

FAMILIES FIRST OF MONROE COUNTY



Serving Residents of Monroe County since 1996

September 2015

Agency Overview

As an active member of the Monroe County community, Families First supports and assists residents through their financial and life challenges with respectful and empowering services.

Founded in 1996 Families First of Monroe County is a charitable 501(c)3 non-profit organization, serving residents of Monroe County. Families First strives to provide resource, referral and emergency services to individuals and families who are in need.

Families First is a proud member of a collaborative network of individuals, agencies, groups and partners working to ensure less fortunate members of our communities receive effective services to support their most basic needs.

Families First assists residents with identifying appropriate community resources, restoring disconnected utilities, infant supplies, employment support items and general budget and case management services.

Current Families First programming emphasizes Homeless Prevention Programming, for residents experiencing imminent loss of their primary night time residence.

Families First is led by a volunteer Board of Directors, who impart a wide variety of skills and experience working with residents and partners throughout Monroe County.

“True compassion means not only feeling another’s pain, but being moved to relieve it.”

- Daniel Goleman



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Safety for all Kids Program (SAK)

In 2013 The Monroe County Health Department received funding from the Tomah Memorial Foundation to provide childproofing and education “SAK Packs”, to eligible families. Participants receiving these packs maintain income less than 185% below the federal poverty level, postpartum women, and/or parents of children less than 4 years of age.

Each pack distributed contains important safety items and information such as:

- Outlet Safety Covers
- wireless window alarms
- whistle key lights
- “Protect your Home from Poisons” brochure
- “Look out for Lead” Pamphlet
- “Car Seat Coalition” brochure
- “Childproofing your Home:12 Safety Devices to Protect your Children” pamphlet
- CPR class information

In 2015 the Monroe County Health Department began partnering with Families First of Monroe County to provide these valuable education and resources to eligible participants from the Families First Tomah Office.

“We have had so much positive feedback and feel that we are making homes safer in Monroe County”, says Monroe County Health department RN, Jennifer Pederson.

Families First appreciates the opportunity to partner with the Health Department in reaching families with these important resources!

Diaper Time!

Families First has provided diapers to more than 70 families during the first half of 2015. This free assistance can go a long way to ensuring families with limited financial resources can make resources go the furthest!

Families First is able to offer this assistance through the generosity of individual and group donations.

Our office currently maintains a very limited supply of size 4 and 5 diapers. If you would like to donate, or learn more about the need, please contact the Families First Office.



Barriers to Housing Stability

Many individuals and families in our communities' face circumstances that create increased challenges to housing stability.

Below are some of the most frequent barriers facing the 27,291 residents of Wisconsin receiving Homeless Management Information System agency assistance in 2014¹

- Previous History of Homelessness
- Disability or Mental Illness
- Lack of Transportation Resources
- Probation/ Parole Status
- Domestic Violence survivor
- No High school diploma/ HSED

¹ The State of Homelessness in Wisconsin 2014; Institute for Community Alliances.

know the five signs.

Reach out, connect, inspire hope, and offer help.



personality changed? agitated? withdrawn? poor self-care? hopeless?

#ChangeMentalHealth

visit

www.changedirection.org

Families First

2015 Year to date
Clients served with
programming focusing
on utility assistance,
housing stability,
employment support
service

Households: 55
Adults: 74
Children: 61

Clients served with
resources including
Goodwill Vouchers,
diapers, blankets and
Jackets

Households: 241
Adults: 202
Children: 342

Current Sources of Support:

United Way

Safe & Stable Families
Grant

Division of Housing,
Emergency Solutions
Grant

Frank G. Andres Charitable
Trust

Thomas B. Earl Foundation

ELCA Hunger Grant

Salvation Army Voucher
program

Goodwill Industries

Private Donors

Case/ Care Management Program Provides Support to Those in Need

Life and financial challenges take on many shapes and forms. From a family facing eviction and loss of stable housing, to an individual unable to keep the lights on, crisis can occur when we least expect it. For residents of Monroe County facing such situations, Families First provides Case/ Care management through a partnership with Great Rivers United Way.

This program allows clients the opportunity to receive support as they navigate challenges such as utility disconnection, land lord mediation, housing stabilization and general budget consultation. This program is available to all members of Monroe County communities and utilizes budgeting tools, housing stability plans and individual case management sessions to support those we serve. As an active member of Monroe County, Families First often provides program/ partner referrals to additional organizations providing services in Monroe County.

Families First Case/Care management program can be utilized in both preventative and emergency situations. Clients seeking support prior to a crisis situation are empowered to utilize tools and resources to better there housing, or financial situation. Likewise, clients facing emergent housing crisis often require additional support to stabilize there situations.

In 2014 Families First provided Case/Care management services to more than 120 Monroe County families, averaging more than 10 per month! Families First Case Manager, Ashley Waege comments that, regardless of the assistance provided, "knowing we are making a difference in that person's life is the biggest reward."

Though Case/Care Management services are available to all Monroe County residents, Families First most frequently provides services to those individuals and families living at or below the poverty line. The United States Census Bureau reports the Monroe County poverty rate at 14.4% between 2009– 2013. This rate for Monroe Counties largest population centers stands at 16.9% (Tomah) and 15.1% (Sparta) over the same 2009– 2013 period.

With many Monroe County residents facing challenging times, supportive programs such as Case/Care management provide a unique and valuable service.



What Home Means to ME!!!!!!

Families First of Monroe County: 118 W. Veterans Street, Tomah WI—(608) 374-4141

Community Partner

Want to Know More???

As an active member of Monroe County communities, we would be glad to provide additional information or speak to your group at your request.

For additional information please contact

Ben Hein
Executive Director
Families First of Monroe County, Inc.
Exec.familiesfirst@gmail.com

Want to Support Families First??

Tax Deductible donations are welcomed!
1118 W. Veterans Street, PO Box 707, Tomah WI 54660

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Contact Us

Families First
of Monroe County, Inc
1118 W Veterans Street
PO Box 707
Tomah WI 54660

(608) 374-4141

Office Hours
Monday-Thursday 8:00-3:00



PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Families First of Monroe County, Inc
1118 W. Veterans St.
PO Box 707
Tomah WI 54660