

**UNITED WAY OF GREATER ROCHESTER  
CHILDREN'S SUCCESS FUND**  
**An endowment fund to improve outcomes for Rochester's children and youth**

*The cost of residential care for a child with emotional and behavioral issues is \$95,000 annually.*

*It costs \$22,000 each year to keep a child in foster care. On average, there are  
1,100 children in foster care in Monroe County annually.*

*It costs taxpayers \$33,000 a year to incarcerate an individual in Monroe County.*

**"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men,"** Frederick Douglass once noted. More than a century and a half later, these words continue to ring true. The research is clear and unequivocal: early interventions in the lives of children result in higher school achievement, higher rates of high school graduation, less crime and delinquency, more income and employment, and fewer teen pregnancies. Investments made now will mean lower public expenditures later.

By investing in United Way's Children's Success Fund, you have the opportunity to improve the lives of the youngest and most vulnerable in our community, helping those children who are most at-risk of failure. That's because gifts to the Children's Success Fund will be used, in perpetuity, to support United Way-funded programs that help ensure that children enter school healthy and ready to learn; that they succeed in school; and that they make positive choices. We invite you to consider leaving a legacy that will help to break the generational cycle of poverty and underachievement.

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN KIDS DON'T GET THE SUPPORT THEY NEED**

Too often, the road to adulthood is complicated with issues that many of us could not imagine. Some children make it. Some don't. They get caught in despair, often unemployed or underemployed, and too often over-represented in the mental health, social service, welfare, and criminal justice systems. These kids are losing out on improving their knowledge and skills; losing out on being and feeling safe; losing out by becoming a teen parent; losing out by getting into trouble and staying there.

Social science research has established standard indicators to describe the well being of our nation's children. Indicators such as infant mortality, poverty, teenage birth rates, immunizations, enrollment in preschool programs, literacy rates, and high school drop out rates reflect only too well how our children are doing now - and what the future is likely to hold for them if nothing changes.

More importantly, however, the research has moved beyond description to prediction. While multiple factors can change the course of human lives, the research now suggests with certainty that **some children are at high risk for failure**. When children are exposed to certain clusters of factors at a time when they are most vulnerable, their lives will be compromised at best and irreparably altered at worst.

We know, for example, that many children born of low-birth weight to poor teenage parents encounter blocks to literacy from the beginning that may dictate the direction of their lives. Many will spend their preschool years with parents who are too unskilled to enrich their environments. Many will enter school not ready to learn, fall behind their classmates, feel unsuccessful, and eventually fail to graduate - lacking the knowledge and skills they need to succeed as adults. **Since economic self-sufficiency is predicated upon successful high school completion, the**

***combination of poverty, low birth weight, and ill-equipped parents compromise the child's chances of a successful adulthood.*** The path is set early.

We also know that the best predictor of adult criminal behavior is juvenile delinquency, and the best predictor of juvenile delinquency is early demonstration of aggression, often an outcome of exposure to violence at a young age, including child abuse. Remove the sources of that violence and fewer adults will enter the criminal justice system.

A look at any of these progressions from human potential to human failure begs a public cost analysis. We are compelled by the data to move beyond calculating the cost in terms of the human tragedy to calculating the cost to the community. This includes the incalculable cost of the lost contributions that a child could have made to society in adulthood, had he or she succeeded as a young person.

### CHALLENGES IN OUR COMMUNITY

To gain an even greater understanding of the challenges our children and families face, despite the work that's already been done, here's a snapshot of what is happening in our community. What do we know about the well being of our Monroe County children and teens? We know that:

- The ***number of children age nineteen and under rose 13.7%*** between 1990 and 2000 to almost 164,000, compared with an overall population increase of 3%.
- Approximately 8.2% of births in Monroe County occur with ***late or no prenatal care***, that compares to an upstate average of 5%.
- Research shows ***six of every 10 pregnant women, in the City of Rochester, received prenatal care in the first trimester*** - compared to nearly nine of every 10 in Monroe County suburbs.
- More than three of every five families with children under age 18 at home, who live in the City of Rochester, are ***headed by single parents***.
- Thirty two percent of city families with children under 18 years of age ***live below the poverty level***.
- Some 21% of children living in the city ***experience violence in their neighborhood***.
- More than 40% of kindergarteners in the city have ***parents who didn't finish high school***.
- ***Child abuse and neglect reports increased*** by 13% between 2000 and 2005.
- Eight out of every 10 students living in the Rochester City School District ***receive free or reduced-rate lunches***.

