



United Way of Brevard



Alexandria's Story

Growing up, Alex was unsupported at home. Her mom, an alcoholic who was also addicted to pills, struggled to provide for many of her basic needs and was little in the way of a positive influence. Despite these challenges, Alex was extremely motivated in school. She was an honor student and worked hard to maintain her grades. She frequently stayed late at school when she needed help or tutoring, even though it meant missing the bus and walking the 5 miles home.

After graduating, she was determined to find a job and become self-sufficient so she began working as a CNA. Finances were tight, but she was surviving. It was when she had her son that things began to fall apart. "I felt like every month I was having to choose between paying rent and getting food for us to eat." She struggled to keep her head above water and pay her bills, but she knew she needed to make a change. When she began looking for a roommate to share expenses, she found Brevard Rescue Mission (BRM).

BRM provided her with the stability and foundation she'd been craving her whole life. "For the first time in my life, I felt like I had a Mom. I was always so afraid to show anyone how alone I was, but I needed to become my own person and learn how to adult." Through counseling and case management, Alex learned the tools she needed to create stability and a better life for herself and her family. BRM taught her how to plan and budget and manage her finances. They also helped her to set goals and plan a career path that included benefits and better wages – things she never learned from her mom.

Alex now works a high-tech job, with plans to continue her education and pursue an engineering degree. She hasn't forgotten the help from BRM. In fact, she frequently goes back to mentor and give hope to the current clients. Thanks to you, this young family - Alex, Kyle and their two children are now living on their own and well on their way to long-term self-sufficiency. With a just a little help from their community, they are building the foundation for their family that Alex never had.

ALEX'S LIFE CHANGED, THANKS TO YOU!



Ms. B's Story

Ms. B had been turned away by several agencies before she came to The Salvation Army to ask for help with her power bill. She was out of money, her power had been shut off and she had no food in her apartment. She was scared. She was desperate and running low on hope.

As she waited to see if she qualified for assistance, she talked about moving to Brevard after her previous hometown was devastated by a storm. She talked about living on a small, fixed income and blessings of neighbors who help drive her to appointments. All the time, her anxiety was palpable and it was clear she was psyching herself up for rejection. When the case manager came out with her paperwork and told her they could help her, Ms. B turned around with tears in her eyes and said "I can't thank you enough."

That tearful thanks was meant for all United Way donors. It's a moment of pure joy and relief that you can feel in your heart. She left with some groceries and with the promise that her lights would be back on by the time she got home. Your gift really does make a difference in people's lives. Tomorrow it will be someone else, but today it was Ms. B. And she would hug you if she could.

MS. B'S LIFE CHANGED, THANKS TO YOU!



Patrick's Story

When Patrick moved to Brevard with his family seven years ago, he was almost entirely non-verbal and had trouble making eye contact with even his peers. Patrick is on the autism spectrum and is challenged by significant developmental disabilities.

Patrick began attending programs at Brevard Achievement Center where he was exposed to life skills training, computer classes, empowerment programs and performing arts. His teachers and mentors saw him improve so dramatically that they advocated for him to begin training for possible employment opportunities. During his vocational training, Patrick and his father joined BAC staff in Tallahassee to advocate for himself and his peers with our legislators.

The first time Patrick approached a state representative, looked him in the eye, shook his hand and told him his name in a clear, confident voice, his father became so emotionally overwhelmed he had to step from the room. He told BAC staff that he never would have thought Patrick capable of this level of interaction and professionalism. BAC had truly helped his son reach levels well beyond what he thought possible.

This year, Patrick achieved a milestone that most of us take for granted but that his family never believed possible for him - he accepted a job in the community. Patrick works for a local law firm, providing data input of technical legal findings into specialized software. He eats lunch with his co-workers who joke with him; he asks others about their day; he holds eye contact when someone is talking with him. He is empowered and successful at work!

PATRICK'S LIFE CHANGED, THANKS TO YOU!