

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

### **A second chance at life: Jasmine's Story**

*Every day, Heritage United Way community partner agencies work together to address the most critical issues facing thousands of infants, children, teens, adults and elderly individuals in our 18 communities. Your investment in United Way enabled Jasmine to obtain self-confidence and self-respect, and have a second chance at a bright future.*

Cathy, a United Way volunteer, is a foster parent in Manchester, NH. She has cared for 9 children and has had the privilege of adopting one little girl, Jasmine.

Jasmine's biological mom was a prostitute. Homeless most of her life, Jasmine lived in a car and sometimes at Victory Park in Manchester. The state finally caught up with them and took custody of Jasmine.

Cathy met Jasmine, or Jazzy as she's called, when she was 7 years old. Jazzy had no hair; her mom had shaved her head because she had lice. (Jasmine told Cathy about the long hair she had before her mom shaved her head and she was very self-conscious about it.) When she was dropped off, Jazzy only had the clothes on her back. She had no favorite toys and no friends—she was often dragged from hotel room to hotel room with her mother, so most of her interaction was with adults.

Considering all the challenges her past presented for Cathy and her husband, they knew they needed help—so they reached out into the community. Without knowing it, they reached Heritage United Way and its partners. It was through United Way-supported programs that Jazzy was able to get the help she so badly needed.

Upon learning about Jazzy's past, Cathy and her husband had realized that she had some medical issues that needed attention. Both Child Health Services and Manchester Community Health Center were able to get her in for treatment very quickly.

Cathy and her husband were very concerned about Jazzy's ability to succeed in school. Her previous experience was extremely negative as she attended three different schools in her first year, missed 83 days, and ultimately had to repeat first grade. It didn't help the situation that Jazzy had very low self-esteem and virtually no self-confidence. Her biggest fear when starting school was that everyone would think she was a boy.

Jasmine began attending the Boys & Girls Club of Manchester's after-school program. She learned how to interact with children her own age and participate in various activities, like arts and crafts. She got help with her homework if she needed it. Today, in her fourth year at the Club, her self-confidence has been boosted immensely with the caring attention of the staff.

She attended the YMCA's Camp Foss in Strafford, NH, another United Way program. The overnight camp for girls helped Jazzy make social connections. After spending three weeks for the fourth consecutive year, she came back from camp a different girl, brimming with self-respect.

Your contributions have helped provide Jazzy the tools she needs to deal with life's many challenges. She is now very enthusiastic and full of life. Her exposure to positive role models has influenced Jasmine. She wants to be a Counselor in Training at Camp Foss when she turns 16 so she can help other children. Cathy also volunteers with Jazzy at the Kids' Café in Manchester, where Jazzy see many kids she knows from her time on the streets. Cathy can't say enough about Heritage United Way's partner programs. Jazzy is a shining example that the network of agencies work. She is now able to be a kid again and has been given a second chance at life.

**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](http://www.heritageunitedway.org).*