

# Big Pals ~ Little Pals

## From Defiant to Confident

Kingston's story is one of transformation and hope. Growing up in a difficult home environment and struggling with a strained relationship with his father, he often experienced emotional outbursts and challenging behavior. That began to change when he was paired with Kris, a steady, positive mentor who shows up with genuine care. With Kris's support, Kingston has learned to channel his emotions in healthier ways, and both his mom and mentor have seen remarkable improvement. The outbursts have stopped, and their time together is now filled with trust, growth, and fun. Kingston's journey shows the powerful impact a caring mentor can have on a young person's life

**87 youth reported maintaining meaningful relationships with adults and/or peers.**



Columbus Area  
**UNITED WAY**





# CASA

## A New Beginning

“We had a case open for 964 days involving five siblings under age 10 whose parents were unable to care for them physically, emotionally, or financially. Their home was in deplorable condition, the children were falling behind developmentally and educationally, and some had untreated medical issues. Our advocate worked tirelessly, connecting the family with every available resource, but ultimately both parents chose to relinquish their rights, divorce, and move on. Thankfully, a relative and his wife stepped forward and adopted all five children. It’s incredibly rare for siblings of this size to stay together, making this a remarkable success for everyone involved.”

**As a result of this program, 32 participants developed a plan for safety.**





# Center for Survivors

## Erin's Story: Finding Peace

After years of living in fear, Erin found the strength to reach out for help. The Center for Survivors supported her and her children by connecting them to emergency shelter, basic necessities, safe and permanent housing, counseling, legal advocacy, and community resources to meet their needs. With support from law enforcement, her advocate, and a protection order, Erin and her two children were able to find safety and stability. Today, Erin is working two jobs to support her family while navigating the challenges of single parenting and rebuilding financially. While the journey has not been easy, their new apartment is now filled with warmth, laughter, and peace. With the support of a caring community, Erin continues to demonstrate that with courage and support, a brighter future is possible.

**\$1,300 can help a victim by meeting emotional and physical needs and assist in providing resources for a safe environment.**



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# Community Family Partnership Community Prevention

## From housing insecurity to homeowners

“This family began working with a Family Prevention coach in January 2026 after reduced income and housing instability left them living in a friend’s basement, \$3,000 behind on rent, and struggling to meet basic needs. Through coaching and community referrals, they received food, clothing, cleaning supplies, rental assistance, and budgeting support. Within three months, they stabilized financially, purchased a mobile home, and increased their income when the husband secured full-time work. Today, the family is stable, saving monthly, exploring a small home-based business, and grateful to provide safe housing and reliable transportation for their children.”

**85% of participants report they can resolve conflict or have adopted coping skills after receiving services.**



Youth Opportunity



# Imagination Library

## From Storytime to Strong Readers

We love this program!! Excited for the new stories each month and love that both my kids and I enjoy it. I also appreciate the tips in the jacket of the book for discussion with the kids. Great conversations!

**97% of parents reporting maintaining or increasing reading time with their children.**

[www.columbusunitedway.com](http://www.columbusunitedway.com)



