

KIDS WITH SOMEPLACE TO GO... GO PLACES.

Education is the foundation for a child's success in work and life, and high school graduation is a major milestone toward achieving that success. And we know that out-of-school time means that students might be wasting precious time when they could be learning. Yet thousands of young people are alone and unsupervised between the hours of 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM during the school year, placing them at risk for problems.

That's why places like the Parkland Boys & Girls Club play such an important role in our community; Boys & Girls Clubs of Kentuckiana focuses on providing social, vocational, cultural, spiritual and other programming for children between the ages of six and eighteen. After a brief closure, a renovated and reinvigorated Parkland facility opened in September 2012 and now works every day to make sure that youth stay in school, remain on grade level and graduate from high school on time. And they are succeeding!

Jennifer Helgeson, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Kentuckiana, recently talked with Brooklyn, a ten-year old regular visitor to the center from the neighborhood. While chatting, Jennifer asked Brooklyn if she had ever thought about what she might want to be when she grows up. After a moment of reflection, Brooklyn enthusiastically shared, "I want to grow up to be just like you!"

Through Metro United Way's support of a variety of OST programs like the Boys & Girls Clubs, over 33,000 youth now participate in quality out-of-school time programs that provide a stronger educational foundation to help decrease the high school drop-out rate and increase college degrees, benefitting our entire community in the long run.

This is why we believe that reducing the drop-out rate has as much to do with what kids do outside the classroom, as what they do inside it.



Brooklyn – Parkland Boys & Girls Club

GET INVOLVED

There are a number of ways you can get involved...

GIVE: Invest in your community. Your generosity shows your commitment because it ensures that our important work continues.

ADVOCATE: Get informed, champion the Cause, and be part of the change. Your voice is a powerful way to make a difference in people's lives.

VOLUNTEER: Give your time. Lend a hand. Share your talent. No matter how much you can volunteer, every minute counts toward making a positive difference in people's lives.

This is how we **LIVE UNITED!**

HELPING KIDS SUCCEED

We know that when families and neighborhoods are engaged in education, our kids are better prepared for school, have higher academic achievement and an increased likelihood of high school graduation. That's why one of Metro United Way's Community Aspirations is that parents and caregivers have the knowledge, skills and abilities to maintain family stability and help their children succeed!

Metro United Way works with low-income parents and caregivers in the California, Russell and Portland neighborhoods in Jefferson County to help involve families; it starts with a trusted leader in each neighborhood who has a passion for children and learning. This "parent advocate" is a volunteer who supports our focus on the building blocks for a good quality of life – education, financial stability and health – while respecting the families' needs and interests in those communities. Consistent interaction, learning opportunities, family-centered events, parental support, field trips, mom's reading clubs and potluck dinners are just a few examples of the activities that promote engagement.

Lindneka, a nursing student, is a parent advocate in the California neighborhood who has organized educational events with the health and fire departments to teach parents about living healthy and safely, and recently organized a "Movie Date with Your Kids" at an area church.

Another neighborhood advocate, Tara, who lives in the oldest housing project in our community, uses her apartment for a community gathering spot although she has no children. This past summer, she hosted a potluck "street" party.

These events reinforce the parent and child relationship as well as offer a physical place for moms, dads and caregivers to connect with other parents. Judy Schroeder, Senior Manager for Neighborhoods at Metro United Way says, "These events are important because they keep parents and kids participating and involved on an ongoing basis, benefitting each of them."



California neighborhood "Movie Date with Your Kids"

ADVANCING EDUCATION
INCOME AND HEALTH

WORKING TOGETHER

BECAUSE
COMMUNITY
MATTERS

Our mission is to improve lives and our community by engaging people to give, advocate and volunteer.



Excellence Academy — Goodwill of Southern Indiana

READY. LEARN. SUCCEED.

Now in its second year, our Excellence Academy continues to help preschool teachers grow their skills in early learning centers through a specially-designed training program. Teachers progress through nine levels of development to achieve the "Master" level and earn increased compensation as they do so, thereby reducing turnover and ensuring a more stable learning environment for the children.

Goodwill of Southern Indiana is one of the centers that has been an Excellence Academy site since the program's inception, and many of their teachers recognize the impact of the Academy in their classrooms for their children.

