

Success Stories from United Way Funded Programs

In their own words:

Aid for Friends

My first semester in college I became homeless, in March, with four kids. My baby was only seven months old. I was living in the basement of a small house. Sewage started to leak into my kids' bedroom. All of the tenants had to move out and my landlord didn't have any other places open. If it wasn't for Aid For Friends I would have to leave Pocatello and would not be looking forward to graduating. Almost five years ago they gave me a place to sleep and helped me get into the house I am today. I am so happy to have the opportunity to donate; to give back.

Bannock Youth Foundation's Baby Steps program

This year, one of our participants with an early childhood education background was motivated to start a parent-led preschool co-op. With the use of our childcare classroom, she and a few of the other parents as well as parents from outside of the program put together a preschool. Our participant offered to put together the weekly curriculum and activities. Each week 3 additional parents come in to assist with the children. They have 10 children who attend preschool once a week. This has been a great opportunity for our parents who may not be able to afford preschool. The children have benefitted from the early education and the parents have benefitted from being part of the collaboration process. We were happy to provide the classroom and make others aware of this great opportunity.

Blackfoot Senior Center's Meals on Wheels program

Last year we were contacted by a lady who was very concerned about her grandparent's situation. They were surviving on a very limited income and were not eating because they had no money for food. We put them on Meals on Wheels so they could get a hot nutritious meal each day. In addition we have sent them out a food box with soups and easy to fix meals to assure they are not going hungry.

Boy Scouts of America, Grand Teton Council

Rex is a 10-year-old Cub Scout who has been participating in the after-school program. He comes from a broken home and his mother is barely making ends meet. In November he won a \$100 gift certificate. He was so excited thinking about all of the things he could get for himself and his family for Christmas. A few days later he heard that one of his friends, who was also in a difficult situation had a family tragedy happen and that there would not be any Christmas presents for the children. Rex asked his mother if it would be OK if he would give his friend's mom the gift certificate, because in Cub Scouts they had been learning about service and helping others and he wanted to help his friend's family. Rex's mom said that she was so proud of him for thinking about others before himself, and, yes it would be OK.

Camp Fire USA

In 2014, we met a young mother of three boys and a fourth on the way. Earlier in the year, her young husband died unexpectedly leaving her to manage her growing household. Her late husband had been a volunteer coach with Camp Fire for both basketball and flag football for his two oldest sons, and when she came in to complete registration for them conveyed the tragic story to the staff. Through her tears and those of the staff, it was easy to see this woman was still grappling with the effects of these events and was unsure whether she could afford to register both of her oldest sons (ages 6 and 7) for both football and basketball again. To that end, Camp Fire staff immediately dismissed talk of payment and provided scholarships for both boys for both sports. Later on, the young boys grandfather (their fathers' father) came in to volunteer in his sons place as a coach for the boys' teams claiming he knew that Camp Fire had provided fee waivers to his grandsons and he wanted to give back and be involved. After the basketball season, the young mother was back in the office and relayed how much her sons had benefited from playing and being coached by their grandfather--while she couldn't yet afford to cover the fees for their upcoming flag football season, she expressed her gratitude to Camp Fire for providing a way for her sons to continue playing and also spend time with their grandfather turned coach.

Health West – Access to Healthcare program

During my first week at FM Clinic, I was getting ready to finish my day when a woman probably about 45 came into my office to discuss her bill. Her bill was getting fairly large and she wanted to make arrangements as best she was able. She look really bad and I inquired if she was in need of medical attention and she said she just couldn't afford to pay for another office visit right then. She told me her story of how she was an employee of the local school district food services department when she became ill with heart problems. She had insurance while she was employed but had lost her job due to her heart condition. She didn't qualify for Medicaid and was currently trying to get on disability with no avail as of yet. I explained about how the Special Service Fund could assist her with the nominal fee for a visit today. She looked really bad and was on oxygen and the company was threatening to take it away the afternoon for nonpayment. I was totally floored the oxygen co. could be so callous as to take away this woman ability to breath, anyway we call the company and got them to lower her cost and allow her to keep the oxygen she needed to breath. We set her up with a provider to help stabilize her condition. Without the Special Services Fund this woman may not have survived the weekend. It really made me feel proud that with the help of United Way and the Special Services Fund we were able to assist this woman in retaining her dignity and getting the help she needs.

Salvation Army Social Services program

Betty came to The Salvation Army seeking help with food for her family and gas vouchers to help her get to her then part time job. She is now full time employed and able to provide for her family. Betty was in a crisis and her anxiety level was high when she sought help. She is very grateful for the assistance she received through The Salvation Army Social Services Programs. Often Betty was near tears trying to figure out how she was going to survive and meet her family's needs. She feels that she is now a productive member of her community.

SEICAA – Bingham County Community Services program

Margarita and her husband Aaron have 5 children ages range from 9 to 17. Every year they struggle to purchase school supplies for their children. Even though they both work full-time jobs they just did not have the money to purchase the items they had needed for their children to start school with. They called the Bingham County SEICAA office and made an appointment for help. They brought in all the children's school supply lists and thanks to United Way SEICAA was able to help, not only with school supplies but with donated book bags and the 2 older kids were able to go to after school student activities because they had a student activity card.

Shelley Senior Citizen Services

CJ is a 90 year old gentleman whom we have been delivering meals [to] since 2010. He is very hard of hearing, and he has no living family members. We also help him with his paperwork to help him get food stamps and other resources. Other than a lady who lives nearby, and some church members who check on him once in a while, we are one of his main contacts. CJ has remarked to us that if it were not for the meals and the help that we give him, he would not be able to stay in his home. He basically would not have anywhere to go. CJ is quite a character, and he has told us that he really enjoys the association with his meal drivers. They are his main contact for the day.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience program

17-year-old Girl Scout Senior Natasha C. entered Girl Scouts in second grade. Girl Scouts was only one of a few opportunities available in Eastern Idaho for youth development and mentorship. During her decade in Girl Scouting, Natasha has performed hundreds of community service hours. For her highest award in Girl Scouting, the Gold Award, Natasha used her passion for animal rights to educate her local community on the importance of a new animal shelter. Through the proven educational and leadership Girl Scout curriculum, Natasha, like many Girl Scouts, has developed project management skills, leadership skills and learned how to advocate for herself and others. Natasha was honored at the Eastern Idaho Scouting Stars event in October 2014 for her outstanding accomplishments in Girl Scouting and in the community.