

PREPARING YOUTH FOR LIFE

Ben Donlon, Business Intelligence Analyst at Metro United Way and a recent graduate of the University of Louisville, discovered the power of volunteerism through UofL's Community Engagement program. Deciding to participate, Ben set a personal self-enrichment goal to achieve 1,000 hours of community service within one year.

This year, 1,290 students in our community will drop out of high school, resulting in negative consequences that ripple throughout our entire community. Ben experienced firsthand that reducing this drop-out rate has as much to do with what kids do outside the classroom, as what they do inside it through his volunteer roles in the GoCollege Mentor Program, Western Middle School Mentor Program and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana.

Becoming a mentor to a young man, Ben gradually discovered the challenges and obstacles that the youth faced – including the death of his mother and siblings over a brief three year period. Realizing that he was playing an important role in this young man's life, Ben paid close attention and stayed connected to the youth, and over time, what started out as a self-enrichment goal has turned into a lifelong friendship.

Ben can't say there was one pivotal point that led him toward volunteerism, but he knows that he enjoys the feeling of giving back and contributing to the community. He hopes that he can inspire others his age to discover the reward of volunteering and helping others, especially our youth. The experience has taught him to appreciate the opportunities that he has and that by simply being there for someone, we can make a significant difference in their life.



Ben Donlon set a personal goal of 1,000 hours of service.

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.



Dorman Preschool Teachers.

READY. LEARN. SUCCEED.

When parents drop off their children at the Dorman Preschool Center in Shelbyville, they're not just leaving their children in excellent care, they are also laying the foundation for lifelong success. Serving children ages twelve months to five years in Shelby and surrounding counties, the Dorman Preschool Center teaching staff has been recognized for outstanding achievement as a participant in Metro United Way's Excellence Academy program (EA).

The EA aims to give preschool children the highest quality of early education by increasing the aptitude and commitment of their teachers and improving learning environments. By using Creative Curriculum®, a research-based interactive system that promotes critical thinking, problem solving, and social components, kids learn to love learning! Teachers earn incentives as they improve and advance their skills through levels identified as Novice, Apprentice, Intern, Scholar, and finally, Master.

The Dorman Preschool Center has earned the significant achievement of having a Master teacher in every classroom, the most Master-level teachers of any EA early learning centers.

Research shows that high quality early learning experiences are key to a child's success in life. In fact, if preschoolers are prepared to succeed the first day of kindergarten, their chances of succeeding in high school, college, work and life increase dramatically. And we all win when that happens because we all have a stake in making sure that today's children grow up to be productive citizens who give back to our community.

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. Together we are accomplishing things no one organization or individual can accomplish alone:

- Over 75,000 donors contributed \$28.9 million to our 2012 annual campaign and 82,955 volunteers invested more than 435,873 hours of service valued at \$9,448,645 with Metro United Way.
- Our Excellence Academy launched its second year and continues to help teachers grow their skills in early learning centers through a specially-designed training program that compensates them as their skills develop.
- 88% of parents and caregivers enrolled in our Ages and Stages Questionnaires program reported that they believe the ASQ gave them more knowledge to help prepare their children for kindergarten.
- The Dreamers' Academy pilot program was launched in partnership with Neighborhood House and Boys and Girls Club of Parkland to help prevent summer learning loss so that more youth graduate high school on time prepared for college, work and life.
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites helped 14,000 families secure \$6 million in earned income tax credit and nearly \$20 million in total tax refunds, helping families become stronger and more financially stable; these benefits ripple throughout our community.
- A network of services that address basic needs ensured that over 141,000 people found help that they needed.

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

A good education is the foundation for a child's success, and when a child succeeds, we all win. That's why one of our community aspirations is that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn. Studies show that children who enter kindergarten prepared are more likely to graduate from high school on time, go to college and find a stable job upon graduation.

Metro United Way provides the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) as a resource for families in our community because we want parents and caregivers to have the knowledge, skills and abilities to maintain family stability and help their children be successful. ASQ is a series of questionnaires that families can fill out together to help monitor their child's early development from two months to 5 ½ years old and make sure they are on track. Did you know that 90% of brain development happens before age six?

Over 3,700 children in our community have enrolled in the ASQ program; 93% of parents and caregivers surveyed believe the information they received from ASQ was helpful to their families.



Louisville preschooler and her caregiver spend quality time together.

"You have to make sure your child is not behind because it can be hard for them to catch up. ASQ has helped me more than I can put into words."

— Concerned Mom

When parents have the knowledge to help their children learn and grow as much as possible during the early years, they give them a boost that can make a difference from kindergarten to career.

