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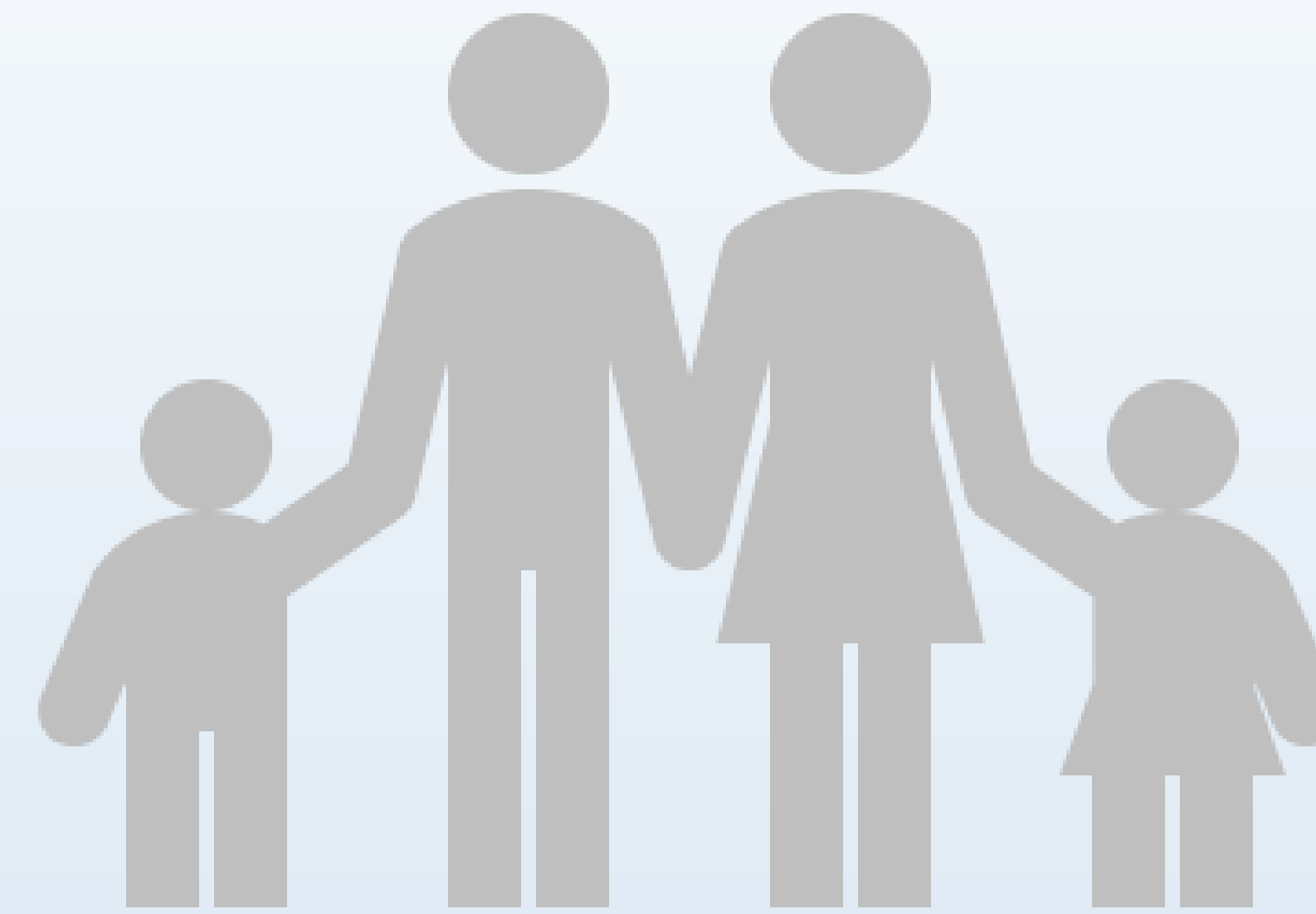
Keeping Unsheltered Families Together in Polk County

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Objectives

- To increase family shelter capacity in Polk County
- To expand Mid-Willamette Valley Family Promise services to the greater Polk County area including Monmouth, Independence, and Dallas
- Allow individuals in Polk County to define what family means to them



Findings

- 26 homeless children in Dallas School District and 20 homeless children in Central School District (B. Demoe, personal communication, November, 14, 2019)
- Unsheltered children are at higher risk for mental illness, substance abuse, & criminal activity (National Network for Youth, n.d.)
- In 2018, 79 unsheltered families came in seeking resources from the Dallas Resource Center in a 6 month period (PCFCO, 2018)
- For families who experience homelessness, separation and foster care placements often occur one month after going into a traditional shelters (Shinn, Gibbons-Benton, & Brown, 2015)

Methodology

- Implemented a modified version of the SOAR and logic model to guide research and recommendations.
- Utilized CINAHL and PubMed to research evidence based recommendations and interventions.
- Collected data from governmental reports
- Interviewed representative from Polk County Family and Community Outreach (PCFCO)

205 total unsheltered individuals in Polk County (Woodworth, 2019)



Discussion

- There are no family shelters in Polk County. Available shelters in Monmouth, Independence, & Dallas include Gale's Lodge & Sable House
- Disruption of family routine & rituals can magnify the stress of homelessness (Mayberry, Shinn, Gibbons-Benton, & Wise, 2014)
- Family Promise provides homeless prevention services, transportation, life skill sessions, food, shelter, and case management to all types of families in Marion County (Family Promise, 2019)
- A secure location that promotes family well-being provides stability, a sense of normalcy and can improve family outcomes (Meschede & Chaganti, 2015)

Limitations

- Limited amount of time to implement proposed recommendations
- Limited staff and volunteers
- Limited funding sources
- Limited recognition of the unsheltered crisis in Polk County
- Limited support from Polk County congregations
- Limited accuracy on the exact number of unsheltered families in Polk County
- Data is based on self-reported homelessness
- Varying definitions of unsheltered and homeless

Vacancy Rate in Polk County:
1.4% Owner Rate 2.2% Renter Rate
(Oregon Housing and Community Services, n.d.)

Recommendations

- Continue collaboration with Polk County Family and Community Outreach, Family Promise, and Polk County Congregations
- Host a community forum with community members, church leaders, Family Promise, & PCFCO
- Obtain commitment from 13 congregations in Polk County to provide temporary housing for unsheltered families
- Explore various funding resources including fundraisers and grants
- Locate a facility in Monmouth, Independence, or Dallas to serve as day center for unsheltered families