



Michael's Story

Michael still thinks about the day he decided to drop out of school, "I joined up with some of the guys in the neighborhood and wanted that whole fast life," remembers Michael. After leaving school he began dealing cocaine and was arrested multiple times, but he returned to the same life.

Everything changed for Michael when he went to meet one of his regular clients to arrange a deal. When he arrived he looked into the woman's eyes and realized that what he was doing was hurting people and that he needed to make a change. Michael sold his possessions and donated all his money to the church. He sought out to start a new life.

With a criminal record, Michael found it difficult to find work. He struggled to find a job to support himself and his six children. A life-changing moment came when he discovered the Cara Program (TCP), a United Way partner.

Michael worked with a Professional Development Specialist at the Cara Program to develop a resume and work on interview skills. To improve his candidacy, Michael participated in commercial office cleaning training, worked at Cleanslate (TCP's neighborhood beautification business), and constantly followed up with his Professional Development Specialist.



Michael found full-time employment and was promoted twice in 10 months. He is working hard to support his family and he hopes to go back to school to get a Doctorate degree in Theology.

Without United Way and the Cara Program, Michael may have been another man trying to overcome his past without hope or help. Now he is working toward a better future.

No one agency or organization can solve the problems of joblessness and poverty alone. Through partnerships with funders, service providers, government and business leaders, United Way and The Cara Program are able to make sure educational and employment opportunities exist for all of our community members. In 2013, United Way invested \$3.8 million in 68 agencies across the region that provide high quality workforce and economic development services to communities and people who will benefit from them the most.

Michael'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.



Michael's story changed because of people like you. Help us continue to *change* the story.