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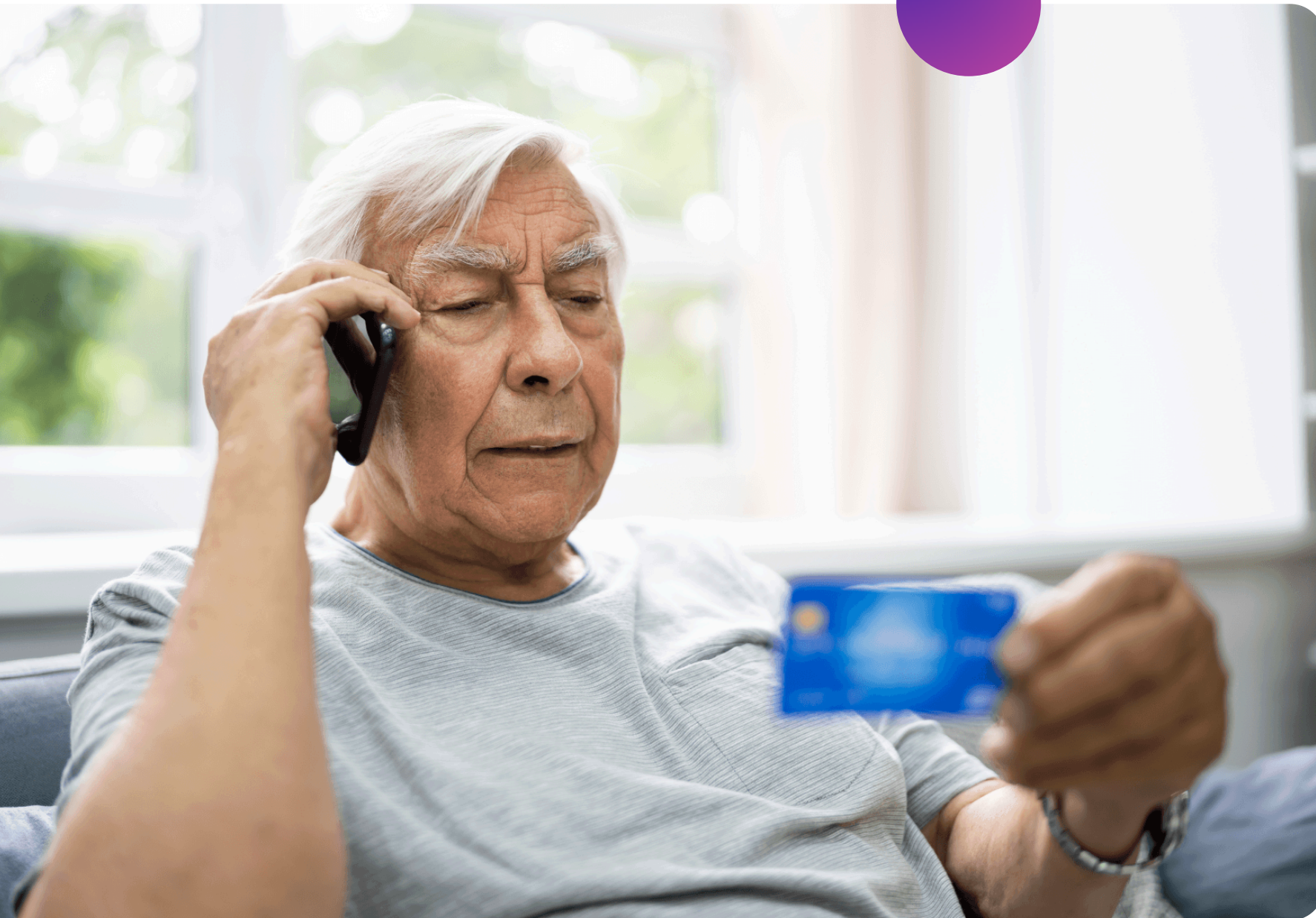
# Student Health

## Every Child Deserves Access to Care

After missing work to care for her autistic child, a parent found herself struggling to keep up with household expenses. Assistance through the Student Health Fund covered a necessary health-related need, such as medical, dental, or vision care, allowing the family to prioritize health while easing financial pressure. The support helped prevent additional hardship and gave the family greater peace of mind.

**39 students were able to be assisted in the last year accessing medical, dental, or vision care.**





# Columbus Emergency Relief

## Helping People Stay Housed

A senior struggled to pay rent after a failed hip surgery, and it left him unable to work his part-time job. Living on Social Security, he quickly used up his savings. Thanks to support from Columbus Emergency Relief and Simon House, he received the assistance he needed to stay in his home.

**Over 500 individuals and/or households were served in the last year through Emergency Relief.**





# Faith Health

## Child Advocacy Center

### Collaboration That Keeps Kids Safe

A family was located in the CAUW service area thanks to strong coordination between the CAC and school partners. With support from law enforcement, DHHS, and local educators, the family accessed in-home services, substance abuse treatment, and safety planning. This allowed the children to remain safely with their parents. Today, both parents are in recovery and receiving ongoing therapy.

**282 of program participants reported having a plan for safety after receiving services.**





# Habitat For Humanity

## A Home and Future

Catalina Pablo is a hardworking single mother of three children. For several years, she lived in her sister's basement while she diligently worked toward her dream of homeownership. In 2025, Catalina was selected to be a Habitat homebuyer, where she invested her time and sweat equity into building a new affordable home for her family. Now, with the help of Habitat for Humanity of Columbus, Nebraska, Catalina and her children have a home filled with love, hope, and the promise of a brighter future.

**100% of individuals in this program reported improvement in self-sufficiency.**





# Platte Valley Literacy Association

## Adult Literacy Services

Xilonen is a GED student who has wonderful attendance. She is committed to coming to class and learning. She has showed growth both times she post-tested. When she was named Student of the Month in February, she was so excited, she was jumping up and down. Brandon is a CCC ESL student who has excellent participation in class. He never hesitates to ask questions or clarify information. He is always courteous of other students. Brandon recently went above and beyond to demonstrate his progress with English. Unprompted, Brandon volunteered to translate during a Red Cross Presentation and did an amazing job. He inspires other students to keep studying hard.