"What a privilege it has been to be introduced to the Excellence Academy through Metro United Way," said Linda Wallace, Lead Toddler Teacher at Goodwill of Southern Indiana. She explained, "Belonging to the Academy has been an eye opening experience and one that I value; it has made me more aware of my classroom environment and the environment my children are exposed to daily."

Each teacher in the Academy benefits by having a mentor assigned to observe classroom dynamics, make recommendations on classroom environment and curriculum and work closely with them to nurture change. "The Excellence Academy has really helped us all grow as teachers," expressed Sarah Bonifer, another teacher at Goodwill of Southern Indiana, "and it has helped us remember that no matter how much experience you have, your professional development is never over and you can always learn new things. I know I am a better teacher because of it!"

By increasing the skills and retention of the teachers, we are improving the learning environment and helping to ensure more of our children are prepared for kindergarten, as well as teaching them a lifelong love of learning! That's why Metro United Way sees helping our children do better in school as the best way to improve lives and our community in the long run.

GETTING THINGS DONE

We know that the measure of our success is ultimately in the ways we are impacting the quality of life for everyone in our community. Our Excellence Academy early learning centers continue to help prepare our preschool children for kindergarten by increasing the skills of their teachers and creating a quality learning environment. Currently, 14 teachers have reached the Master level, over 90% of teachers are being retained and 85% of our classrooms have reached a 5 or higher on their Environmental Rating Scores!

But perhaps our preschool teachers can capture the impact of the Excellence Academy program best:

"Before coming to Neighborhood House and working with the Excellence Academy mentors, I just thought working with young children simply meant keeping them safe. Now I know that it means so much more! I have an opportunity and an obligation to prepare them for their next classroom and their next steps in life outside of this classroom."

– Jamaica, Neighborhood House

"The Excellence Academy is a program that knows the importance of a quality early childhood program and the value of the teachers. Being a part of the Excellence Academy has rekindled my spark and love of teaching."

– Angie, Goodwill of Southern Indiana

"Because of the Excellence Academy, I believe I have finally seen the road map to my future. At first, I wanted to reach the Master level, leave St. Benedict, and enter into the JCPS system. That plan has been scratched! I now see my future as a mentor in the Excellence Academy program with a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education."

– Charice, St. Benedict

For more information on these stories, visit metrounitedway.org.

STAY CONNECTED



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LASTING CHANGE



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! As we look ahead, will 2014 be a year of change for you?

Like each of us, Metro United Way has changed over the years. For nearly 100 years, we've worked to support a safety net so that folks have places to turn when they need help. While we remain committed to this important role, we also know that there are conditions in our community that need to change in order for every person to have the ability to achieve their fullest potential.

So we asked ourselves, "what are the elements for a good quality of life"? They're pretty basic: education, financial stability and healthy lives. And when we looked at all of that, we decided that focusing on education would have the greatest ripple effect on the other needs for success. Not necessarily just education in the classroom, but from the standpoint of looking at what we can do in the community to help more of our kids be ready to succeed when they arrive at kindergarten and then, once they're in school, what can we do to embrace and support those children and their families, find balance where it's missing, and help more of our youth graduate from high school on time prepare for college, life and career.



Chestnut Street YMCA



Ballard High School student



Park Hill family



Henryville volunteer

So today we're on a journey, with your help, toward really bold goals. And we're making incredible progress. For example, we've received the final report on our six year collaborative project in four of our community neighborhoods – Portland, Russell, Smoketown and South Louisville, where we've focused on preschool age children with the goal of having them ready for kindergarten and helping their families be more stable. The program evaluations executed by Spalding University and U of L conclude that we've achieved, quote, "astounding" results; while the previous actual rate of readiness for kindergarten in these neighborhoods is 20% or less, we've seen increases up to 87%. That is astounding!

Here at your Metro United Way, we connect the people and organizations with the passion, expertise and resources needed to get things done. And this one example proves that right here in our community, when the children with the most challenging circumstances are given the right approaches, strategies and efforts, they can not just survive - they can thrive. And that's what we need a lot more of.

