

## PREPARING YOUTH FOR LIFE

Did you know that kids may actually lose learning over the summer break? Studies show that students lose reading, spelling and math skills during the summer. That's why Metro United Way is excited about our partnership with the Oldham County Schools system this year for a fun but important summer camp focusing on reading intervention for incoming first graders.

Reading skills build a strong foundation for academic success and high school graduation. Until 4th grade, students learn to read and then they read to learn; in fact, studies show that students who aren't performing on grade level at 4th grade are four times as likely to drop out of high school!

Camp Literacy Live is a comprehensive program that lasts four weeks this summer. Each participant has been hand selected by their school based on their kindergarten reading scores and enrolled in the program to ensure they are on track to succeed. The children receive round trip transportation as well as breakfast and lunch each day to help make their learning easy;



Shared book reading helps kids prepare for school

along with increasing their reading skills, they'll spend their afternoons in a science camp led by the Kentucky Science Center.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters in Oldham County, this wonderful summer camp opportunity is free to the participating students. Success in school leads to success in life, and this is how, together, we make a difference and Live United!

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.

## GETTING THINGS DONE

A community of connected individuals—all people—united and working together for the benefit of all, is at the heart of what Metro United Way represents. By working together with individuals and organizations, we are changing the odds for our kids and the future of our community:

*"Metro United Way has been an instrumental partner in pursuing several top goals, including making Louisville the world's most compassionate city through our Give A Day week of service and by working with us and Jefferson County Public Schools to create a coordinated, out-of-school time system that helps our youngsters stay in school, stay on grade level and graduate high school college- and career-ready."*

— MAYOR GREG FISCHER

*"Supporting the work of Metro United Way is essential to developing a healthier community. Initiatives like Ages & Stages are helping to make sure that our children are meeting developmental milestones and that they are physically, emotionally and mentally ready to begin school. These efforts put our kids on the path to a healthy and productive life."*

— DR. LAQUANDRA NESBITT, DIRECTOR LOUISVILLE METRO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNESS

*"Schools alone cannot solve all the challenges facing students and families. Lasting solutions require collaboration, and Metro United Way is a valued partner in helping us ensure our students succeed in life."*

— DR. DONNA HARGENS, SUPERINTENDENT, JCPS

*"From the very beginning Metro United Way has been supportive of the Boys & Girls Clubs. MUW has helped us to reach out to the community and the youth that need our services most. We would not be able to continue to provide services without the help of MUW."*

— JENNIFER HELGESON, CEO,  
BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF KENTUCKIANA

## HELPING KIDS SUCCEED



DI and his mother share a proud moment

Metro United Way is committed to ensuring that students all across our community graduate high school in order to succeed. Irakoze Dieudone, a 2014 senior at Waggener High School, represented the city of Louisville at this year's Building a GradNation Summit in Washington, DC.

Irakoze, called DI, lived in a refugee camp in Tanzania for 12 years before moving to Louisville in 2008. He didn't speak English but was determined to move forward. "I didn't let that become an excuse to fail; I used it as fuel to drive me to succeed," he said.

In the years since he arrived, DI has gotten involved with the Louisville Education and Empowerment Partnership program (LEEP), been accepted into the Governor's Scholar Program and participated in the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Seminar.

90% of LEEP participants graduate high school, DI among them. He plans to attend Northern Kentucky University in the fall to study international business and global politics. With that knowledge he hopes to one day help people in countries that are divided by war and political unrest.

It took the commitment of our community to our children to ensure DI's success, something that DI is very grateful for. One day he hopes to be able to do the same for another student in need; "one day I want to be a part of this movement of giving back," he said.

## 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!**



Excellence Academy kids at Goodwill of Southern Indiana

## READY. LEARN. SUCCEED.

When children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn, they are more likely to graduate high school on time, find a stable job to support their family and succeed in life. That's why we're proud that Metro United Way's Excellence Academy early learning program is helping to change the odds for the directors, teachers and children at our centers.

Michelle Cissell, Director at Goodwill of Southern Indiana, recognizes that there are "teachable" moments every day. Recently, a group of 3 year olds were playing at a sensory table during a classroom break. Michelle noticed with some alarm that the table was full of corn starch, thinking what a mess it would be to take time and clean up.

Brayden, one of the 3 year olds, immediately stuck his hand in the corn starch and then blew it everywhere. "Corn starch needs to stay on

the table," explained Michelle. When Brayden blew the cornstarch for a second time anyway, Michelle removed him from the table play area while she cleaned.