**Over 160 individuals attended adult education classes.**

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# Royal Family Kids

## Serving Families, Not Just Campers

Many have heard this story, but it remains our strongest success of the year. We serve kids ages 7–11, giving some the chance to attend camp for up to five years. One camper, always quiet and reserved, rarely participated—no singing, no dancing, no actions. This year, everything changed. At 11, he was dancing, singing, joining activities, and finally letting himself be a kid. He still had challenges, but the growth was undeniable. He felt safe, respected, and loved. This is why we do RFK—because sometimes it takes years for a child to trust that caring adults truly exist, and every moment is worth it

**31 youth were educated on healthier lifestyle choices.**



## Youth Opportunity



# TeamMates of Columbus

## It's More Than Being A Mentor ● ● ●

These are the words of one of our mentee's that just started in TeamMates this fall. It truly shows the positive impact that a mentor can have on a life in a very short amount of time: "Teammates saved my future. At least, that's what I believe — and I know many kids like me believe it too. I was born in Japan and lived there my entire life— from the day I was born, all while growing and connecting with the people around me, learning my culture, and finding my identity. However, this comfortable life changed three years ago, when I moved to the United States with just my father. Rebuilding my life from scratch while leaving the rest of my family behind was an overwhelming experience. While in my most vulnerable times, I had to maneuver through a completely different environment. I struggled everyday trying to fit into American culture, build new friendships, and faced an unfamiliar future. I felt as though my life was crumbling beneath my feet. Until the beginning of this year, I felt unsure and scared of life's uncertainties. But when I joined Teammates and met Peg, everything began to change. Having someone I can talk to openly — a strong female role model who supports and guides me while giving me space to breathe and unwind during my hectic weeks- helps me feel lighter and more in control as I navigate the intense high school experience. I truly don't know where I would be without Peg and the support of everyone involved in Teammates — not just for me, but for students facing similar struggles. Teammates is a guiding light on the rugged path toward the future. I am deeply grateful for this program, and I hope my story shows- that becoming a mentor could be a powerful step towards creating a more stable future for kids across the Midwest and beyond." -Solara Vick, CHS sophomore ●

**101 youth served maintained a meaningful relationship with adults and/or peers**



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# The Arc of Platte County

## Understanding Patience and Progress

Recently, one of our long-time participants attended a program where his behaviors had noticeably escalated. Fortunately, he had an exceptional volunteer who demonstrated remarkable patience and dedication, addressing all his needs effectively. When a challenging moment arose, this volunteer quickly recognized the situation and sought assistance from the staff at the Arc of Platte County, prioritizing both the participant's safety and her own. Once he calmed down, he was able to engage positively with his friends and peers for the remainder of the program. It's clear that without compassionate and understanding volunteers like her, individuals in our programs would struggle to maintain fulfilling and healthy social lives. Their commitment truly makes a difference in the lives of those we serve.





# Youth & Families For Christ

## After-School Drop-Ins & Crisis/Preventive Classes

We have one student who was invited to hang out at YFFC with friends when she was in middle school. She came once or twice and wasn't really invested. When she moved on to high school she ended up needing to attend our alternative school. As she has grown in maturity she has become a dedicated and persistent individual. She frequently stays during our drop-in hours to hang out and work on homework. She has become a leader among her peers and is the first to encourage others to do the right thing. Our relationship with her has deepened over the last two years and she is open about her fears, struggles, and the issues that plague her family life. We have seen how the small wins are adding up in her homework and motivating her to keep pushing herself and devote time and effort to accomplishing her dreams. We are her second home - possibly the more balanced one.





# Youth & Families For Christ

## C.O.R.E. Crisis and Suicide Prevention

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**438 youth attended suicide prevention presentations and/or support groups.**





# Youth & Families For Christ

## Healthy Hearts & Souls Exercise and Cooking Classes

A student who is often in trouble at school has become deeply engaged in our cooking class. He shows up excited to use his talents, try new things, connect with peers, and contribute with real enthusiasm. In just three months, he's grown tremendously. We celebrate wins—like perfect sourdough brownies—and learn from mistakes—like burnt popcorn—and he's beginning to understand those lessons in daily life. One day he came in upset after ISS, but after talking through what happened and building him up, he was kinder, more focused, and even stepped into a leadership role. When expectations are low, he meets them; when expectations are high, he rises. In our cooking class, he has found a place where he can be his best self

**482 individuals participated in healthy food access/nutrition programming through YFFC.**





# TeamMates of Fullerton

## 25 Years, 25 Matches, Countless Memories

The Fullerton TeamMates Program has proudly maintained 25 mentoring matches for 25 years, meeting the unique needs of their school and community. With strong support from Fullerton Public Schools, mentors meet regularly in the school building and participate in outings, fundraisers, and special events. This year, the program enhanced match meetings with a custom activity cart filled with games, crafts, and snacks thanks to feedback from mentors and mentees. The highlight of the year was a trip to Lincoln to see the Broadway show Annie at the Lied Center, giving mentees a rare and memorable cultural experience.

**Through United Way funded programs, 221 youth were assisted to help overcome a barrier impacting school performance.**