I look forward to sharing more incredible results of our work together with you moving forward in the months to come. My sincerest best wishes for the New Year and my thanks for showing you know what it means to **LIVE UNITED!**

Sincerely,

Joe Tolan
President and CEO
Metro United Way

*Do you agree that early education is key to success in life?
Visit ourunitedvoice.org and share your voice!*

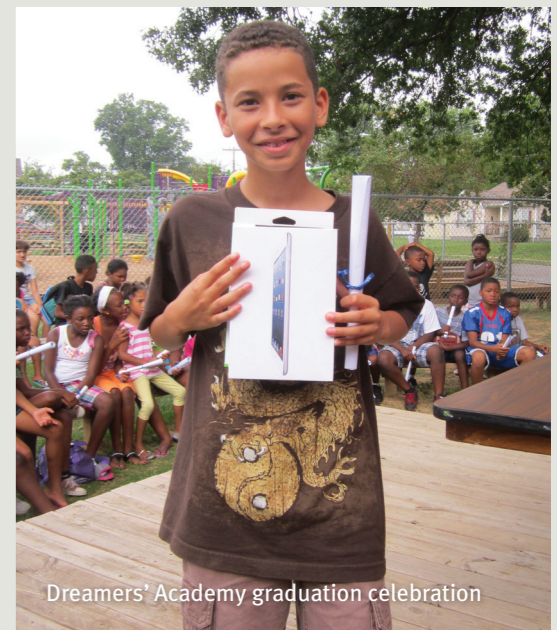
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Because we know that success in education leads to a better income and a healthier life, one of Metro United Way's Community Aspirations is that all youth will complete high school on time prepared for college, work and life. And studies indicate that quality out-of-school time activities are shown to contribute to key performance indicators for on-time graduation.

This past summer, Metro United Way launched the Dreamers' Academy, an eight week program aimed at preventing summer learning loss by providing a quality out-of-school time program for youth; this pilot focused its efforts on youth at risk of academic failure living in Louisville's Parkland and Portland neighborhoods and was developed in partnership with JCPS, Neighborhood House and Parkland Boys & Girls Club.

Among the volunteers who participated at the Parkland Boys & Girls Club was Tina Spadie, an employee of BB&T. Knowing that it's important to be proactive to prevent summer learning loss, Tina read with children and facilitated learning games to help the kids retain what they learned during the school year. She believes that programs like the Dreamers' Academy will help more youth stay on a track toward graduation and realize their potential for a better life. "Education provides many growth opportunities in life and if a child is more prepared each school year, they will have more self-esteem to take advantage of these opportunities," said Tina.

Preliminary results indicate that the Dreamers' Academy participants' grades have improved, many by as much as two letter grades. And Tina has started volunteering more because she enjoys feeling like she is making a difference. "If you show kids you believe they can achieve great things, they will believe in themselves," she said. "I hope more people in our community will see how important it is to volunteer because we all have to help each other to make things better!" This is how, together, we LIVE UNITED.



Dreamers' Academy graduation celebration

BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES



Ballard High School

Students only spend 9% of their lives in school, so it is important to make every minute count. And when students are struggling with mental health, emotional and behavioral problems, they may not want or be able to process and engage with instruction in the classroom. That's why Metro United Way is now partnering with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) and Louisville Linked to help children get what they need outside of school so they can be successful in the classroom.

The purpose of Louisville Linked is to remove barriers to student learning time by linking students with partners who are committed to helping in the community by providing academic interventions, securing basic needs, fostering resiliency through social skills and providing physical, mental and emotional healthcare services. Metro United Way's 2-1-1 help referral service is proud to support our community's educators and youth as a reliable and easy-to-use resource that lists the agencies and organizations approved by Louisville Linked to provide services to JCPS students and their families. And, by featuring the Louisville Linked logo, these programs are easily identifiable on the 2-1-1 website.

For example, a possible barrier for a child's success in the classroom could be a basic need such as insufficient food, clothing or housing. Teachers simply visit the Metro United Way 2-1-1 Community Resource Directory, choose the search word or phrase to find a specific service that their student needs (such as "homeless"), and click to see the full list of resources that are available to help, including a description of their services!

This new process for 2-1-1 community support will also be utilized by the 55,000 Degrees program to support students working to obtain graduate degrees. Since the beginning of September, over 13,000 students of the total student body of 101,000 of JCPS have been served through the Louisville Linked system.