

RESULTS: Your United Way contributions touch thousands of lives every year. When we reach out to touch one life, things get better for everyone else. It's all about working together -- LIVING UNITED -- to build a stronger and healthier community!

How to use these stories: You can use these stories during campaign and (just as important) throughout the rest of the year as part of your employee newsletters, e-mail newsletters, envelope stuffers, etc. Be creative! Always check online for videos and additional stories: www.LiveUnitedChattanooga.org

INVESTING IN CHILDREN – EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

How Billy Lives United in Marion County

Billy is an active 3-year-old from Grundy Co. His Mother brought him to a United Way-supported program for the hearing impaired when he was two years old and had almost no language skills. He could not express his wants or needs and he was beginning to throw temper tantrums due to his frustration over his inability to communicate. The program evaluated Billy and began treatment immediately. A Speech Pathologist worked closely with his parents, giving daily home assignments. Following a year in treatment, Billy is now using 4 & 5 word phrases, is beginning to sing, and uses his newly developed language skills to ask to go to "granny's house." Billy and his family are proof that United Way supported programs create lasting changes in families' lives. **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**

How Maria Lives United

Maria, a three year old Hispanic child, could not communicate with teachers and classmates because she couldn't speak English. Her family speaks only Spanish and must use the oldest child to translate for them. The two younger siblings entered this United Way supported child care and education program with Spanish as their only language. The Maria was very withdrawn. In an effort to help with her social/emotional development, the staff developed a comprehensive plan for vocabulary development, object identification, word recognition and the development of positive interactions with peers. The emphasis was on positive language interactions and helping her express her needs and wants in English. Watching and helping her interact with classmates helped Maria become comfortable speaking English. She's very personable now and outgoing with English speaking classmates and teachers. She also translates for her parents when needed. In August, she will move up to the 4 year old class and will develop the literacy skills necessary for kindergarten and beyond. **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**

How Will Lives United in North Georgia

Three year old Will had a speech problem. A Parent Educator in a North Georgia program supported by United Way discovered this problem during an early ASQ Developmental Screening. Will could only say the end sounds of a word. After this

discovery, his mother enrolled him in speech therapy, but he still struggled, having trouble speaking in complete sentences. The United Way funded Parent Educator brought Will's mom the three year PAT visit plan called "Word Games." This helps language development because children learn from interacting with parents and they must name the objects in the game. The Parent Educator was concerned because Will never said linked words together during a visit, but the lesson plan was a success. Not only did he love both games but he was able to name all of the objects and play "I SPY" perfectly. Mom was so surprised. By the end of the visit he was joking around and speaking in three word sentences, such as "Pig is gone." This United Way funded program truly makes an impact in catching developmental delays early enough to create lasting change in children's lives. **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**

How Jason and Jackson Live United

An important part of an Early Childhood Education Program is discovering developmental delays a child might have and then obtaining the appropriate help. Upon entering this United Way supported program, three year-old twin boys Jason and Jackson were noticeably delayed in their speech development. Their teacher referred the boys to a United Way supported program for the hearing and speech impaired, and both boys measured below normal levels. They now receive weekly speech therapy and have shown drastic improvement, not only in their language but in their social-emotional development as well. These two United Way programs worked together to discover a deficiency and get Jason and Jackson the early intervention they needed. **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**

BUILDING STABLE LIVES – YOUTH MENTORING

How Michael Lives United

Michael is 13 and comes from a single parent household. He hasn't always been the easiest kid to deal with but six years in a Youth mentoring program supported by United Way has begun to change that. His mom volunteers with this program and works to do the best she can handling him. This past fall, he went on a scouting trip to visit the USS Yorktown in North Carolina. His best friend wasn't going to be able to go because his family couldn't afford the trip. So Michael took the money out of his savings account and paid for his friend, selfless behavior he wouldn't have shown years earlier. United Way-supported youth mentoring programs reach out to single family households to help instill in these children values of selflessness, leadership, and compassion for our neighbors. **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**

How Cindy Lives United

Nine year old Cindy was referred to a United Way supported mental health program due to increasingly disruptive behavior at school. She had been suspended multiple times and was at risk of failing. She was diagnosed with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity

Disorder (ADHD) and referred for case management, a psychiatric evaluation and individual therapy. She was started on medication for ADHD and both her family and teachers noted improvement almost immediately. A therapist worked with her to develop improved impulse control and decision making, while a case manager worked with both her mother and teachers on developing and maintaining behavior management plans. She's passing all her classes and hasn't been suspended since starting treatment. Her teachers and family note significant improvements in her behavior. She no longer requires therapy but continues to see a psychiatrist and case manager. United Way supported programs for children help catch problems early so lasting changes can be made. **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**

