
Eberl Iron Works, Inc.  
Davis, Donna  
Lutheran Charities  
Fay, Thomas & Mary  
Nobel, Sanford M.  
United Way  
Tay Tahk, Charlotte  
Van Note, CJ  
Stylze by Stass  
Suttell, Daniel  
Hoffman, Christian  
Vaughn, Lewis  
Alcamo, Thomas  
Taylor, Suzanne  
West Herr  
Encore Funding  
Bradley, William  
Brunner, Kathy  
DeMarti, Cindy  
East Hill Foundation  
Erbacher, Christine  
Hyde, Alison  
Interim Employment Solutions LLC  
Kenmore Lions Club  
Mark A Nickerson CPA PLLC  
St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church  
Stewart, Ryan & Megan  
Stone, Jordan

## Gifts of \$500-\$999

Zion Lutheran Church  
McKay, Bruce and Phoebe  
McAllister, Timothy and Noreen  
Church of the Nativity  
Hamburg United Methodist Church  
O'Connor, Keith & Wendy  
Kegler, Gary & Marcia  
Kenline-Blette, Beverly R.  
Stepien, John  
Schneggenburger, Julie  
Schneegold, Andrew  
Keith, Melissa

Fredericks, Martin  
Aldrich, Timothy & Donata  
Montagnes, Rosemary  
Wild, Norline  
Beecher, Iliia  
Blackman, Bruce  
United Way of Greater Rochester & Finger  
Lakes  
Pyramid Brokerage  
St Joe's University Parish  
Sealing Devices  
State Employees Federated Appeal Niagara  
Frontier  
Clifford, David and Cheryl  
Alice L Say Family Foundation  
Blackley, Carol  
Bradley, Virginia  
Compass Minerals  
Dickman, Paul  
Egan, Mary and Edmund  
Felician Sisters of North America, Inc.  
Greatbatch, Michele  
Hunt, Mary Jo  
Johnson, Maxine  
Law Offices of Jessica A Kulpit  
Metzger, Sarah  
Orchard Park Presbyterian Women  
Pasquarella, Matthew  
Rich Products Corp.  
Schaaf, Norman & Joann  
The Caring House Project  
The Woodforest Charitable Foundation  
Warner, Eileen  
Wynne, Robert & Audra  
Youngstown Lions Club

### **Gifts of \$100-\$499**

Following Jesus at Harris Hill  
Stewart, Joseph  
Durkin, Michael & Karan  
Friends of Night People  
Tracy, Megan  
Johnson, Amy  
Lyle, Stephen  
KeyBank  
Knights of Columbus - John Cardinal O'Hara  
Council  
John Svec & Kandy Krampitz

All Saints Lutheran Church  
Connolly, James & Patricia  
Kney, Jeffrey & Jane  
Eagle Scout #411  
Banas, Christopher  
Rizzo, Marta  
Anderson, Diana  
Dingboom, Grace  
Brady, Karen  
Hines, Michael & Candace  
Frazer, Betsy  
Graves Towers, Lynn  
Duggan, Andrea  
Maras, Amber  
Battistoni, Linda  
Berrady, Laura  
Cappello, Robert J. & Julie M.  
Delo, Marylou & John  
Sieracki, Roger & Kathleen  
Ss. Peter & Paul Church  
Montgomery, Paul  
Oczytko, Barbara  
Bauman, Matthew & Ann  
Moran, Nellie  
Schutte, Mary and Al  
Highgate Medical  
Becton, Matthew  
CSX Foundation  
Johnson, Carrie  
Stroud, Meagan  
Doick, Robin  
Capezzi, Rita  
Beyer, Jim  
Brandel-Murphy Youth Foundation Inc  
Buttino, Anthony  
Grace, Lee Ann  
Hartigan, Patti & Paul  
Parker, Richard & Mary  
Ryan, Bridget  
Samita, Danielle  
Schneggenburger, Caroline & Gerald  
Vilardo, Anthony & Maria  
Grimaldi, Eileen  
Cavo, Kelli  
Marschke, Stephanie  
Buttino, Thomas J. & Amy G  
Luppino-Gholston, Kristen  
Wixson, Stephen  
Paladino, Katherine

Burke, Patricia  
Collins, Bonnie  
Hayes, Bob and Kathy  
Michael & Jenn Bishara  
Sager, Alan and Suzanne  
Tunmore Oldsmobile  
Suhr, Tammy  
O.P. Craft Club  
Bakowski, Evelyn  
Misenheimer, Dana  
Pawarski, David  
Godwin, Sean  
Askew, Dawn  
Beuler, Robert M. & Colleen M.  
Crowley, Patricia  
Dann, Jeffrey and Maureen  
Desiderio, David & Mary Ann  
DiCerbo, Nicholas & Ann  
Ensminger, Eric  
Loftus, Patrick & Renee  
Meador, W. John and Barbara Mindel, Mary  
Mitrovits, Joseph  
Morrow, Donna & Michael  
Mount St. Mary Academy  
Bridge, Carol  
Zastrow, William  
Brauer, Carol  
Bukowski, Edward and Anne  
Bauer, Dale  
Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph  
Smith, Gary & Judy  
Fabiano, Jude & Eileen  
Mallak, Robert  
Interlichia, Kate  
Madoff, Ben  
St. James UCC  
Kegler, Johanna  
Burke, Christopher  
DiPasquale, Michael  
Doly, Lillian  
Marrano, Carol  
McSweeney, Gerald  
Petre, Joseph  
Anastas, Tony & Catherine  
Bauda, Shari  
Bauer, Carl & Carmille  
Brickman, Laurence & Celeste  
Bronnenkant, Bruce & Carol  
Brown, Charles & Alice

