

Real People, Real Results: A Report to Heritage United Way Community Investors

The childhood she never had: Genie's Story

Heritage United Way's community partner agencies work together everyday to address the most critical issues facing thousands of infants, children, teens, adults and elderly individuals in our eighteen communities. Last year, your contributions to United Way enabled those, like Genie, to develop the skills necessary to lead healthy, productive lives.

Genie, an abused and neglected 15-year-old, had been in foster care since she was three, always moving from one home to the next. Deserted by her father and dealing with a mother who was addicted to drugs, Genie's problems were seemingly insurmountable.

Genie became pregnant and had to leave the foster care system, moving in with her brother who was also a substance abuser. Her boyfriend was controlling and violent and Genie nearly lost the baby after a severe beating.

When her son was two, his father went to prison for statutory rape. Genie returned to high school and lived with a local pastor and his wife. She was also introduced to The Upper Room and its Teen Information for Parenting Success (TIPS) program.

The TIPS coordinator reached out to Genie at a time when her life was at a crossroads. Through TIPS, she learned the skills necessary to be a successful parent and was encouraged to finish high school. She was also connected to services and resources that, as a teenager, she might not have known existed.

Genie has now graduated from high school, received two associates degrees, a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and is working towards her Masters in Social Work. She is also married with a second son and is determined to give her children the childhood she never had. In addition, she regularly speaks to teenagers in schools through DCYF and has founded a support program for abused foster children.

Genie credits TIPS and her TIPS counselors for helping her succeed.

Thanks to you and your support of Heritage United Way, agencies like The Upper Room can continue to provide individuals, like Genie, with the support they need to lead a better life for themselves and their children.

collaboration matters. For more information on how Heritage United Way partners in your community every day, please visit our newly redesigned website- www.heritageunitedway.org.