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

STAY CONNECTED



Metro United Way

metrounitedway.org



LASTING CHANGE



Dear Friends,

Everything we do at Metro United Way is driven by our mission and vision. And today, while **we remain committed to support a network of programs that address the basic needs of our community**, we are determined to provide the leadership to change the odds for success for many of our children and youth who face harsh realities and obstacles in their journey to achieve their fullest potential.

Education has an unmatched, powerful impact on success in life, proven as one of the single most important indicators leading to a good job, enough income to support a family through retirement and being healthy. And this is critical for the long term well-being of our entire community, so supporting education helps each and every one of us.

From JCPS, we know that almost 2 in 3 of our preschool children are not ready to learn when they reach kindergarten. Most parents of preschool children have little, if any, information on their child's developmental skills and progress compared to what is normal for their age. And when they start out behind, they are likely to stay behind, requiring costly interventions that may or may not work.

Our Excellence Academy is dedicated to ensuring that these children enter kindergarten ready to learn.



The Neighborhood House learning center



Ballard High School students



Former ASQ participants – Lauren & Ethan



Henryville volunteers

And we know that about 1/3 of our youth fail to graduate high school on time. School age children spend the vast majority of time outside of the classroom, so quality out-of-school time programs help keep kids out of trouble and reduce learning loss so that drop-out rates are decreased, graduate degrees increase, and more of our youth stay out of prison. **Our Out-of-School Time Summer Learning Pilot is designed to prevent summer learning loss, leading to better school performance when participants return to school.**

Our family involvement initiatives help children get ready to enter school, promote their school success, and prepare youth for college. **Metro United Way helps make this happen by ensuring that parents and caregivers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to maintain family stability and help their children succeed through tools such as our Ages and Stages Questionnaires.**

We will achieve our bold goals by building a network of collaborative partnerships with other leaders in our community who have shared visions and goals - and the power to make long term sustainable change happen. Through this collective impact approach, we'll gain significantly better results than we can achieve alone.

So our journey has begun, and much more remains to be done. None of it is possible without your support, so together we are making a difference. Our children's future and the future of our community depend on our commitment to **LIVE UNITED**. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Joe Tolan
President and CEO

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Since 1985, Joan Winkler has been engaged with Metro United Way in almost every way. She's invested, championed the cause, and shared her time and talent with her community.

Joan initially became involved with Metro United Way through her workplace campaign. Subsequent site visits to funded agency programs were important to her because they gave her the opportunity to see her gifts in action. "It impressed upon me just how important my donations can be. You become more aware of the needs in our community when you see it face to face," said Joan.

As a CPA for many years, Metro United Way was also a natural fit for Joan because of "their organization and efficiency. They know where the money is needed in the community and put the resources there. You can donate to one place and believe in Metro United Way's stewardship because we don't have dollars to waste."

In support of Metro United Way's belief that a quality education is the foundation for a child's success in work and life, Joan recently had the opportunity to visit Frankfort and raise her voice on Children's Advocacy Day. From her experience, she believes everyone can get involved one way or the other. "We can all do something. You may not have the time but you may have the resources. Or if you don't have the resources, you may have the time." Joan added, "For me, I'm able to get on a bus to Frankfort and give my time and raise my voice. You'll get more than you bargained for when you give back."

After many years of service, what drives Joan to keep going? "We're all one big family. We need to reach out when someone needs help. If we all work together, we can make this community a great place for the next generation. United we stand, divided we fall."

Thanks, Joan, for showing you know what it means to LIVE UNITED.



Joan Winkler (left) with Metro United Way staff and volunteers at our state capitol.

BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES

We all need a little help from time to time and finding the right information quickly is vital. Last year Metro United Way's 2-1-1 "help" referral service assisted over 62,000 people from across all zip codes in our community. This was an increase of almost 14,000 answered calls and online searches from last year. Individuals were able to find the help they needed for a wide range of services including utility assistance and quality child care.



Henryville volunteers for tornado recovery.

Since 2006, 2-1-1 has helped over 284,000 people find resources to help them face life challenges, often for the first time, through the appropriate service provider. A trusted and caring call specialist listens to the full scope of an individual's issue and then connects them immediately to the right source. This easy to remember phone number saves time and frustration by eliminating the need to navigate a maze of agencies and help lines.

Utility and rent assistance payment, food pantries and homeless shelters were the most requests from 2-1-1 last year. However, individuals can find assistance in almost anything including tax preparation, foreclosure help, legal services, job training and more.

2-1-1 is a resource that benefits everyone in the community.