We know that less than half of all young adults in the City School District graduate, with ***a startling 8.7% (nearly 800 kids) dropping out entirely***. And while the City School District has made progress in improving scores, 74% of students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the city schools do not meet ELA standards; 57% (80,000 students) are at or below minimal literacy standards.

United Way recognizes that if a community can ***identify a child's developmental lag early and address it when the child is most responsive, we can avoid the high cost of long-term special interventions*** over the child's school career. We recognize that remaining in school is the single most important action adolescents can take to improve their future; high school graduates earn at least \$6,000 more per year than those who have dropped out of school. We also know that women who become mothers as teenagers are four times as likely to be living in poverty in their twenties and thirties as those who delayed childbearing.

## WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW... WHAT YOU CAN GROW

Your United Way is committed to making the future brighter for our children. Here are just a few examples of programs that United Way's donors have helped put in place, programs that truly are making a difference:

- **The Nurse Family Partnership**, which is led by the Children's Agenda, can dramatically cut down on child abuse, as it improves parenting skills for new mothers. *Studies of existing Nurse Family Partnership programs have demonstrated that home visitations from nurses can reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect by 75% in the first two years of life for children of high-risk families. Follow-up studies over 15 years have shown a 50% reduction.*
- **The Teen Outreach Program**, which is designed to prevent teen pregnancy and increase academic success, has also been shown to cut down on problem behaviors. TOP female participants' *pregnancy rates have decreased by 31%, compared to a 2% decrease among similar peers who were not in the program.* A cost-benefit analysis of the national research available showed that the Teen Outreach Program *provides a \$1.29 return on every dollar spent, primarily due to increased graduation rates.* This program is currently offered as part of Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection and the youth development programs at Baden Street Settlement and Charles Settlement House.
- **The Incredible Years** focuses on *helping parents*, some of whom are considered at-risk for abusing their children, *strengthen their parenting skills.* The Incredible Years has been extensively and rigorously evaluated and has consistently shown significant improvements in parent-child interactions and notable decreases in children's problem behaviors. *Effects have been sustained up to three years after intervention.* This program is currently being offered through a United Way-funded collaborative at multiple sites throughout Rochester.

United Way constantly is seeking new programs, new strategies, and new ways to help ensure that every child in our community is ready for school, succeeds in school, and makes positive choices. We have not confused programs with outcomes. Programs are not an end in themselves. Rather, *the programs we support are the means toward building a positive future for every child and teen.* Your United Way is committed to identifying and bringing the best preventive and intervention efforts needed to help our children. *We recognize that to reshape future outcomes, our youth programs must be family focused, comprehensive, long term, and engage the entire community.*

Because of our long history of encouraging community dialogue, building community coalitions, and implementing successful programming, your United Way is one of this community's most effective catalysts for mobilizing this community's time, talent, and treasure to improve the lives of kids.

*Your United Way intends to give form, shape, and focus to the best vision this community has for its children – a vision that says we will not lose any child to poverty, violence, indifference, or despair.* But we need the community's help if we are to ensure that every child raised here will enter adulthood ready to fulfill his and her potential and to play a positive role in the future of our community. That's why the Children's Success Fund was established.

## **THE CHILDREN'S SUCCESS FUND**

The United Way of Greater Rochester has established the Children's Success Fund as part of its endowment. The Children's Success Fund will provide, in perpetuity, additional resources to sustain and expand the most proven and innovative opportunities for Rochester's children and youth.

By investing in the Children's Success Fund, you will help to break the cycle of poverty that too often traps our children and holds them as victims.

Imagine how your legacy of giving will pave the way for a brighter future for those children in our community who are most at risk of failure.

On behalf of the children who need our help today, and those who will tomorrow - and for the future of their grandchildren, whom we hope will never know the struggles their parents do - we encourage you to consider investing in the Children's Success Fund. For more information about how you might leave a legacy, contact your estate or financial planner or United Way's manager of planned giving, Diana Lauria, at 242-6544.