



## Impact Stories

### Rachelle's Story

Last year, at the beginning of her sophomore year, Rachelle start attending a United Way funded afterschool program to stay on track with her goals. The program gave her a safe place to stay afterschool while her mom worked and offered mentoring and support to help her finish her homework.

Suddenly during her first semester, Rachelle's family had to move to escape an unsafe situation. Rachelle, her mom and her younger brother stayed at a United Way funded emergency shelter until a case manager connected them to more permanent housing.

During this time, staff at the afterschool program noticed Rachelle's attention and drive plummeted. With her life upended, she no longer had the motivation for her homework. Even after her family moved into an apartment, Rachelle struggled to focus on her academic goals.

It was then that Rachelle confided in a staff member that her family left many of their personal belongings behind when they left their unsafe situation months before. Even though her mom had a new job, money was tight and they couldn't afford any extras. In fact, just that month a United Way funded agency had helped them with food and utilities. Rachelle missed her art supplies, which gave her a creative outlet for her feelings.

Thanks to community support, staff were able to purchase new art supplies for Rachelle. Just this little gift helped boost her spirits and give her hope for her future. Her confidence and initiative returned and her grades improved. With some hard work, she even caught up on some past assignments and is on track to reach her goals.

### Carmine's Story

When Carmine was ready to leave an abusive living situation, she wasn't sure where to turn for help. Thankfully, a coworker slipped her a phone number for one of United Way's partner agencies after a quick online search. The agency was able to find temporary housing for Carmine and her young child, and walked alongside Carmine as she sought out more permanent housing. Although she worked full time, finding an apartment in her budget was a struggle. Thanks to community funding, once Carmine had signed a lease, the agency was able to provide Carmine with furniture to help her get her family back on their feet.

### **Kari's Story**

Little Kari's family relocated from their native country of Egypt nearly a year ago while his parents were attending classes and working part-time at a local university. Far away from their support network, the family needed childcare for Kari for the first time so they could work and go to school; however, they were not eligible for state subsidy and could not afford to pay for toddler care out of pocket. They were relieved when they found a United Way funded childcare program within walking distance from their apartment and learned they could receive a scholarship to provide tuition assistance. Kari's parents still had some initial reservations, since the two-year-old had only ever been with family and did not speak any English. The teachers in the toddler classroom, however, welcomed Kari with open arms and were quick to put his parents at ease. They provided a safe and loving environment that Kari began to trust and eventually flourished in. Staff communicated regularly with Kari's parents and offered support and encouragement. Additionally, thanks to United Way funding, the program was able to provide a winter coat for Kari.

### **Mark and Tanya's Story**

Mark and Tanya are quick to say that never thought they would need help from a United Way agency. Both had given to United Way through their workplaces before they retired. When they imagined the folks their donations were helping, they didn't think about folks like themselves who had a house, two cars and plenty of clothes. But about a year ago, a medical crisis wiped out their savings. After paying bills each month, there was very little money left for food. After a month, their credit cards were maxed out. When the couple found their way to a food distribution event held by a United Way funded agency, they felt no judgment. This tangible support, along with the healing power of a caring heart is helping the couple is getting back on their feet.