

**AT UNITED WAY OF GREATER TOPEKA OUR PURSUIT OF  
ADVANCING THE COMMON GOOD FOR OUR COMMUNITY IS NOT NEW.**

WHEN IT COMES TO LEADING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CHANGE, WE LEARN FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES' SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES TO HELP US BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN TOPEKA, SHAWNEE AND JEFFERSON COUNTIES.

**IMPACT SUCCESS:** Elimination of the Racial Achievement Gap

Where: **United Way of Dane County,** (Madison, Wisconsin)

This United Way led the charge in its community by setting a bold goal to eliminate the climbing racial achievement gap for third grade reading.

In 1995, there was a 29 percent achievement gap between white students and children of color. **Through advocacy work and a long-term volunteer mobilization effort through the Schools of Hope program, the racial achievement gap was virtually eliminated** in nine years (one year less than they had planned!).

Each year in Dane County, its United Way recruits approximately 600 new volunteers and has a total of 1,500 available at any given time to provide one-on-one tutoring to students within the school system.

Dane County's success has inspired our United Way and showed us we can unite our community around an issue and solve a problem by uncovering root causes and working together.

To learn more about this and other community change successes in Dane County, visit [www.unitedwaydanecounty.org](http://www.unitedwaydanecounty.org).

**IMPACT SUCCESS:** Dramatic Reduction in High School Drop Out Rate

Where: **United Way of Chittenden County,** (Burlington, Vermont)

In the late 1990s, nearly 100 students were dropping out of high school each year contributing to a 67 percent graduation rate.

United Way of Chittenden County drove a stake into the ground and rallied resources with a commitment to make an impact.

Research indicated many of the students dropping out were habitually truant and ended up on the streets or in the correction systems. School attendance was a direct indicator of whether they reached graduation on time or fell through the system without a plan for the future.

**Because of United Way's community focused intervention in that community, 60 more students are graduating today than in 1999 and absences among all students decreased by 25 percent since 2000.**

These successes in the city were then duplicated at the county level with new attendance policies implemented in Chittenden County and three other contiguous counties. Recently, Burlington was rated as the number one US City to raise a child by Children's Health Magazine much because of its graduation rates.

To learn more about this and other community change successes in Chittenden County, visit [www.unitedwaycc.org](http://www.unitedwaycc.org).





[above] Volunteers for the Nancy Perry Day of Caring make an impact in OUR community!

## IMPACT SUCCESS: Financial Stability Increased for Lower-Income Families

Where: **United Way of Forsythe County,** (Winston Salem, North Carolina)

In 2008, a community problem was mounting, in Forsythe County and its **United Way identified an integrated, innovative service strategy to effectively respond to the comprehensive needs of lower-income families** seeking to improve their financial situation.

In just a few short years putting a stake in the ground around this issue, the community has already reported many successes including:

- 400 individuals secured a new or better job
- 458 families and individuals reduced debt; 278 are paying their bills on time
- 79 chronically homeless individuals have found and remained in permanent housing for over year.
- 321 new units of supportive housing was added to the community.

The new focused impact work allowed this United Way to broaden its circle of partners and collaborate in a new way. For this focused work, this United Way partners with Goodwill Industries, Consumer Credit Counseling, the Center for Homeownership, Experiment in Self-Reliance and Family Services' Ways to Work Program.

To learn more about this and other community change successes in Forsythe, visit [www.forsythunitedway.org](http://www.forsythunitedway.org).

## IMPACT SUCCESS: Cycle of Poverty Broken for Thousands of Families

Where: **United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack County,** (Boston, Massachusetts)

The challenges are many, but this United Way is stepping up to the challenge in this community where family homelessness is at an all-time high with more than 17,000 families without a home; one in four working families doesn't earn enough to cover basic costs of living; and one third of adult workers lack the skills necessary to compete in an increasingly high-tech, knowledge-based economy.

United Way's strategy work supports programs and organizations that help families meet their basic needs, attain safe and affordable housing, and jobs that pay family sustaining wages.

**For thousands of families, the end results are life changing.** Through this focused work, 13,000 people gained job skills and basic skills to compete in the job market, 2,546 gained English proficiency (a barrier to securing employment), and 4,000 people secured employment.

To learn more about this and other community change successes in Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack County, visit [www.supportunitedway.org](http://www.supportunitedway.org).