Places of Worship

Resource Packet
Introduction to Family Gateway

Our mission is to provide stability and life-changing supportive services to children and families affected by homelessness. Founded by Mayor Annette Strauss in 1986, we operate the only emergency shelter in Dallas that will serve a family of any kind — single parents with children, families with older male children, families with same gender parents, multi-generational families — all are welcome. Services offered include assessment and diversion, emergency shelter, supportive housing, case management, and education programming.

As an agency, we have been designated to field and triage Homeless Crisis Helpline calls for families experiencing homelessness in Dallas County. This means we prioritize families for care according to urgency, divert those we can from shelter, and triage the ones who need shelter into the four local shelters that provide support for families.

We believe in providing housing first and then use a two-generation approach to wrap trauma-informed services around both the parent and the child. In our own emergency shelter, we are housing focused for adults and education focused for children, offering an after-school program and the coordination of education, preschool, daycare, etc. The interventions we provide give young children who have experienced homelessness the chance to build the resiliency they need to break the detrimental cycle of homelessness.

Volunteer Opportunities at Family Gateway

The success of our children and families depends on support from community volunteers. Volunteers of all ages are needed, but children under the age of 14 must be supervised by an adult. Opportunities include:

- Helping kids with homework
- Planning activities for children
- Organizing an in-kind donation drive
- Preparing and/or serving a meal
- Providing kitchen support
- Providing administrative assistance
- Cleaning/facilities maintenance
- Hosting a 3rd party fundraising event (i.e. bake sale, jeans day)
- Answering Helpline calls (18+)
  - For this opportunity, please send your resume to Rosie at rgarcia@familygateway.org and then set up an interview time with her.
How to Volunteer at Family Gateway

We have a simple, self-service volunteer portal for easy sign up and scheduling online at https://familygateway.volunteerhub.com.

Volunteers 18 and older will need to create an account and complete a background check through Verified Volunteers. The background check costs approximately $9.

If you are between the ages of 14 and 17, or wish to sign up someone in that age range, please complete the initial user profile information and contact Kendall Brown (kbrown@familygateway.org) to complete his/her registration and bypass the background check.

Children 13 and younger must have adult supervision when volunteering and do NOT need to create an account. The adult supervisor is required to create an account and complete a background check.

To volunteer as a group, coordinate with a Family Gateway staff member to reserve the volunteer slots of a certain opportunity for your corporation. We can also create a special volunteer event for your group.

Ideas for Places of Worship

We are thrilled that you are interested in getting your congregation engaged in our mission. Here are a few ideas to help you get started:

- **Invite a Family Gateway staff member to speak to your congregation.**
  - The staff member will share more about our work and then discuss ways to get involved and give back. At the end of the presentation, there will be a 10-minute Q&A session.
  - If desired, a Family Gateway 101 PowerPoint presentation can be shared as well as a 5-minute video about the agency.
  - This presentation typically takes 30 minutes, including the Q&A session, but can be adjusted to accommodate your schedule.

- **Organize a donation drive for in-kind items.**
  - When a new family moves into emergency shelter, they are provided with new bedding, toiletries, towels, and other basic essentials. All these items are donated by the community and stored onsite in our Donation Closet.
  - Places of worship can organize a donation drive for items from our Wish List (see page 6), come organize the collected items in our Donation Closet, and take a tour of the shelter.
  - We also have an Amazon Wish List for easy online shopping with delivery directly to the shelter.
  - To find out our most current/urgent needs, please contact Kathy Kidwell at kkidwell@familygateway.org.
Ideas for Places of Worship (continued)

- **Collect a special offering for Family Gateway.**
  - Select a Sunday and donate your offering that week to children and families affected by homelessness.
  - Include information about Family Gateway and how to get involved in your bulletin that week; we are happy to provide messaging for you to use.

