

A Typical Host Week at Interfaith Hospitality Network

Source: <http://www.FamilyPromise.org/Familys-Stay>

On Sunday afternoon, the network van arrives at the host congregation with cots and the families' personal belongings to be set up in a designated space, such as classrooms or a fellowship hall with dividers. Volunteers set up the common area and the rooms for the families.

Guest families arrive at the host congregation Sunday evening. Families settle in, relax, and meet the coordinators and the evening volunteers. Dinner is served family style. Guests and volunteers share the meal together. Families are responsible for their children and help with cleanup and chores.



After dinner, volunteers and their families fellowship with guests and their families. Together, they play games, do homework, watch videos, or just talk.

Adults turn in at around 10:00 PM, children at appropriate earlier bedtimes. Two volunteers spend the night at the congregation.

On Monday morning, volunteers serve breakfast at around 6:30 AM, as they will every weekday; typically it is cereal and other convenient foods. Volunteers make food for lunch available in the kitchen area, and guest parents make sack lunches for their families.

During the day, the families will not be at the congregation. The network van picks the families up at 7:00 AM and takes them to the day center. From there, children go to school, and the parents go to their jobs.



If the parents do not have jobs, they work with the Director at the day center to seek employment, housing, and other resources to help them regain their independence. The day center has bathrooms with showers and other necessities to prepare for the day.

The van brings everyone back to the host congregation at around 5:30 PM, and the cycle repeats.

On the next Sunday, the families pack their things and leave the facility before Sunday services. The van driver takes them to the day center for the day until it is time to move on to the next congregation . . . and the next host congregation begins its week.

Once the families have been able to save money and find jobs, they are ready to move into housing. Families leave the network only when they are able to secure housing and *maintain* it. The goal of IHN is to enable a family to keep their housing after they leave the program, not merely to help them over the short term.

The relationship between IHN and a guest family does not end then. Congregations, volunteers, and case managers stay in contact with families, often through mentoring and other programs. And guests return as volunteers, helping create a true community of hospitality.