

"Thanks to a doula's supports, I played a positive, active role in the birth of my healthy baby."



TIARA, a first time mom, was determined to have a healthy pregnancy and baby. But she was also terribly worried by the statistics for black moms, and by her own hospitalization with Covid early in her pregnancy.

She found doula care through her health center and a community partner, funded by a joint grant with United Way. The doula coached her on self-care, breastfeeding, labor, and delivery. Inspired, informed, and confident, Tiara gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Today, they are both thriving.

INSIGHT Black moms are 3X as likely to die from pregnancy-related deaths as their white peers. Black infants are 2X as likely to die in their first year of life. Doula care improves outcomes.

"You don't know how happy I am to receive this card. I didn't know how I would feed my kids."



DEREK provides for his family of seven by picking up extra shifts at his retail job. Despite working overtime on most days, he finds himself only able to cover the basics they need to survive. To help, he relies on school meals to feed his six children. When his working hours were cut, Derek wondered how he would afford to put food on the table.

Through the United Way's Healthy Savings program, Derek received weekly stipends for fresh, healthy produce. This support helped him decide to buy fresh food at the grocery store and to feed his family well.

INSIGHT 50% of hardworking adults find it a challenge to afford food.

"My dream of a better life is becoming more real every day."



ABIMBOLA enrolled in community college as a path to a brighter future. But he needed a full-time job to support himself, some math tutoring, and a network of friends to thrive.

He found UPLIFT - a program supported by United Way - which offered him academic, social, and financial supports. Today, he has a banking job, an Associate degree, and is bound for UConn to study Finance. He is giving back by mentoring other youth facing challenges.

INSIGHT Men of color graduate from community college at 1/6 the rate of white men in the US. They are more likely to lack sufficient food, stable housing, and mentoring supports.

"It's been a great relief to have my child in such good hands. I trust her 100% to take care of my daughter."



CAROLINE needed care for her child so she could continue to work, support her family, and advance professionally. However, she was distressed by the high cost of quality care.

She found United Way's Cora's Kids initiative. Cora's Kids is a network of providers who receive licensing support, professional development, and start-up supplies. In return, providers charge reasonable rates to working families. There she met Fanny, a trained, licensed, trusted provider who offered more than just affordable care--she provided quality learning activities to promote her daughter's on-track development.

INSIGHT Quality childcare is scarce and expensive, often consuming 30% of a household budget.

"These programs have enriched his life in a big way. Thank you for creating wholesome memories for our family."



KAREN lives with her nine-year old son Don, a special-needs child diagnosed with autism and ADHD. Everyday life can be challenging, but with the help community support and a trained service dog, they lead a fulfilling life.

Thanks to United Way's ALICE Enrichment Fund, Don participated in special-needs Tai Kwon Do and adaptive swimming lessons. Through these enrichment activities, he gained confidence and skills. He can now stay safe around the pool and even swim independently in the deep end.

INSIGHT Enrichment activities improve health, school achievement, and life skills. Families with modest incomes can rarely afford to participate.

"I was astonished by this help. I am very grateful."



PAUL lives in group senior housing in Darien and gets by with a small Social Security check. He has a heart condition. When Covid hit, food prices rose steeply, and his doctor insisted that he protect himself with masks, gloves, wipes, and disinfecting products. These unplanned expenses were too much for his modest income.

A gift card from United Way helped him buy the food, protective gear, and cleaning products to keep himself healthy and safe.

INSIGHT Seniors on fixed incomes struggle to weather unexpected expenses.

"Although I'm just starting out in a new career, I am hopeful for what the future holds."



JAMES lost his job as a forklift driver when his company's warehouse closed. Due to limited computer skills, James did not search for a job online. Instead, he visited job sites in person to ask if they were hiring. He searched for months with no success, draining his savings to get by.

Through a United Way partner, James enrolled in a digital training program where he learned computer skills that expanded his prospects and landed him a job with benefits. He's now working with a budget coach to get his finances back on track and rebuild his savings.

INSIGHT 40% of Americans cannot cover a \$400 emergency expense.

"I'm hopeful for the future—for my family and for other youth who are drowning in their own personal crisis of homelessness."



ELIZA lived in the family car as a child, struggled with depression as a teen, and suffered in an abusive relationship as a young adult. She decided she wanted something better for her one-year old daughter. She fled, with nowhere to go.

With the help of community partners and United Way, Eliza found a home, got a job, transitioned off disability, and returned to college. Her daughter attends a preschool on scholarship. She is paying it forward by advocating for improved policies and services for homeless youth.

INSIGHT On a given night in Fairfield County, over 1,000 youth are homeless or unstably housed.