The next time Michelle entered the classroom and found the same play time situation, she thought, "Is it really a big deal? So it's a mess, but I have a broom and it's not that much time or effort to clean!" She watched as Brayden played in the corn starch and as Keegan and Callie joined in the fun, now three children laughing their hearts out in pure enjoyment.

"Yes, that day I had corn starch all over my black pants and you could follow my footsteps through the hallway but I had a teachable moment that day. My pants are okay, the children had a great time and so did I in those few moments out of our day; we learned the value of laughter and fun together!"



# LASTING CHANGE



Excellence Academy kids at St. Benedict Center for Early Education

Dear Friends,

At Metro United Way, we connect the people and organizations with the passion, expertise and resources needed to get things done.

And we are all interconnected; we all win when a child succeeds in school, when a neighborhood turns around, when families have good health and when workers have solid jobs. At Metro United Way, our vision is a community whose people achieve their fullest potential through education, financial stability and healthy lives.

How do we know that, together, we can impact the quality of life for everyone in our community?

- When our children are ready for kindergarten and stay on track to graduation, they are better prepared for the future and contribute to our community.
- When families have the tools to be financially independent, neighborhoods become stronger, our schools improve and our businesses prosper.
- When individual needs are met, we are healthier, more financially stable, our kids do better in school and our communities thrive.

Today we stand at a unique threshold of opportunity for our community; our Mayor has chosen Metro United Way to be the community-wide convener

in transforming Early Care and Education, based on our significant work in early childhood education and including our most recent achievements with our Excellence Academy early learning centers.

We are also demonstrating our capacity to lead transformation through our key partnership to create a premier out-of-school time system that advances our children's learning outside of the classroom so that they graduate high school on time, ready for life.

Studies show that quality education leads to better income and a healthier life. 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.

We're excited to lead this rewarding journey to make lasting change in our community; thank you for joining us to Live United!

Sincerely,

Joe Tolan  
President and CEO  
Metro United Way



Excellence Academy kids at Neighborhood House



An Excellence Academy teacher at St. Benedict Center for Early Education



Out-of-school time at Shawnee Boys & Girls Club

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Mia Cooper, Early Care and Education Project Manager for Metro United Way, has been making a positive difference in the lives of children in our community for over 10 years by following her passion for dance. Now she volunteers every other week to teach liturgical dance, an expression of worship, to youth ages 7-17 at her church.

From her experience at work with Metro United Way's Excellence Academy early learning centers, Mia understands that what happens outside the classroom is just as important as what happens inside it for a child's success in school, starting at an early age. She not only teaches dance to her students, but she also instills rules and guidelines that will help them in the future – like respecting themselves and others.

"I volunteer and teach because dance is what I love to do," said Mia, "and because I know that it means much more in the long run to the kids than just the dance itself." She added, "engaging and building a trusting relationship with each of the individuals in my class - and having them thank me years later for the experience - is very rewarding, and I know my time with them made a difference."

This is why Mia continues to share her time and talent with children, both at work and in our community. And this is what it means to Live United!



Mia Cooper volunteers to teach and mentor children

# BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES



Americana Community Center family enjoys time together

As a funded investment partner of Metro United Way, Americana Community Center is "where Louisville meets the world" by serving mainly refugee and immigrant populations. Located in an area of our community with 37% poverty level and only 6.3% of individuals over age 25 earning a bachelor's degree, Americana works to address their neighborhood's needs from a holistic approach.

At Metro United Way, we know that family involvement is one of the strongest predictors of children's school success. Through Americana's Family Education Program, parents have the opportunity to attend classes such as English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education and General Education Development. They are also paired with Family Coaches for help to create goals, connect to available community resources and overcome barriers to economic self-sufficiency. This program has enabled families to achieve significant goals such as advancing from the highest ESL classes to begin work on their GED, buying a home and saving for their child's future education.

At the same time, children receive hot and nutritious meals along with tutoring for reading and homework assistance while they participate in activities that focus on phonics development and other enrichment based programming such as creative arts, life skills, environmental and physical education classes. A beautiful and productive community garden serves as a hands-on outdoor learning environment where parents and kids together learn about healthy living while they strengthen their relationships.

Americana Community Center's comprehensive approach to family needs is helping build stronger kids, stronger families and a stronger community for our future.