



United Way
of the Tri-Valley Area

Making a Difference in Greater Franklin County: Testimonials from UWTVA Community Partners

Bobbijean – Franklin County Children’s Task Force client

“Thank you so so much. I can't thank you enough. You made our Thanksgiving. And the girls were so excited to have girl clothes that were soft and fit. Thank you. I'm so ashamed I can't give them these basics at the moment. I've applied for social security disability for myself due to my MS and need for dialysis. They say I should have an answer by mid-January but because of Covid it could take longer. I'm so grateful. You literally gave us our Thanksgiving. I was unable to shop this week because I drove for Uber to make \$\$ for this place to live, and repair the van. But because I made \$253 for 3 weeks in a row we lost our assistance. I kinda feel damned if I do and damned if I don't. Regardless, I'm so grateful. I'm sure you saw the stove open, but it does heat the kitchen and living room to a decent temp. But upstairs is still a bit chilly . I'm trying to get help to install the wood stove I have or the gas stove, but either one is about \$800-\$1100 to have it installed. So for now we're making due with what we have. Your kindness has made this situation much more bearable for all of us. Again thank you falls short of how grateful I really am. But it's all I can give right now, so thank you a thousand times over. You're truly an Angel. Thank you so very much.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services, Children’s Advocacy

Mom of a 6 yr. old – Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services, Children’s Advocacy Client

“During a year that has been so isolating I was so grateful for the CAC staff who offered validation, support and warmth in a time that felt so tragic to my daughter and me. I’m so grateful for their humanness and care.”

Mom of a 12 yr. old – Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services, Children’s Advocacy Client

“I felt like the CAC was able to help me understand my child, how I can help my child and how to help stay grounded when all the strong emotions and choices were coming. Thank you.”

Father of a 10 yr. old – Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services, Children’s Advocacy Client

“You don’t know how this will feel until it happens to you. I appreciate the help and support.”

Children’s Advocacy Center partner

“At case reviews there have been times when I may not know that a parent is not supposed to be having contact with their children and it is helpful to find out this information within this safe and confidential

setting. I appreciate the continued professional growth opportunities/trainings offered. I feel like the CAC leadership is truly invested in my continued growth.”

Western Maine Community Action family

A family of 5 contacted us. They had a fire in the middle of the winter and lost their home and everything in it. They literally got out with just the clothes on their backs and their family dog. The 3 children ranged from 9 to 18. Their school books, sports equipment, electronics, everything was gone. They were all very glad that they were all safe. All their lives were upended.

After assistance from other local agencies for the fire, they came to us. They had found a camp-like structure to live in until their new home came, but they needed fuel for the tank along with other needs. We were able to help them using 2 different fuel funds. We also helped them get help to cover 3 months rent so they could use their funds to cover other necessities. With another community program we had, Operation Santa Claus, we were able to replace much of the sports equipment for stock we had for the upcoming year.

The family came to see us after their new home arrived and they were getting settled in. They wanted to say thank you and to tell us how much the services they received from WMCA helped them. They made a donation to our fuel funds.

We explained that without the help of the community and our partners we would not have been able to do what we did. Our partners, such as United Way, are critical to the services we are able to provide.

Amy, Outpatient client, Kennebec Behavioral Health

“I have been going to Outpatient at KBH for three years now. I have been dealing with mental health problems for most of my life but have always had trouble getting help. When I was younger, we didn’t have a car or we didn’t have good insurance. I also had a hard time keeping a job because I never felt well. I started to see Kerry, my clinician, and she has helped me a lot. At first, I saw her in Winthrop but when she moved to Farmington, it made it easier since I live in Franklin County. Before I went to KBH, I had a hard time finding someone to help me with my illnesses and so I stopped trying. A few years ago, my doctor told me to try KBH and made a referral. I was on a waiting list for a little while but eventually I was able to get in. The Access Center talked to me about my needs and referred me to Kerry. However, I couldn’t always get to Winthrop for my appointments so I was so glad when I could see her in Farmington.

After a while, I started to feel better and more in control. I also use the case management services at KBH and they work together to help me and address any other needs. While I have days where I am not doing well, Kerry is always helpful and for the last two years I have been able to keep the same job.

When the pandemic came, I was really worried about my job and not having my appointments at KBH. At first, doing my appointments online was confusing, but the staff there helped me to understand how it works and now I enjoy it since I don’t have to leave my home but I can still get help. I feel much safer this way. My hours at work were cut back in April but Kerry helped me to find ways to feel more in control. I still struggle from time to time but I feel stronger and I am very appreciative that there is now a clinic in Farmington that receives funding from United Way. KBH and their Outpatient and Case Management program have helped me so much and I am so happy they were able to keep seeing patients during the pandemic.”

