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United Way impact includes new smiles

Organization issues quarterly statistics

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If it weren't for United Way of Central Kentucky, Linda Howard might not be smiling today.

Howard, 65, a Medicare patient and widow, had no dental insurance to cover treatment for an abscessed tooth. The swelling made its way to her throat, leaving her in a condition where she could swallow nothing except pudding.

Ashamed of her mouth, Howard never left her house out of fear of judgment. However, a change of fate occurred when Howard visited the Community Health Clinic, a partner of United Way.

Through the clinic, Howard received antibiotics she needed to clear the infection and volunteers soon worked to bring Howard's smile back.

"This has changed my life," Howard said in a testimony. "They work to make their donations spread to help as many people as they can."

United Way of Central Kentucky recently released a quarterly report indicating the scope of its community impact. The organization's Fall Impact Report presents the effect United Way community partners have had on residents in need.

According to the report, the last quarter saw 38,390 individuals and families receiving emergency food from food banks and food pantries; 70 community members being placed in jobs or pursuing career growth with improved financial knowledge; 204 children given the resources to prepare for academic and social success in kindergarten; 354 individuals receiving increased access to health care, including mental health services and prescriptions assistance; and 547 individuals receiving clothing or hygiene supplies, assistance with utilities, or rent or mortgage assistance.

Katie Kurtz, UWCK's director of development and communications, said the figures are made possible by the organization's many community partners. 100 workplace partners and 3,700 donors.

"The work we do is not possible without this support," she said.

Ron Eppes, who became president and CEO of the organization on Oct. 1, said he hopes to help steer continued success in the community.

"By providing solutions to poverty through a holistic approach, our goal is to strengthen partnerships by finding solutions to problems that no one organization can address alone, providing a full spectrum of services that will allow families in our community to thrive," he said in a news release.

"United, we have the power to make this change happen."

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