



Valley of the Sun
UNITED WAY

UNITED IS THE WAY™

TO FOOD SECURITY



STORIES OF IMPACT

MEET CHELLI

From Uncertainty To Stability

When Chelli came to Arizona, she was searching for something every parent hopes to find: stability, safety, and the chance to build a better life for her child.

Instead, she found herself facing **food insecurity and unemployment**, carrying the growing burden of uncertainty each day. As SNAP disruptions and rising food needs pushed more families to the brink, **Valley of the Sun United Way and its supporters** stepped in at a critical moment.

Through United Way's immediate response to the federal funding cuts to SNAP, Chelli received **food assistance, education, and one-on-one mentoring** that helped her regain her footing and move forward with hope. What began as emergency support became the foundation for lasting change.

Today, Chelli has found **stability, secured employment, and is creating a stronger, brighter future for her child.**

Her story is a powerful reminder that **United is the Way**—and that together, we can help families overcome crisis and build a better tomorrow.



[Learn more about our work.](#)



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TO ECONOMIC MOBILITY



STORIES OF IMPACT

MEET THIA

From Barriers To Opportunity

After incarceration, Thia faced a challenge shared by many people reentering the workforce: finding a chance to move beyond her past and build a stable future.

Like so many justice-involved individuals, she encountered barriers to employment that made financial independence difficult. Through **Valley of the Sun United Way's Fair Chance Collaborative**, she found a pathway forward.

Through a Skills Center culinary program at St. Mary's Food Bank, Thia received **job training, industry-recognized certifications**, and **hands-on experience** that prepared her for employment.

What began as a second chance became the foundation for a brighter future. Today, Thia works as a line cook and is a proud, contributing member of the workforce.

Her story is a powerful reminder that **United is the Way**—and that together, we can create pathways to employment, economic mobility, and lasting opportunity.



Learn more about our work.



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TO EARLY LITERACY



STORIES OF IMPACT

MEET LESAI

From Struggling To Thriving

When Lesai entered kindergarten, he was already facing challenges that put his success at risk. **Inconsistent attendance and early literacy struggles** threatened to leave him behind before his educational journey had truly begun.

Through **Valley of the Sun United Way's Literacy Hub at Lattie Coor Elementary School**, Lesai and his grandmother found the support they needed to change that path.

With one-on-one tutoring, literacy support, and encouragement, Lesai built skills and confidence while his grandmother stayed actively involved in his learning. With regular participation, he **improved his attendance, strengthened his reading skills, and exceeded every benchmark** before him.

Today, Lesai has achieved all of his first-grade reading goals and is thriving in the classroom.

His story is a powerful reminder that **United is the Way**—and that together, we can help children build the literacy skills they need for lifelong success.



[Learn more about our work.](#)



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TO HOUSING SECURITY



STORIES OF IMPACT

MEET RICHARD

From Homelessness To Home

Richard worked hard to rebuild his life after overcoming alcoholism. He became a husband, father, homeowner, and company manager, creating the stability he once thought impossible.

But after a relapse led to homelessness, **Richard faced losing everything** he had worked to achieve.

Determined to recover and start again, he turned to **Valley of the Sun United Way's network of partners** for support. Together, organizations including Central Arizona Shelter Services, NourishPHX, and Elaine provided coordinated care that addressed his needs, including **housing, food, health care, transportation, and employment**. With that support, Richard was able to rebuild his life once again.

Today, he is sober, housed, healthy, reconnected with his family, and volunteering to help others on their own journeys.

His story is a powerful reminder that **United is the Way**—and that together, we can restore stability, strengthen families, and help neighbors find their way home.



[Learn more about our work.](#)