Lucy - Catholic Charities SEARCH program client

Lucy has been a SEARCH client since March 2019. She is matched with volunteer Ben. He brings her to do her errands like getting her groceries and to doctor's appointments. He is very helpful to her. His wife has cancer and Ben is her caregiver, so he has a lot on this plate but still manages to volunteer for SEARCH and support Lucy.

Lucy had to have surgery awhile back and Ben had brought her to the hospital, and she said to Ben that he could go home and wait for her to call when she is ready to be picked up. Lucy was thinking of Ben's wife and knew Ben would need to go check on her soon. But instead, Ben called his wife to check on her and stayed with Lucy the whole time. He was there by her side when she woke up from surgery, holding her hand. Lucy is so grateful for him and his wife. She would not know how she would get her needs met if it wasn't for Ben. She said the SEARCH Program is a great program, their volunteers take care of their clients.

Healthy Community Coalition

Mary - Healthy Community Coalition client

"Mary" presented at the HCC office in December 2019. She was living in her truck, cutting holes in the ice in Wilson Stream to bathe and wash clothes, and not having eaten in five days. She was provided a snack at the office and received emergency food. Over the last twelve months staff have assisted in achieving a trailer, plumbing assistance to fix a defunct system, fuel assistance, assistance with disability application, and emotional support as the client learns to advocate for herself. She has received a few gas cards to enable her to get to odd jobs she has sought out to produce income. "Mary's" health issues include a mental health disorder, advancing rheumatoid arthritis and an autoimmune disease. She shared with staff that the care and support she has received through this initiative has literally saved her life. She had been contemplating suicide, thinking there was no hope and no one cared about her until she walked through the door of HCC. She was inspired to stop drinking and doing drugs and has been sober since June. She stated no one has ever believed in her until she connected to staff and that she now has hope.

Healthy Community Coalition Mobile Health Unit

One gentleman presented on the MHU for a health screening. At the time, he was worried about his health and his blood pressure was elevated. Staff helped him identify a primary care provider and assisted in scheduling a new patient appointment. His appointment was a few months out. The gentleman returned a few weeks later and his blood pressure was dangerously elevated. The medical provider on board was prescribed a medication and arranged for his new primary care provider to see him within the week. He knew he wasn't feeling well but wasn't sure where to turn. Without his visits to the mobile health unit, this gentleman was high risk for an adverse event.

A few elderly residents in northern Franklin County reached out to inquire if the Mobile Health Unit would stop by their house to give them their annual flu shots. These individuals were isolating as instructed to avoid COVID. Staff arranged to meet these individuals outside their homes to administer the influenza vaccine. These clients were grateful that staff took the time to immunize them before flu season, alleviating their fear of vulnerability to COVID exposure at a health care facility or in a public setting.

Literacy Volunteers

95% of parents of a child at Headstart who attended LVFSC Bring Books to Life parent book club report that the book club was useful to feel more comfortable using, sharing, and talking about books with their children in an age-appropriate way. Here is some of what they said on surveys: "Book club has helped us tremendously! My kids get new books which is something we can't afford to do on our own, they enjoy reading more, and I enjoy reading to them more. The activities help too because I have a hard time coming up with activities."

Western Maine Transportation Services

WMTS has served an older couple who live in the UWTVA catchment area for over a dozen years. They take our bus, usually together, two or more times each week, to go shopping, access healthcare and sometimes just to go out for a ride. When WMTS had to reduce service in the spring, they called often asking when we might be able to return to full service and always thanked us for what we do. We learned a few years ago that WMTS is their lifeline to all services and also a significant source of enjoyment and socialization for them. In another instance, WMTS was able to provide access to work for a younger individual who was just starting out and didn't have the resources to own and operate a personal vehicle. We understand they are doing well and gaining experience and responsibility in their position. For one other individual, we're told the GreenLine has become a way for them to travel to Lewiston for healthcare services, not available in the UWTVA area, which they wouldn't be able to access reliably any other way.

Community Dental

We have one young patient who has severe dental anxiety. He is about 17 and came in for an emergency but would barely let us touch him. We were able to get an X-ray done and give him a referral. We convinced him to come back for comprehensive care. We have completely reconstructed his mouth.

After a motorcycle accident, another patient woke from a coma and came in to our office having lost two teeth. We gave him a "partial" (dentures) and are working on restoring the rest of his mouth. His insurance covered very little of this much-needed work, so he used the Patient Assistance Fund to help him access this care.