- **Organize a donation drive for special/seasonal items.**
  - Year-round – snacks, cereal, and tennis shoes
  - April/May – flip flops, goggles, beach towels, sunscreen
  - Summer/August – school supplies, backpacks, uniforms
  - October – Halloween costumes (can be gently used if in great condition)
  - November/December – toys, gift wrapping supplies, batteries

- **Assemble snack bags, lunch bags, hygiene kits, or emergency move-in kits for our families.**
  - Collect the needed items and have your congregation assemble the kits together.
  - You can also write notes of encouragement to include in the bags or kits, if desired.
  - **Suggested Items:**
    - **For Snack Bags:** juice box or small water bottle, Goldfish, box of raisins, granola bar, fruit snacks (in a brown bag)
    - **For Lunch Bags:** turkey or ham sandwich, box of raisins or fruit snacks, Goldfish (in a brown bag)
    - **For Hygiene Kits:** travel-size shampoo/conditioner, bar of soap, toothbrush, travel-size toothpaste, travel-size deodorant (in a Ziploc bag)
    - **For Emergency Move-In Kits:** one hygiene kit (see above), throw blanket, pillow, body towel, wash cloth (in a large trash bag)

- **Plan activities for children at the emergency shelter.**
  - Ideas include board games, Bingo, arts and crafts, minute-to-win-it games, ice cream social, etc.
  - The best time to plan an activity is during the after-school program M-F from 4 to 5:30pm.
  - Volunteer groups need to provide all activity supplies.
  - Prepare for 20-30 kids unless otherwise noted.

- **Serve a meal at the emergency shelter.**
  - Must be 14+
  - Lunch is served from 12 to 12:30pm and dinner is from 5:30 to 7pm.
  - No more than 6 to 8 volunteers needed.

- **Host a 3rd party fundraiser for Family Gateway.**
  - Organize and promote a bake sale, garage sale, or other fundraising event at your place of worship and donate the funds raised to our mission.
Ideas for Places of Worship (continued)

- **Donate used items to Casa View Thrift Store.**
  - 2303 Gus Thomasson Rd, Dallas, TX 75228
  - Family Gateway receives “credit” for used items donated on our behalf, and you receive a donation receipt for your contribution.
  - We transport our families to shop at the thrift store on a regular basis using the credit accumulated from your generosity.
  - Have furniture or other large items you would like to donate? Schedule a pick up with Casa View Thrift Store by calling (214) 328-6043.

- **Help with a special event during the year.**
  - March – volunteer or plan an activity during our Spring Break Camp*
  - April – volunteer at our family-friendly outdoor fundraiser, DAY to PLAY**
  - Summer – volunteer or plan an activity during our Summer Camp*
  - September – volunteer at or attend our annual Gateway to Opportunity Luncheon. Learn more at [https://www.familygateway.org/luncheon](https://www.familygateway.org/luncheon).
  - November – volunteer or plan an activity during our Thanksgiving Camp*
  - December/January – volunteer or plan an activity during our Winter Camp*
  - Holiday Program – volunteer in our Holiday Store on a Saturday in December**
  - Plan a holiday party or themed activity for Valentine’s Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, or Christmas.

*All camps take place M-F from 10am to 3pm.

**Specific date and time TBD.

Questions?

If you have questions or would like to schedule a speaking engagement or special volunteer event, please contact Kathy Kidwell at [kkidwell@familygateway.org](mailto:kkidwell@familygateway.org) or 214-823-4500 x106.

For more information about Family Gateway, visit [https://www.familygateway.org](https://www.familygateway.org).
Wish List

For Emergency Shelter:

- Twin-size sheet sets
- Twin-size comforters
- Throw blankets
- Pillows
- Shaving cream and razors
- Mouthwash
- Body wash
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Laundry detergent pods
- Deodorant
- Towels (body, hand, and wash cloth)

For Supportive Housing:

- Full-size sheet sets
- Full-size comforters
- Toiletry items as listed above
- Pots and pans
- Dishes
- Silverware
- Cups
- Cooking utensils
- Cleaning supplies
- Dish soap
- Laundry detergent
- Shower curtains, rods, and hooks
- Trashcans
- Brooms and dustpans

For Emergency Move-In Kits:

- Throw blanket
- Pillow
- Body towel
- Wash cloth
- Travel-size shampoo
- Travel-size conditioner
- Bar of soap
- Toothbrush
- Travel-size toothpaste
- Travel-size deodorant
- 13-gallon, tall kitchen trash bags