



**United Way**



## **More than just a meal**

**Help from a United Way-supported food program means Chad doesn't have to wonder where his next meal is coming from.**

"I was raised in a small village and when I moved to the big city, you'd rarely find a soul who was willing to give a hand. That's what makes United Way so important—I was one of those people that needed the service, and I realized it was something I could depend on. I didn't have to sit around worrying, I could get the support I needed.

Even now, knowing that the food program is there—and that if I need help, they're not going to say no—means a lot.

I receive groceries on Wednesdays. I realized I needed the help over the summer, when the pandemic had been going on for a few months. This support means I don't have to wonder when I'm going to eat, or what I'm going to eat. It might be a loaf of bread or a gift card so I can do my own shopping, but it makes me feel more stable. That help goes a long way when you don't have the means to do it yourself.

There are even times when they'll give a little bit more than what I actually need. That's when I try to pay it forward—you know, a friend will come over and I'll say, 'Here, take



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this. If you need it, please take it.' Because if I can't use it, then I know somebody else who can.

That's why I also volunteer at the food program. I was raised to believe that a helping hand is always welcome. My foster dad was the town plumber, and even though some people couldn't always afford to pay him, he would just do the work. And my foster mother was active at church and was part of the women's auxiliary. They'd do bake sales and dinners and stuff like that. Helping one another really brought people together and made us a close-knit community.

It's basically right there in the name! Whether we're working or receiving help, United Way brings us together. It's uniting us into believing we can help one another."



## **Feeding families—and community**

**When Travis realized some of his neighbours were struggling during the pandemic, he knew just how to help.**

"When the pandemic started, I saw that people in my community were struggling. Not everyone had enough to eat. Now, I'm a single foster parent of three kids, so I keep a stocked pantry—lots of meat, vegetables, soups, that kind of stuff. I also grew up in a



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small community and I've had to live without certain things, so I know living on dried foods is tough.

So, I started going through my pantry and started dropping off care packages to people who I thought were in need. People started hearing about what I was doing and one day, someone at United Way reached out to me to ask how they could help.

I didn't even have to think about it. I liked the organization, and I've seen them meet their commitments for years and years. I've never utilized their services myself, but I know people who have, and I know that United Way offers more than just food. They offer family, community, structure and stability.

I started out delivering goods to six homes, but with United Way's help, I can now help make sure 23 households have enough to eat.

It was so uplifting to be able to do that, because not only did I get to help, but I also got to know the families. Some were elders, some were big families, some were single people taking care of an ill parent.

I look at communities like a domino effect—if one thing breaks down, everything else starts to crumble. We need to keep people sustained, otherwise that's how we lose our communities. Being able to help people is really important, because you want to be able to maintain that structure of community.”