

Community Impact

Children's Garden Prepares At-Risk Children for School

While Timothy's mother recovered from her cancer and brain surgery, his father and grandmother struggled to care for their family. Neither his father nor grandmother could work during this time because of the constant supervision necessary for 3-year-old Timothy, his 1-year-old brother and their mother. With no money for childcare and forced to go back to work, Timothy's grandmother called Children's Garden for help.

A comprehensive child development program, Children's Garden serves young children of homeless and needy families. Lack of childcare is a major barrier to stabilization of families, so this prevention component often keeps families from continuing downward spirals to worse situations.

Timothy's mother recovered, but their family problems continued. With only one car for three adults, the family struggled with employment. Timothy's father had to take a construction job out of state and later struggled with back problems and a drug addiction. His grandmother became ill and began receiving disability. The burden Timothy's family felt during this time led to his parents' divorce.

Timothy developed behavioral problems as a result of the stress he felt with his mother's illness and his parents' divorce. To deal with the detrimental impact of his anger and fear on his development, Children's Garden felt that continued care for Timothy and his brother and support services for their family was crucial to the well-being of the entire family.

United Way of the Midlands funding enabled Timothy to access a scholarship to remain at Children's Garden for another year until he entered kindergarten. With a specialized and nurturing environment of safety, security and love, Timothy had an opportunity to learn and grow through skilled teachers, staff and volunteers. Children's Garden met his needs in health, nutrition, mental health, social skills, language development, education and safety; and his family has received support and an opportunity to work towards stabilization.

The stress of his formative years put Timothy at-risk for failure in school. Children's Garden, however, provided many school readiness opportunities for Timothy as well as a strong family literacy program, and Timothy successfully completed kindergarten this spring.

Timothy's brother remains at Children's Garden through a United Way scholarship, and their family has been strengthened and continues to participate in the Parent Literacy Program. Because of the partnership between United Way of the Midlands and Children's Garden, the children have received valuable language and readiness skills.

United Way of the Midlands is donors, partners and volunteers discovering and responding to the crucial needs of our community—then finding resources to address those needs and following up to make sure the work gets done.