

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2009-2010

This has been an extremely challenging year for everyone who lives in our region. While the economy showed some signs of stabilizing, we still have double-digit unemployment and continue to be the homeless capital of the nation, with 1 in 5 of our children living in poverty.

YEAR 3 OF OUR CREATING PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY PLAN

Thanks to our donors and volunteers, we continue to make great progress. We're providing long-term solutions in the 3 interconnected areas that are the root causes of poverty:

Reducing homelessness by 75%.

Increasing the graduation rate to 75%.

Ensuring that families have jobs and the financial education they need to be economically stable.



PAMELA'S STORY

Finding a Permanent Home with Support Services

Pamela Parker has a law degree, worked on the space shuttle for NASA and ran for West Hollywood City Council. Then her life changed dramatically, leaving her homeless. "The loneliness is the worst. People won't even look at you. Your heart is devastated and it seems like nobody even cares."

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For four years, Pamela slept behind dumpsters and learned to live on one meal a day. "I was driven to survive right up until the last month," says Pamela. "Then I realized I couldn't do it anymore. I thought I was going to die."



Today, Pamela lives with 100 others in an apartment building run by United Way partner, Skid Row Housing Trust. It's a permanent home with health and mental health care in the building. "You've given me my life back. I now have a chance to live again."



REDUCING HOMELESSNESS BY 75%

Helped over 4,000 homeless families and individuals move into permanent housing.

Homelessness is Extreme Poverty

The number one reason for homelessness is loss of a job. With our region's unemployment at the highest it's been in a decade, it's not surprising that we are the homeless capital of the nation, and that 40% of the homeless are women and children.



Permanent Supportive Housing Works

We can end chronic and family homelessness by moving people into housing quickly while giving them the necessary services to remain there. This permanent supportive housing model has drastically reduced homelessness in cities like New York and Denver. And the UWGLA *Homeless Cost Study* shows that it is 43% more cost effective to provide the chronically homeless with supportive housing than to leave them on the streets, constantly cycling in and out of costly emergency rooms and jail. The data also shows that 80% of people in permanent supportive housing stay off the streets for good.

PROVIDING JOB TRAINING AND FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Trained over 5,000 people.

Launched a new green jobs training program.

Provided free tax preparation for 40,000 people who received \$44 million in tax benefits.

The Importance of Growth Sector Jobs

For our economy to prosper, we need to make quality job creation a priority and give people the skills they need to compete in the 21st century workplace. We are training people in growth areas like green jobs, technology and healthcare so they will have jobs in industries that are thriving now and will continue to prosper in the future.

Maximizing Wages for Long-term Financial Stability

Job growth in L.A. County over the past decade has been led by low-paying service and retail sector jobs that typically do not come with health insurance or other benefits. As a result, 15% of people in L.A. County live in poverty.



One health crisis can tip them over the edge. We are helping families maximize their wages through better budget management, making use of their tax benefits and incentivizing them to save.

MONICA'S STORY

Training Adults for a Better Future

Persistence is Monica Gipson's middle name. After years of working in a low-wage job, the single mother of three was ready for a change. "I was happy to have a job, it just wasn't enough money," says Monica. "I still needed to get food stamps and MediCal and I had to decide between buying groceries and paying bills."

“I'm no longer living paycheck to paycheck. I have some savings. I was never able to save before. Now I'm grateful for every day. Every day is a good day to me.”

United Way partner, Worker Education Resource Center gave Monica the chance to pursue her dream as a medical coder. She worked full-time and studied at night and weekends. "I was literally sleeping with my books. They slept on one side and I slept on the other," says Monica, laughing.

It took almost two years, but she made it. And she's already been promoted twice. "I'm no longer living paycheck to paycheck. I have some savings, I was never able to save before," says Monica. "Now I'm grateful for every day. Every day is a good day to me."



INCREASING THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE TO 75%

Helped over 10,000 middle school students improve their math and English performance.

Provided 38,000 students with academically enriching after-school programs.

Trained 3,800 parents to become school leaders.

An Educated Workforce Means a Healthy Economy

Education determines whether a person will end up in poverty, and an educated workforce makes our region more competitive. If we want our region to prosper, we have to invest in educating our children. We are focusing on middle school reform because studies show that when students succeed in middle school they are much more likely to graduate ready for college and the workforce. Today over half of L.A. County's middle schools aren't meeting national education standards.



Focusing on Effective Instruction and Leadership

Effective instruction and leadership are the keys to academic achievement. And that is not possible without the right data to hold us accountable to our goals. This past year we partnered with LAUSD to provide a re-designed school report card so parents will have the right data to help improve their school's performance. We supported 34 organizations that provided after-school and academic enrichment programs to low-income students. And our Principals to Watch Leadership Academy schools showed significant improvement in their students' API evaluation scores.



TRACEE'S STORY

Educating Parents to Help Kids Succeed

Tracee Kellogg had her son when she was just 17. He struggled in school and she had no idea how to help him. "I was so young myself and I didn't understand what he was going through," says Tracee. So, the single mother decided to get her own education by taking parent classes at United Way partner African American Parent/Community Coalition for Educational Equity (AAPCCEE).

“Parents really have to get involved to make sure everything is lining up for their kids' future.”

When she started to see her daughter struggle in middle school, Tracee was well prepared. "They taught me the questions to ask, so I could talk to my daughter and all the other people who were involved in her education." The vigilance paid off. Her daughter's grades went up and Tracee has made it her mission to share her experience with other parents. "So many kids aren't getting the right classes they need to graduate. Parents really have to get involved to make sure everything is lining up for their kids' future."

LIVING UNITED

Working together we can create pathways out of poverty to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in Los Angeles County.

GIVE

Support our Creating Pathways Out of Poverty plan in your workplace campaign or log on to UnitedWayLA.org to donate online.

ADVOCATE

Share information about our work with others.

Invite a United Way representative to your organization to present highlights from our *Tale of Two Cities: One Future* report or our *Homeless Cost Study*.

Make your voice heard by contacting your elected officials.

VOLUNTEER

Log on to UnitedWayLA.org and find out how you can get involved in your community to move our work forward.

Join us every year for our annual HomeWalk and help us end homelessness in L.A. County. Log on to HomeWalkLA.org to register and walk.

Follow Us Online



Connect with us at UWGLA

on Facebook and Twitter to learn how you can create pathways out of poverty in your community—and connect with other fans.





Los Angeles County Employees



TO CREATE PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY