

UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST GEORGIA

Check YouTube to see what your United Way does

I am often asked, "How can I learn about what United Way is doing in our community and the impact my gift is having?"

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then our new United Way video is worth a million. I encourage you to visit our website at ourunitedway.org and click on the YouTube link to view the 2011 video and hear Jeffery Ramos and

Jennifer Coker's United Way stories. The video highlights United Way's impact: creating happy childhoods and providing services for the elderly.



**Amanda
Burt**

Jeffery works with two United Way agencies, being a role model for young children and helping them stay on track for school, work and life. He learned through his own childhood just how important United Way programs are in helping children be successful.

Jeffery had to grow up really fast. He moved to Dalton as a child and his parents started working in the flooring industry, 12 hour shifts at night. During his childhood Jeffery's sister, who is only two years older, provided primary care for him in their apartment while the parents worked.

Fast-forward 16 years. Jeffery now works at the Boys and Girls Club, a United Way partner agency, and gets to see firsthand the value of having a safe place for kids.

"Kids walk through the doors of the Boys and Girls Club and they feel safe — it's their sanctuary. At the Boys and Girls Club, we are impacting the community by raising responsible citizens," says Jeffery.

Jeffery also volunteers at Big Brothers Big Sisters, a United Way agency. He was matched with a fourth grader at City Park School through the Buddy Program. Jeffery learned that sometimes kids just need somebody to listen.

"My buddy needed a positive male role model in his life. When I started working with my buddy, he caused a lot of trouble at school," Jeffery said.

Slowly, through the mentoring relationship, Jeffery saw improvement in his mentee. The student made better grades and

improved his attitude towards school.

The need for home and community based services for older adults is increasing. Between 2010 and 2030 the number of people aged 65 and older is projected to grow by 31.7 million or 79.2 percent. Through United Way programs, elderly individuals and adults with disabilities are able to remain independent.

Meet Jennifer Coker. Jennifer's father was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, dementia, and severe neuropathy in his legs. He is not able to stay at home by himself. RossWoods, a United Way partner agency, provides care that he wouldn't get anywhere else. RossWoods provides nursing services, meals, snacks, exercises and enrichment activities like painting and choir.

Jennifer has really noticed the difference that RossWoods has made in her father's life.

"My dad is a retired minister," Jennifer said. "When he became sick he wanted to stay home. He didn't really have the desire to go anywhere which is very unlike him. Now, the socialization is back. He is talking more, and we are able to understand him. Without United Way I would have to quit my job at Shaw Industries and stay home and care for my father."

In 2010 United Way provided more than 106,000 services to individuals and families in Northwest Georgia. United Way recruits people who bring passion, expertise and the resources needed to get things done. The way we live our lives can impact the way others live theirs.

Your co-workers, neighbors and friends are working right here in our communities to make real lasting change by focusing on the building blocks of a good life. It takes everyone in the community working together to create a brighter future. With United Way you don't have to choose where you want to help. Your gift helps the whole community.

To learn more about Jennifer and Jeffery, please visit us at youtube.com/user/UnitedWayNWGA. To stay up to date with what is happening at United Way, join us on Facebook or Twitter and sign up for our email newsletter at ourunited-way.org.

Amanda Burt is the president of the United Way of Northwest Georgia.