

**We thank YOU...the hand raisers, the game changers...
the ones who help make a difference.**

Thank you for investing in our work to help more than 100,000 people in Berks County live their best possible lives.

Meet Some of the People You've Helped

Kevin is a disabled veteran who is a Red Cross client utilizing its transportation program to and from the VA Medical Center, which is supported by United Way. Kevin does not drive and does not have anyone who can take him to the Medical Center. Kevin states that "if it were not for the transportation services provided by the Red Cross, I would not be able to obtain the proper medical care." "The Red Cross van drivers are courteous, friendly, on-time, and efficient".

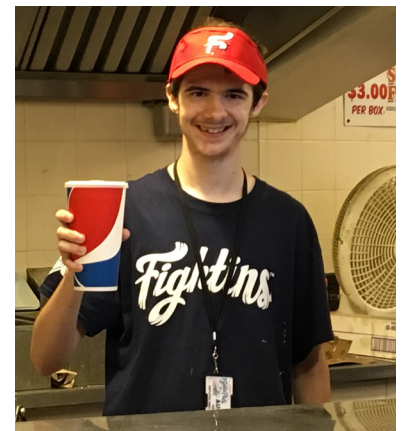


Strengthening Lives

When **Hunter** was introduced to Big Brothers/Big Sisters, he was going through trying times that many adults have not encountered. When matched with "Big Sister", Brittany, she was able to bring the best out of him and raise his spirits. Brittany has been able to help him recognize the importance of respect and caring for one another, and that led them to be named Big Brothers Big Sisters 2017 Match of the Year. United Way is proud to provide funding to Big Brothers /Big Sisters.

A.D. is a 7 year old boy with Autism Spectrum Disorder and attends Easterseals, a United Way agency partner, for outpatient Occupational Therapy (OT) services. When he began OT he was not able to stay focused on a task for longer than 5 seconds, which made school difficult, and he was not able to dress himself. Since working with Easterseals, he dresses himself, he can write his first name, and he has learned to pro-actively use sensory activities when he's having difficulties paying attention.

Our community is stronger when all citizens are involved - - socially and vocationally. **Austin**, a client of United Way partner, Threshold/Berks Personnel Network, gained interview and job skills to obtain his first job at the Reading Fightin Phils where he helped prep the stadium for game time and worked at the funnel cake stand. He enjoyed working with others, appreciated the opportunity to learn new tasks and skills and applied the values of teamwork and responsibility to the job.



Empowering Individuals

Sue Maack-Addison, a Ready.Set.READ! tutor shares "It's so rewarding to see the students' progress and to start to really enjoy reading. Every second grader I have worked with either has already or has developed a strong desire to read. It's very special to have some part in that. I see how important it is to read with the children. They learn so quickly it amazes me."

United Way and partners support **Ready.Set.READ!** as a community initiative designed to help elementary students become better readers to ultimately achieve future successes. By working with schools, businesses, volunteers, child care centers and others, we're focusing on key issues such as building literacy skills for pre-school children, encouraging family engagement around literacy and boosting reading skills for students in 1st through 3rd grade. Currently, nearly 400 trained volunteer tutors work with close to 500 students in 12 local school districts, representing urban, suburban and rural districts. United Way is also collaborating with others to support summer learning opportunities throughout the county to lessen the "summer slide" and keep kids on track with literacy skills throughout the summer months.



Growing Learners