



Jessica, a once vibrant and exuberant 10-year-old child, is now quiet and reserved since being sexually assaulted by a relative. Jessica's mother, Beth, realized the immediate need to help her daughter through this traumatic experience and sought help from the United Way. Together, Jessica and Beth were counseled and provided therapy to work through their emotions.

During therapy, Beth disclosed the physical and emotional abuse she was suffering at the hands of her husband. Wanting to end the cycle of abuse for her and her children, she found the strength to leave the abusive relationship.

Jessica's attacker was charged in criminal court and plead guilty to the charges. The emotional, physical and mental trauma suffered by an innocent, vulnerable child due to sexual assault will have lasting effects. But with the help of United Way funded programs, this child and her family have profound hope that together they will survive.

Our community is a diversified one. Language barriers persist but the strides made by United Way funded programs are knocking down these barriers. Recently, a Hmong man arrived at his doctor's office confused, frustrated and angry compounded by post traumatic stress disorder.

He was referred to a Hmong therapist. The therapist knew the culture and language and was able to identify with the individual with hopes of working through his PTSD. Although it was not a U.S. waged war this man fought in, his emotional battle wounds and scars are none-the-less real and tragic.



This situation could've easily gone from bad to worse, with the consequences possibly deadly. Due to funding provided by the United Way, a Hmong therapist whom identifies with the culture and knew how to cross the language barrier, was able to make a difference and show our community how to LIVE UNITED.

Christmas is the season of giving and this certainly rang true for Theresa during a winter of debt. Theresa, a disabled mother of two, worked very part-time hours barely getting by. Not having seen a child support payment in nearly two months, bills were piling up. Her energy bill alone would have consumed more than she had.



As Christmas drew near and another payday had come and gone without being able to buy gifts for her children. A neighbor understanding her living situation showed her a flier about a Christmas Assistance Program. Theresa knew she wanted to give her children a happy childhood memory and by the following week, her family had been matched with a sponsor family.

United Way, through several partner programs, provided a memorable Christmas for Theresa and her children. She received baskets with Christmas dinner fixings, trays of home-made treats, boxes of canned goods, large bags of gifts and a voucher for the energy bill.

Circumstances sometimes prevent even the most courageous women from doing what is best for them. But knowing that there are people willing to listen, give advice and even provide shelter when it is needed is often enough. United Way funded programs offer this hope to many women in abusive relationships.

Debra sought help right after she was married, often calling the 24-hour crisis hotline on a daily basis. As the years progressed and the violence escalated, she found refuge in the shelter as well. But it wouldn't be until her children were grown and living on their own that she finally found herself in the right circumstances to put herself first. Over the years she took the abuse from her husband, not wanting him to inflict any pain on the children. Her protective mothering instinct brought safety for her children when they needed it most. Now it was her turn to find safety.



She reached out one last time, staying at the shelter for over 3 months, working with assistance programs for housing, job placement and schooling. Today she's living on her own without fear and abuse.

Being a teenager in today's world is not easy. And being different or unique, certainly doesn't make it any easier. What we value as we grow older are things which as a teenager, we would find mortifying. Differences define us and form who we are. For Sarah, a young teenage girl, striving to fit in and be like everybody else was what she longed for. Sarah hadn't discovered her true value as a person but United Way made sure she did.

Always smart and gifted well beyond her years, Sarah took part in gifted and talented programs in her school. Often looked upon by her peers as an outcast or loner, she began to feel even further isolated due to her parents impending divorce. Thankfully and much to the surprise of Sarah, she was not alone. In her school journal, she wrote several entries with suicidal intentions. Teachers and counselors immediately took action and referred Sarah and her family for counseling services. These family counseling services wouldn't have been possible without United Way.



Today, Sarah's confidence and self esteem is heightened and she has a greater appreciation of her own unique talents and gifts. With the help of United Way, Sarah is happy to be herself.

Fruit snacks and friendship anyone? Molly, a busy mother of two, had a date she held every Tuesday. Molly was Big Sister to a boy named Tim. Every Tuesday, come rain or shine, Molly kept her date with Tim. They met in Tim's elementary school library and spent the time doing homework, reading books, eating fruit snacks and talking. In fact, some of the best times Molly had was talking with Tim.