How Adam and Kyle Live United

Before the Adam and Kyle joined this United Way supported after school program, the staff saw consistent, undesirable behavior out of the two boys while their mother was shopping. Any single mother will admit to the challenges of raising children on a fixed income -- especially two very energetic boys. Ms. Jones was so excited to learn about our program where the boys could gain structure, academic help and positive social interaction in a safe environment. Adam and Kyle joined the program during the summer and immediately began to show improvement in their behavior and social interactions. Since the summer program stresses the importance of academics, the boys really began to blossom – even in subjects and concepts that were new to them. The Thrift Shop staff noticed a significant difference in how the boys acted when visiting the shop. Once the new school year began, both boys' teachers commented on how much improvement (both academically and behaviorally) they showed, thanks to their time in this program. That progress has continued throughout the school year, thanks to the continued attention and one-on-one efforts of this program. This success will cement a strong foundation for the boys as they move through their academic careers. **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**

BUILDING STABLE LIVES – JOB TRAINING & REHABILITATION

How Paul Lives United

Thanks to the help of United Way-supported job readiness and work training programs, Paul and his family went from living on the street to having their own home. Paul lost the fingers on both hands in an industrial accident in 1994. After rehab, he could only find temporary work and secured housing at Patten Towers. Paul later married and built a family with his new wife and 3 step children. In December 2007, Patten towers evicted the family because the new management changed the rules on the number of family members allowed to live together. Paul, his wife and 3 children were on the street with nowhere to go. Paul and his wife lived in shelters while the children were taken in by family members. The Southeast Career Center sent Paul to a United Way supported job training program, which he successfully graduated in May of 2008, while he and his wife were still living on the street. Ten days later, he found a job as a contract employee with

an environmental services program. Paul travels to his job by bus every day, always arriving early. Today, he is the lead person for several contract cleaning jobs and gets rave reviews from his clients. A private fundraiser helped Paul secure enough money for a deposit on a three-bedroom rental home in East Lake. His wife is working on her GED and a business license. Their children are enrolled in school and they all love their new neighborhood. "I'm content," said Paul, "and I love my job." Life for Paul, his wife, and three children, once more looks promising. **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**

SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

How Pat and Rosemarie Live United

Pat and Rosemarie Park came to a United Way supported elder-care program about 5 years ago looking for social interaction and intellectual programming. They were surprised to find everything they needed for under one roof. He likes the discussion groups. Rosemarie enjoys belly dancing. They both come to the movies, dinner programs and dances, and are often seen at the weekly Golden Ager luncheons. Then a crisis happened. Pat had to have emergency heart surgery. This was devastating because Rosemarie depended on Pat as her caregiver – she had a stroke years ago which damaged her cognitive and physical abilities, leaving her unable to live alone. With Pat out of commission, the elder care program made all the arrangements for Rosemarie to stay at home with a temporary caregiver. Meals, transportation and participation in programs were critical as it tried to keep her life as stable as possible. The program also advocated for the best possible health care services for Pat while he was in the hospital, rehabilitation and adjusting back home. Home visits and regular phone contact were made to ensure that the crisis was minimal. A little prior to his heart attack, Pat and one of the program's social workers began developing an action plan to help Rosemarie in case Pat can no longer care for her. Rosemarie's parents, whom Pat also cares for, are in their nineties are also clients of this United Way supported program. His in-laws take advantage of the meals program and transportation. **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**

How James Lives United

In the fall of 2007, James was living under a bridge by the Tennessee River, homeless and suicidal. Then he heard about a United Way supported program for people with mental illness. Within one week the program got him an apartment, then it put him in classes to learn about his mental illness so he could stay healthy and well. This program then helped him apply for social security disability income, getting his application approved in just a few months. With secure housing and a steady income for the first time in years, James was finally free to work on a dream: home ownership. A partnership between this United Way supported mental health program, the Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union and the Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE), Inc. made his dream a reality. James was required to complete homeownership pre-purchase classes, as well as attend further post-purchase and finance management

classes as needed to manage the stress involved in transitioning into home ownership. James says, "I now have the best support system imaginable. I was at my wit's end and the AIM Center is nothing short of a God send." **When we reach a hand out to one, we influence the condition of all. That's how you Live United.**