

United Way of Greater New Haven Success Stories

“Dinner and Story” will lead to a Family’s Success:



Mr. B is a single father of 2 young children a boy age 3 and a girl age 5. He started coming to Centro San Jose for ESL classes and comes every week with his children since we provide free childcare for families to reduce barriers to attendance. Since he has been coming for classes he is able to learn about other programs we have to offer and started coming to our “Dinner and Story” Nights. “Dinner and a Story” is a highly interactive program which provides families with a warm dinner and literacy-based activities designed to promote positive parent-child interaction and a lifelong love of reading.

Recently Mr. B is in the process of enrolling his three year old into Centro San Jose’s School Readiness Program for the fall. Mr. B is grateful that the school readiness program will provide child care that enables him to work. Mr. B demonstrates how with the support of the United Way of Greater New Haven, Centro San Jose is able to build parental engagement in their children’s education early in their children’s lives. Research shows that if parents are engaged in their child’s education early, they are more likely to remain engaged in their child’s education throughout their entire academic career.

Job Skills Training Creates Stability



STRIVE's program offers a three week employability skills training program. In short, they help people get to work. The United Way of Greater New Haven funds STRIVE, and the support is directly responsible for allowing STRIVE to continuously provide the services for the community. Since 2000, over 1,300 people have graduated from STRIVE's job training program and are on their way to gaining financial stability and leading productive lives.

The stories of recent graduates, Tony, Larry and Deb, embody what STRIVE is all about and illustrate the diversity of the people they serve.

Tony: Tony came to STRIVE while living in the Emmanuel Baptist Emergency Shelter. When he first came here, he literally only had the clothes on his back. Our staff was able to provide him with appropriate STRIVE attire, and he showed up early every day and was the model of professionalism in the class. Almost immediately after finishing the program, he was one of the first hires at the new Stop & Shop on Whalley Ave. in New Haven. Since then, he left that position, and is working two other jobs and no longer resides at the shelter.

Larry: Larry is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He came to STRIVE as a result of our partnership with the Veteran's Administration in West Haven. Young and eager, he took the tools we gave him and found a job during the last week at STRIVE. Since graduating, he is now on job number four and on the lookout for number five.

Deb: Deb is a graduate and is currently working 15 hours a week for \$9 an hour. Why is this a success story? Deb was released from an eight-year prison sentence into a sober house two weeks before coming to STRIVE. This is what we call a first step, a chance for her to build a positive work reference. STRIVE follows up with every graduate for two years, and we know we will be sharing more great things about Deb in the years to come.