Years have passed and Tim is now in Junior High, but Molly and Tim still meet every Tuesday for fruit snacks and friendship. Molly began to realize over the years that what may have started out as friendship to help Tim ultimately became a friendship that has helped her. Through the United Way, funding for mentoring programs made it possible for the friendship shared by Molly and Tim to develop into something quite special.





Trust - once lost, it's hard to get back. Tracy, a young, vulnerable woman knows this all too well. She met a man that was nice to her and they began to hang out at school quite a bit. He asked her to come over to his house to watch a movie and she agreed to go.

While at his home, he forced himself on her and raped her. She went home after the assault, emotional and distraught. Breaking down, she confided in her mother what had just occurred. Having relived her tragic experience with her mother, Tracy did it all over again with the police and emergency room nurses and doctors. Her innocence was shattered and her trust in men irrevocably broken.

United Way funded programs were able to help Tracy and her mother during a time of need by providing a victim advocate to support them as they went through this ordeal. The support offered by the advocate didn't end that night. The advocate was present through the court proceedings and Tracy's testimony which sent her rapist to prison.

With the help of a women's support group, Tracy is slowly building back the trust in herself and others she once had. United Way was able to help in a time of need, positively enhancing Tracy's life and those supporting her.

Emily is twenty-two years old and has two small children. She works full-time, and plenty of overtime, in a local factory to provide for her kids. And, things were going pretty well until her roommate moved out and took many of their belongings along.



Now Emily is being evicted. She just can't afford the apartment on her salary alone. She considers going to the shelter, but doesn't know how she will get her children to daycare and still get to work on time. The shelter is just too far from her daycare and job, neither of which is served by the bus line.

Emily doesn't know what to do about their living situation, and it is further complicated by the fact that her daughter is supposed to start kindergarten next week. She needs to find a place to live that is within walking distance of the elementary school.

Fortunately, a friend learned of Emily's situation and helped her with a place to stay. And her friend also put her in touch with a local program that was able to help with furniture and other things for their home---even school supplies for her daughter. And, they assisted with rent for a few months until she was able to make it on her own again.

A helping hand in times of crisis--that's what your generosity can accomplish.

In 2004 Jennifer was receiving W-2 benefits and was assigned a community service position at a local non-profit to develop job skills and gain work experience. She began as a receptionist, answering phones and greeting visitors. She was often the first person walk-in clients met when they arrived seeking assistance and information.

The staff soon realized that Jennifer was hardworking and capable of additional duties. They suggested a self-paced keyboarding program to improve her skill set and in a little over a month Jennifer completed the course and became proficient at data entry and word processing.



The staff encouraged Jennifer to look for a position using her new skills and offered to serve as a reference for her. In a very short time Jennifer was hired by a local company. Today she is working and no longer dependent on W-2 benefits. Adult education programs, in collaboration with Job Service, provided the opportunity for Jennifer to learn, and then practice new skills which helped her find full-time employment and became self-sufficient.

Your United Way contribution is working hard to help people learn the skills they need to become self-sufficient, to get beyond the need for assistance, to be independent. That's how we are creating lasting change.

Katie had lived in a violent marriage for over a decade. She didn't understand why David was always so angry, but she spent most of her energy trying not to do things that set him off. Recently Katie decided that she didn't want to live in fear any longer.

She took a big risk and went in to a shelter for abused women, along with her daughter, Samantha, who was 12. Katie and Samantha stayed in the shelter for several weeks while they worked with a legal advocate to obtain a restraining order against David.

Once the restraining order was in place, Katie and Samantha returned home. Unfortunately, David chose to ignore the order and showed up at their home. For the first few minutes, things seemed fine. But when Katie insisted that David leave and not come back, he became very angry and started to assault her.



Samantha quickly called the staff at the shelter, since she knew that they would know what to do next. They called the police and an officer arrived at the scene very quickly.

David was in jail for a time, but when he was released Katie and Samantha again returned to shelter temporarily. Eventually they realized that David wasn't going to contact them again, and they could safely return home.

Your contribution to United Way makes it possible to provide shelter, counseling, advocacy and legal assistance to women who feel trapped in an abusive situation. You make it possible for people like Katie and Samantha to live free of violence. You make a difference.

Karen had been married for over 20 years, and her husband had been physically, emotionally and verbally abusive during that entire time. She tried to leave several times over the years, but her husband also controlled the finances, and with no education beyond high school, she wasn't able to earn enough to support herself and her teenage son.