Campbell, Barbara  
Colvin, Deborah and Joseph  
Cooper, Janet & Crump, C. Elizabeth  
Dannebrock, William & Audrey  
Dengler, William and Mary  
Deubell, Dustin & Amy  
Discipio, Thomas  
Edgerton, Amy  
Epiphany UCC  
Farrell, Mar  
Galdun, David  
Grotty, Anita & Patrick  
Henderson, Bob and Norma  
House, Cheryl & Anthony  
Jarrett, John & Susan  
Johnson, Karin E.  
Joy, Shirley  
Lynda Erick and  
Mitchel Roemer  
Makey, Brian and Ellen  
Matthews, Helen  
Metivier, Victor & Barbara  
Meyer, Daniel  
Montagnes, Joan  
Munschauer, Cindy  
Ohl, Joseph & Alice  
Owens, Jim & Diane  
Penfold, Richard C. & Karen E.  
Schoenborn, Jeffrey and Margot  
Smyth-Bogumil, Elaine Margaret  
Snyder, Sharon  
Snyder, Suzanne & Kirby  
Sowyrda, Darcy  
Stievater, Frederic & Jaan  
The Congregation of The Sisters of St. Joseph  
Uniland Development Corporation  
University Presbyterian Church  
Van Baak, David & Nancy  
Ventura, Mike & Bev  
West, Sandra  
Wrinn, Thomas and Carolyn  
Wynne, Jane  
Yakovac, Joseph  
Carr, Karen  
Sozanski, John M. & Marilyn

## **Gifts under \$100**

National Fuel Charitable Foundation

Pitchford, Ashley

Reed, Elizabeth

Lennon, Mike & Marsha

Blood, Jennifer

Browne, Thomas & Patricia

Bruning, Richard & Mary

Hofner, Diane & James

Holzerland, Gary & Mary

Knab, Margot

Quinn, David & Maria

Sear, Gordon & Beatrice

Schaab, Gail

Desiderio, Marissa

Morales, Zeida

Gensler, Terry & Maureen

Groeger, Michelle

Murak, Michael

Reed, Grant & Carrie

Rodems, Claudia

Blass, Stephen

Chmiel, Ryli

Crampton, Iain

Watson, Marion

Snider, Larry & Amy

Gambacorta, Claire

Talty, Annemarie

Bowman, Ray & Jeanne

Daly, Christopher

Hartke, Laura

Helmicki, Sharon

Kasprzak, Henry

Liriano, Pedro

McCarthy, John

Stadler, Karl

Andol Moeller, Jeanine

Baier, Michael & Clarine

Bartley, Jim

Barusic, Richard & Christina

Bierl, William & Michele

Burritt, William & Judith

Caramazza, Kathleen

Firestone, Pauline

Girzone, Edward and Jennifer

Gramza, Maryann and Ronald

Hackford, Martin & Elaine

Hamm, Carol

Kirby, Peggy

Klawitter, David

Klick, Gina

Koelmel, Carolyn

Kubala, Katherine

Kulpit, Jessica

Lee, Dr. Richard J.

Lewis, Joan

McDonnell, Robert

McGuirk, Anne & Kimberly

Meyler-Pirk, Jeanne

Park, Sandra

Rivera, Carmen

Somerville, Jeffrey & Lynda

Trinity Old Lutheran Church, Inc

Tunmore, Roger and Bonnie

Wach, Donald & Linda

Wayne, Mary

Wescott, Matthew

Zelasko, Sally & Charles

Tichy, Rudolph S. III & Susan

O'Brien, Patrick

Murphy, Rosemary

Balzano, Gregory

Przybylak, Sandy

Cybulski, David

Frawley, Michael & Dianne

Leggett, Amelia

Leggett, Barbara

Vanremmen, June Campbell

Wilk, Walter & Frances

Rebecchi, Jake

Rodems, David

Arno, Annamaria

Schaller, Lawrence & Barbara

Thomas, Cheryl

Damiano, Mary

Doyno, Ellen

Foster, Richard

Socha, Benjamin & Krystle

Kuzina, Barbara

Heary, Pamela

Romano, Mary

Alberella, Mary Ann

Amato, Samuel

Bonisch, Manfred

Bosinski, Linda and Paul

Boswell, David

Burgess, Tara

Conner, Nancy and Daniel  
Hewson, Theresa and Christopher  
Kasperek, Lisa  
Kowalski Kenneth  
Lillis, Judith  
Molnar, Diane and Joseph  
Oliver, Dana  
Reinagel, TH & TM  
Schillroth, James & Marilyn  
Sister Martha Olszewski  
Sobczak, Kenneth & Martha  
Weaver, Carol L.  
Zeitz, Linda  
Machtel, Deanna  
Martin, Margaret  
Schmidt, David & Mary Linda  
Spahn, Joseph H.  
Steffan, Pamela  
Villa, Sandra  
Voye, James & Linda  
Welchoff, Madeleine  
Morales, Luz  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Bentley, Annette  
Hess, Emmylou & Harold  
Smith, Dale