Ana’s Story

When Ana’s husband received a job offer in Palatine, her family decided to leave their home in Mexico and move to the United States. Ana came to America not speaking any English and she was overwhelmed by the world around her. “I was afraid to leave the house because I didn’t know how to ask for what I wanted,” Ana said. She wanted to make connections in the community but she did not feel she was capable because of the language barrier. She struggled with feelings of isolation, inadequacy and fear.

After the birth of her first son, Ana decided that she needed to make a change.

Ana sought help at the Palatine Opportunity Center (POC), a United Way Partner Agency. The staff at the POC connected Ana with a tutor from Harper College who helped her learn English. Ana graduated from the GED program at POC and then enrolled at Harper College to become a Certified Nursing Assistant. The Family Learning Lab at the POC helped Ana study for her exams and provided childcare for her two boys so she could attend class.

Today, Ana is working as a Certified Nursing Assistant and she hopes to continue her education and become a Registered Nurse. Ana also went through leadership training at the Palatine Opportunity Center and was chosen to be a Promotora de Salud. She is trained to speak with community members about diabetes, domestic violence, and healthy child care.

Without United Way and the Palatine Opportunity Center, Ana may not have been able to reach her full potential and achieve her educational and employment goals. Her kids may have never had the chance to see her graduate.

Ana’s story—and thousands more like it—changed because of people like you.

Through proven strategies and quality programs, United Way measurably improves lives for individuals, families and our region. Join us, and change the story for those in need in greater Chicago.