Children's Center

Lily-Zoe was one year old when she was diagnosed with Joubert Syndrome, a neurological condition estimated to impact 1 in every 100,000 children. It impacts the part of the brain responsible for coordination and balance. Lily's parents were told she would probably never walk or talk.

It's devastating news. It's "not-my-child, what-did-we-do-wrong...what now?" news.

And, thankfully, it's just the beginning of Lily's story. Fast-forward four years and meet this walking, working-on-talking little spitfire. While she may not be able to speak like a typical five-year-old, she's intellectually at her age and she can certainly get her point across! She is working hard in speech therapy to gain verbal words and uses a device to help her communicate. With dedicated physical and occupational therapy services, she learned to stand, took her first precarious steps with a gait trainer, and eventually graduated to leg braces and all the agility needed for a preschooler to keep up on the playground.

Lily was at the Children's Center for two years before graduating this past August. She worked hard, defied odds and inspired a lot of people. Now, she's tackling the next climb – kindergarten!

Safe Voices client

For close to three years we have been working with a survivor who has been experiencing significant and ongoing physical and emotional abuse from her partner. As a result, this survivor and her children have experienced significant trauma, struggled to maintain stable housing, experienced sustained and ongoing food insecurity, and consistently lacked access to the technology needed to meaningfully participate in remote

schooling. In many of our interactions with this survivor she has expressed feeling overwhelmed, isolated, and a sense of deep despair as she tried to navigate her way free from this violence. Over this year her partner had been arrested for several significant assaults and was released on bail to await his trial. He continued to contact her on a regular basis, threatening and assaulting her despite the no contact provisions in place. Partners in the criminal justice system were worried and frustrated feeling like they could not do anything meaningful to keep her safe because she was too scared to make another police report. School officials, including the School Resource officer, teacher, and guidance counselor were all very concerned about the family and the lack of engagement they had due to the restrictions of remote learning. This survivor, who was isolated and under resourced before the onset of the pandemic, found that she was in a critically unsafe situation as her isolation increased and her access to resources and natural and community-based supports dwindled as COVID-19 reshaped our communities. Despite her increasing danger, she continued to find ways to connect with our Franklin County Advocate. Determined to find a path forward and with the help of our Franklin County Advocate Kayla, she has worked on stabilizing her life, sought mental health treatment for trauma, found ways to support her children's meaningful access to remote learning, and begin the process of obtaining employment for long term sustainability. Additionally, our advocate was able to support the survivor in securing temporary housing in our shelter and housing program where she will continue to receive ongoing support in accessing long term housing in her community. In one interaction with our Franklin County advocate, this client shared that without our support she does not know where she would be. She said "you are the only person who has never judged me and who I have always been able to count on being there for me". The morning this client was packing up to move into shelter, she reached out to our advocate Kayla in a state of panic. She was terrified to take this huge step and felt overwhelmed and scared. Kayla was able to listen and validate her feelings, providing the steady support she needed to move forward. She told Kayla "I just needed to know that I can do this, and that you are here with me". This unwavering support is the essence of our advocacy program. We strive to be there for clients who need someone on their side, supporting them and help them on their path to live free from violence.

Rural Community Action

Note from Livermore Falls client—"D.H.": When the governor's Stay at Home order took effect, I was already in personal seclusion, too afraid of catching the virus, and worried about how I was going to get groceries. Your Senior Transportation program's volunteer driver became my personal angel. She started doing my shopping for me every week and checked in on me, too. I didn't feel the sense of panic that had been my bad companion for so long. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for changing your program to deliver groceries instead of people! And thanks for the extra surprises—home cooked meals delivered straight to my door from time to time.

Senior's Plus

Our Nutrition Team gets to know its Meals on Wheels clients as they come and go regularly to their houses and interact. Over the years they got to know a lovely older woman who lived alone near Jay, Maine. The team was especially fond of her. "How was Alice?" they would ask after meal runs. Updates would be exchanged. They weren't certain of her age, but they knew she had been a teacher. Her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren had moved out of state and she enjoyed looking at their photos and occasionally she would talk about them. Alice was always alert and pleasant. In April a check arrived at SeniorsPlus with a note: "I am sending a donation from the family of Alice Xxx. Alice enjoys the food you deliver very much. She particularly tells me about the nice variety. She will be 101 years old in May." The driver made a point of wishing Alice a happy birthday when the day came, carefully following COVID-19 protocols. Sadly, Alice died in the fall, but to this day she is remembered by the Nutrition Team at SeniorsPlus for her sweet demeanor and long- time connection to the organization and Meals on Wheels.