



Safe Families *for* Children

a program of
Catholic Community Services

Safe Families for Children: A movement of families giving hope to *children and parents* in crisis.

For some families there is no safety net when crisis strikes – no relatives or friends to rely on for support. Sometimes a problem such as unemployment or domestic crisis can temporarily jeopardize parents' ability to provide safety and stability for their children.

Now, a promising new collaboration between Catholic Community Services and local congregations gives parents experiencing a crisis *hope*.

Through Safe Families for Children, parents in crisis can arrange for their children to stay with a pre-screened host family while they focus on resolving the situation and stabilize their home.

Imagine your neighbor,

a single mother new to the neighborhood. The recession hits. She loses her job. She loses her house. She has no local relatives or friends to lean on for support. She's drinking to try to deal with her stress. She might lose custody of her children.

But what if something good happened?

Just one thing, to start her life going upwards again...

What if someone volunteered – out of the goodness of their heart – to help this family?

What if someone said, "Need a hand? The kids can stay with me while you find work."

What would that do for her spirits?
What would that do for her future?
For her children's future?

Would it matter?
Would it make a difference?

Might you make a difference?

Safe Families for Children: a new national model

Safe Families for Children is a network of volunteer host families that extends the community safety net by providing parents with a loving respite home where they can safely place their children in times of crisis, such as illness, incarceration, homelessness, substance abuse or domestic violence.

Safe Families gives parents in crisis time, support and flexibility to work through challenges without fear of losing custody of their children. Parents are encouraged to maintain contact with their children during program participation, with the goal of being reunited in their own home.

Host families, prompted solely by compassion, are screened, trained, and serve without compensation. These dedicated community members are recruited through local congregations and community organizations.

Safe Families for Children began in Chicago in 2002 and is rapidly becoming a national model for communities that want to expand their care for children at risk.

The average length of a child's stay is about six weeks, but can range from two days to a year. Nationally, 94% of the children come back together with their original or extended families, often in the most stable environment they have ever known.

Contact Safe Families for Children to:

- Volunteer to provide a Safe Family for Children. Host families are not limited to pilot neighborhoods mentioned below.
- Receive a Safe Families for Children presentation at your congregation or organization.
- Make a potential referral: the program will begin screening for referrals January, 2011. Families served during the demonstration project must live in one of three Fostering Hope pilot neighborhoods: in Salem: Swegle Elementary School or Washington Elementary School; in McMinnville: Sue Buell Elementary School.

503-390-2600

SafeFamilies@ccswv.org