One of her goals was to become a Certified Nursing Assistant. Through a local program that helps victims of domestic abuse start new lives, Karen was able to get some help to pay for textbooks and uniforms, and a rent subsidy while she attended classes. She was thrilled when she passed her Certification Exam and found her first job.

After living in fear for much of her adult life, she was on her own, self-supporting and taking care of her son. She knows that there are still struggles ahead, and she's still unable to afford some things she would like, but she is free of an abusive relationship and enjoying life.



And even more importantly, her son is learning that anger, fear, and intimidation are not the way to solve problems in a relationship. Lasting change--for the next generation. You make it possible.

Carrie had been using drugs and alcohol since age 12. To support her drug habit, she shoplifted from area stores and rarely attended school. Because her mother was also a user and unable to be an effective parent, Carrie was placed in foster care and referred for counseling.

After three months of alcohol and drug counseling, Carrie made real progress. She changed her behaviors, found new friends, and was on her way to being drug free. When she returned home, things didn't go so well. With her mother continuing to use drugs, Carrie soon relapsed in to old behaviors and became reacquainted with old friends—all of whom used drugs and drank and couldn't understand the changes in their old friend.



Carrie and her mother eventually went into counseling together and have been successful in their recovery. Together, they have been substance free for 6 years.

Recently Carrie returned to counseling with her husband, Jeff. Both of them are recovering from substance abuse issues and had difficult childhoods. They have a six month old daughter and were looking for help learning how to be the better parents for her. With counseling and referrals to parenting classes, Carrie and Jeff are doing a great job with their daughter.

Because of your generosity, Carrie was able to overcome her addiction, change her behavior and become self-sufficient. Now, she is looking for ways to improve her daughter's life too. Your gift to United Way created lasting change for Carrie, Jeff, and their daughter.

Trevor is a freshman in high school and according to his teachers, "a completely different kid." Last year, Trevor was withdrawn introverted, shy, and unhappy. But during the last year, he has made new friends, participates in class discussions and actually gets his homework done on time!

What's the reason for this big change?

Today Trevor feels like he belongs somewhere. His mom is a single parent, and doing the best she can, but Trevor missed his dad. He kept to himself and really didn't have any friends. A staff member from an after school program suggested that Trevor check out offerings at their program, where he felt immediately welcome. The acceptance of other members was so different than what he experienced at school that Trevor started coming every day. Soon he was involved with volunteer activities and projects and was learning new leadership skills.

Recently Trevor applied for and got his first job. The confidence and skills developed through the after school program were the reasons he felt comfortable enough to even go on that first interview.

Trevor is on his way. Thanks to you, he will successfully complete high school and continue his education. Thanks to you, he will become a successful, hardworking member of our community.



Last spring a local child care center received a call from Marathon County social worker. She was looking for child care for a client with two pre-school age daughters, Claire, age 4, and Aimee, age 2.



Claire and Aimee's mother was suffering from a deep depression and wasn't able to provide appropriate care for them. Both girls were bright, but behind in their peers in many developmental milestones. Their mother was unable to work or care for the girls full time—at least until medication and counseling helped improve her medical condition.

Both girls were enrolled at a local child care program utilizing a sliding fee scale subsidized by United Way. Claire successfully completed the pre-kindergarten program and is eagerly awaiting the start of regular kindergarten this fall. Aimee continues to participate in activities and programs at the child care center and she is catching up to her peers in important development areas.

United Way funding at local child care centers helped Claire and Aimee catch up to their peers and be ready for school. And other programs in the community helped their mom deal with her depression and learn the skills she needed to be independent and care for her daughters.

This family was kept intact and is beginning to thrive. Your contributions make it possible.



Sam is two years old and his mother left him in the care of his grandmother, Jane, over a year ago and disappeared. Jane needed to work to support the other members of her family and didn't have the funds to place Sam in a quality, safe child care facility.

Jane, like all grandmothers, wanted the best for Sam, and knew that he needed an environment that was not only supportive but would help him catch up to his peers. When she learned that a local child care center would provide subsidized care through United Way she jumped at the chance to enroll Sam.

United Way and our community partners are working together to make a difference for Jane and Sam. We're bringing people together to address changing needs in the community and finding ways to create lasting change.

The ability to read and write is something that many of us take for granted. But, Ruth knows it isn't that simple.



Ruth is in her mid-fifties and suffers from mental illness. She is able to read and write at minimal levels, but wanted to learn more.

She has been matched with Fred, a literacy tutor, and is making progress toward her goal. Ruth and Fred meet each week at a local day program for their sessions.

The day program teaches independent living skills and Fred used the same concept by working on functional literacy tasks like writing a letter to a friend and completing job applications. But, Fred wants to be

sure that Ruth is also learning the basics of the English language. For those lessons, he uses materials that teach spelling and how to use simple reference materials, like the dictionary.

According to Fred, as Ruth's reading and writing skills have improved, her confidence level has increased as well. She looks forward to their weekly sessions and the encouragement of her tutor. For Fred, it's important that Ruth feel comfortable and he tries to create a secure teaching environment where learning is fun.

Ruth is increasing her literacy levels but will need support for some time. Fred finds fulfillment in tutoring and is committed to helping Ruth reach her goals. There are many opportunities for you to get involved in our community—to really make a difference in someone's life. Do it today.

June was always fiercely independent. She had to be. June was widowed at age 32 with three small children. She did everything she could for her kids, and they were now all adults with families of their own.

The last thing June expected was to be spending time in a nursing home. But that's where she was after falling and breaking her hip earlier this month. June is almost 80 years old, and her family really worries about that fact that she is still living alone. And, they aren't too happy that she wants to go back home as soon as her hip has healed enough to make that possible. They're worried that she may fall again, or that she won't take her medications, or prepare nutritious meals for herself.

But, a staff person at the nursing home suggests that the family look in to having meals delivered until June is able to cook for herself. Having a full lunch delivered not only provides June with a nutritious meal each day, but the volunteer driver always has a few words and a smile as well.

Her children are thrilled when June is able to leave the nursing home and return home. Knowing that someone is stopping by with lunch each day makes it a little easier for them to return to their routines as well. And, they can now take turns visiting in the mornings and after work to take care of June's other needs.

Without your help and support, programs that help people remain independent would be difficult to sustain. Your generosity makes it possible.



Having a child with autism is extremely challenging. Just ask Jim. His 10 year old daughter has severe autism and since his wife died three years ago, caring for Dani has taken all of his time and energy.



Jim took a job on third shift because it made it easier to find a caregiver to take Dani at night. But, that meant that Jim spent his days caring for her and got very little sleep for himself. His son, Jason, tried to help by watching Dani for a few hours in the evening, but it got very stressful for everyone.

A social worker recommended that Jim find respite care for Dani. Jim was fortunate to find a program that offered a variety of services from a few hours to 24 hours a day for a week or longer. He decided to try the service—he could use the time to sleep!

Dani was excited about her time there and could hardly wait to go back. Over time she developed close relationships with the caregivers and looked forward to seeing them regularly.

Eventually Jim became comfortable enough to leave Dani for a week and take vacation with Jason. It would be the first vacation the two of them had ever had. Just two guys on a lake, without a care in the world.

The week passed uneventfully for Dani. She enjoyed her time with new friends. And Jim and Jason had the opportunity to really get to know one another again. It was a special bonding time for them.

Your generosity makes it possible for families like Jim's to remain strong and healthy. Your generosity makes a difference.



Roberta is 29 years old. She had been using painkillers and inhalants since she was a pre-teen and had been using heroin for the last several years. In an effort to stay off heroin, she entered a methadone treatment program but had some negative side effects and was placed in detoxification as an in-patient at a local hospital.

After a three week inpatient stay, she started out-patient counseling. She hasn't been "clean" since childhood. Through individual counseling, she learned about her illness and the recovery process and built trust and rapport with her counselor. From there, she progressed to a

women's support group where she was able to talk about past abuse and eating disorder issues that she had kept hidden for years. Eventually she learned to let go of past shame and guilt and move on to recovery.

Today Roberta is 33 years old and has been sober for 4 years. She is in her junior year of college and was recently married. Her goal is to own a foster care group home for young girls. She wants to give back by helping others like herself find their way to sobriety and peace.

Thanks to the impact of United Way dollars, Roberta will have an impact on future generations of young women. That's lasting change. That's United Way.