



Neighborhood House Success Story

Why Education?

Metro United Way is working to advance the common good by focusing on education, income and health. These are the building blocks for a good life—a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health.

All children deserve to be safe, healthy, nurtured and prepared to succeed in school and in life. We can achieve this through:

- Improving access to quality, affordable, child care and early learning opportunities.
- Partnering with schools, families, community groups, service providers and neighborhoods to improve graduation rates.
- Supporting after-school and mentoring programs for youth.

When children begin school prepared, stay connected with caring adults, and have empowering experiences, they are more likely to do well in school, graduate from high school, and go on to further education and success in life.

Measuring results...2018 Goals and Indicators:

MUW Goal:

Children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.

Metro United Way Goal: By 2018, 100% of children score “prepared” or better on kindergarten readiness assessments. 2009 = no local measurement exists; the UWA estimate is that 35% of our children are prepared for school success Metro United Way will be executing a city-wide early assessment screening to determine a first ever baseline.

Indicators (Why this is important):

- A child who is in child care fulltime before entering kindergarten will spend more time in that setting than they will in school for the next 12 years.
- Over 90% of brain development occurs before age six.

- Recent national studies show that on average 46% of the children who arrive at kindergarten each year come to school ill-prepared to succeed.
- Further studies show that children from low-income families often begin school 1-2 years behind their counterparts and are more likely to remain behind and not graduate on time or at all.

Metro United Way wants all children in our community to experience high-quality early care and educational experiences, and works through many collaborative partnerships to increase the quality of child care.

Neighborhood House-Caroline's Story

Caroline was a reserved five-year-old with huge brown eyes, dimples, and curly blond hair. Caroline was known for being lovable and well behaved, and attended the preschool program at Neighborhood House.

Caroline's parents dropped her off for her first day of child care and her teacher, Ms. Lisa, noticed that Caroline walked funny. Ms. Lisa asked Caroline's parents about her walking, and her mother became teary eyed, as she too had noticed. She was scared that Caroline would grow up with a limp and would have to endure teasing and tormenting from other children. Together, Ms. Lisa and Caroline's mom agreed that Caroline may benefit from other services provided by Metro United Way agencies. Ms. Lisa referred her to services for her walking.

Caroline was "held back", and attended Neighborhood House the next year, instead of moving on to kindergarten. Her teacher wanted to ensure that Caroline was well adjusted and comfortable interacting with other children. Caroline continued physical therapy for her walking problem and began kindergarten, ready to succeed, the following year.

Caroline grew into a very bright young woman who attended college on an academic scholarship. Caroline is the only one from her family who has attended college, and when she graduated, she moved back to Portland, to give back to the community and to the agency that gave to her as a child-she became a teacher in the Neighborhood House Program.

While teaching at Neighborhood House, Caroline was never shy about telling the other teachers her story, and at their annual Metro United Way campaign meeting, Caroline presenting herself to the other staff as "One who had been served by Metro United Way through a variety of agencies and programs."

Neighborhood House provides services which enhance the quality of life for individuals of all ages in the Portland area. Neighborhood House was also chosen to be a *Gheens Bridges to Tomorrow" child care center. The Gheens Bridges to Tomorrow program provides higher quality child care by ensuring

teachers are prepared with best practice instruction in the classroom which includes a focus on developmental milestones.

**Metro United Way Gheens Bridges to Tomorrow is a collaborative effort working with families to ensure that children are prepared to begin kindergarten. This initiative was founded by Metro United Way with major funding by the Gheens Foundation, Humana and PNC Bank. The focus of Gheens Bridges to Tomorrow (B2T) is to measurably improve the school readiness of the participating children and improve the financial stability of their families. The four community centers chosen for this initiative include Louisville Central Community Centers, Presbyterian Community Center, Neighborhood House and Americana Community Center. These centers were selected because they serve diverse populations and are backed by strong leadership and good reputations.*

Here's how you can help:

- Become an advocate for children. For more information, please call (502) 292-6157.
- Give. A donation of \$2.50 per week provides a full day of creative, fun and educational instruction for a class of 3-year-old children at a Success By 6 Gheens Bridges to Tomorrow child care center.

To live united is to understand that we are all interconnected. Metro United Way is working to advance the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all. For more information, volunteer opportunities or to make a donation, please visit us at metrounitedway.org or call (502) 583.2821.