

Success Story

Cynthia and her three young children, ages four months to four years, fled domestic violence in search of a healthier, happier, and more stable life. The family was impacted by two Rappahannock United Way (RUW)-funded programs: the Haven, a domestic violence emergency shelter, and Hope House, transitional housing for women and children. They also benefited from one of RUW's community partners in Education, Head Start.

The family first went to the Haven, a local domestic violence emergency shelter. After receiving initial assistance there, they entered into transitional housing for women and children. Cynthia arrived homeless, undereducated, and unemployed. She was also without childcare and had significant dental concerns. Based on information from her case history, Cynthia had had an incredibly difficult childhood, peppered with parental substance abuse, poverty, and mental health issues that culminated in the violent death of a sibling and violence toward her oldest daughter. In spite of it all, she arrived determined to make life better for her family.

Upon entering Hope House, Cynthia had been linked to services such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medical Aid, and Food Stamps. The children were soon enrolled in the Hope House on-site child care center, and Cynthia submitted an application to Head Start for her oldest child who was eligible for the program. Her daughter was accepted into Head Start, and within weeks Cynthia gained employment. She began paying off old debt and saving money. Cynthia began attending classes in pursuit of her GED, studied to obtain her driver's license, and received dental assistance, giving her a beautiful smile. Her once non-existent self-esteem began to soar.

Cynthia recently graduated the Hope House program and found permanent housing in Stafford County where she works full-time. Each of her children is healthy and in an education program. She obtained her driver's license and received a donated vehicle to help her get to work, school, and to her children's schools. She is currently in the Hope House after-care program and continues to work toward completing her GED.

Cynthia needed help from all of the programs that assisted her. Your donation to Rappahannock United Way made it possible for Cynthia and her children to find shelter and safety during their crisis and then rebuild their lives. You made an impact by creating lasting change. Thank you for being an everyday hero. Thank you for Living United.