

Partner Agency Success Story

American Red Cross

Disaster Services



On the evening of July, 18, 2010 our on call DAT Team responder received a call from the Port Byron Fire Department that a trailer was on fire and the family was requesting help from the Red Cross.

Upon arriving at the scene, our responder issued the family comfort kits and quickly proceeded with the interview process. He was able to secure a two night stay for the family in a local motel, as well as issue them a Client Assistance Card (CAC) for them to purchase food and other basic items.

On the third day after the fire, the family again asked for assistance from the Red Cross as they were not able to move back into the trailer. Our Emergency Services Department put them up in a motel in Auburn as it was closer to the Father's place of employment.

About a week later, the same family was struggling to find a place to live and again called the ARC for assistance. Our Emergency Services Director wrote a letter confirming their plight and it helped to expedite the process of them securing a new apartment in Auburn which was also closer to other family members.

Several days later the family was in need of more assistance as most of their bedding and clothing had been destroyed by fire, smoke and water damage. The Chapter issued them another CAC card to purchase new bedding, including a crib mattress for their eleven month old baby. In addition the Chapter provided them with two large bottles of laundry detergent to help clean the clothing that had not been severely damaged, and made an appointment for them with the Seventh Day Adventist Church to obtain gently used clothing, sheets, towels and other items that had been lost.

At the present time the family is in their new apartment and has since called to thank the ARC for not only temporary assistance, but also the ongoing support needed to help them recover from their obvious tragedy.



Partner Agency Success Story

YMCA - WEIU

Camp Y-Owasco

Barbara (not her real name) is a 10-year-old camper who has been attending Camp Y-Owasco for several years. Barbara loves camp, actively participates by singing and dancing in the talent shows, and has developed close friendships with other campers her age. She is a model camper in many ways.

The Camp Director received a letter and scholarship application from Barbara's mother along with Barbara's camp registration this year. The letter explained that, though they had been able to pay in full for Barbara's registration fees in previous years, this year the family is going through divorce and the mother has become the sole provider for two children. The pending proceeding has left her without access to some of her assets and without financial, physical, or emotional support from the children's father. They have little family nearby and depend on the support and services available at the YMCA for care of the children. To further complicate matters, the children's grandfather has recently been diagnosed with serious health problems and Barbara's mother has had to take unpaid leave from her full-time job for his care.

Even so, Barbara's mother has been saving to send her to camp and her brother to the summer care program at the Y. Because of the funding available for camperships through the United Way, we were able to help this family with the difference between the cost of the program and the family's ability to pay.

Partner Agency Success Story

Aurora of CNY

Five years ago Dorothy K. was driving her granddaughter across Auburn for an appointment when something happened that would change the course of her life. 'GRANDMA!', her granddaughter shouted, "didn't you SEE that?" And once recovered from the near miss, Dorothy had to admit that she hadn't seen the obstruction in the road. She dropped her granddaughter off, drove home and called her eye doctor. It was the last time she would ever get behind the wheel of a car.

After several appointments with area ophthalmologists, Dorothy was diagnosed with macular degeneration, a progressive eye disease that obscures and takes away central vision. Not only would Dorothy never drive again, but she would also struggle with everyday household chores such as cooking and laundry and eventually lose the ability to read print, watch TV or recognize people's faces. All of these losses led to an overwhelming sense of frustration, anger and hopelessness for Dorothy. Once all medical treatments were exhausted, she was still left with the need to function with impaired vision. That is when AURORA stepped in and Dorothy began to "see light" at the end of her dark tunnel of despair.

Once referred to AURORA by her eye doctor, a social worker met with Dorothy to go over all of her concerns and conduct a complete intake and assessment to determine what array of services would best fit her needs. Then she received a visit from our Outreach Director who met one-on-one with her in her home and provided devices and information she needed to remain independent there. She began attending the Support Group for the Visually Impaired which meets once a month in her neighborhood. There she connects with others with vision loss.

"I still get very frustrated and angry when I can't do things fast enough and going to the support group helps me cope with that." She remarked in a recent conversation. "I can cook and clean and I am still in my own home because of AURORA's help, but I still get mad." Sharing this anger and strategies to help, as well as getting the latest information on macular degeneration through the group keeps her going. According to Dorothy, "It's [the support group] interesting and I am just going to keep going as long as I can to get the help I need."

Partner Agency Success Story

Hospice of the Fingerlakes

Bereavement Services


The "D" family is a very close family. Each Sunday, the children and grandchildren gather at Grandma's and Grandpa's house for a day of family, food, and fun. In addition, they spend holidays and summer vacations together. No matter the event or occasion, Grandma was the focal point of the family with everyone playing an important role. She was the organizer and supervisor but not in an overpowering or overbearing manner. She did everything with love, patience, and compassion.

Unfortunately, Grandma became ill with cancer. For a year, she battled her disease with great courage never altering the traditional schedule of Sunday's at her home or celebrating the holidays there as well. When Grandma died, the family responded in an emotionally appropriate manner.

The Hospice Bereavement Coordinator contacted the patient's husband and children explaining the bereavement support offered by Hospice. They declined any immediate support. Initially, they seemed to be handling the death well, but within a month, everyone noticed something very odd: no one talked about Grandma. And when they did, there was a rush of uneasiness and a feeling of heavy sadness. At times, they felt trapped in a wave of despair and tears. They contacted Hospice and asked about support for the grandchildren ages 5, 7, 12 and for a 37 year old daughter with special needs. The Hospice Bereavement Coordinator met with them and their parents to discuss their feelings, fears, and concerns.

During the three sessions, the children slowly revealed their feelings through age appropriate activities that included storytelling and handicrafts such as memory boxes and photo collages. As each child worked on their project, they felt comfortable discussing what they missed about Grandma, how they felt at the time of her death, and how they are working through their feelings several months after the death. Their parents were pleased with the progress as they could not get them to openly talk about Grandma no matter how they tried.

In early July, the same children attended our one day bereavement camp, Camp Hearts A'Hoy held at Everest Park in Owasco. The children participated fully in the games, activities, and specially designed bereavement activities with the other children at camp. They felt very comfortable discussing their Grandma's death and shared their feelings with everyone in an appropriate manner. They all left camp with a profound sense of accomplishment and a new sense of hope about the death and the dying process. The "D" family returned their Parental Feedback Forms stating how much their children enjoyed the camp, but most importantly, how they continue to gather for Sunday dinner at Grandpa's more relaxed, more at peace, and more comfortable talking about Grandma.



Partner Agency Success Story


YMCA - WEIU

School Age Childcare

School age child care is becoming more and more of a necessity for today's working parents. Through our YMCA child care scholarship program we were able to offer financial assistance to more than 40 families this summer by providing quality child care at a reduced cost while parents are working. One such family recently found themselves in a position to apply for financial assistance.

Joey, age 8, lives in a single parent home with his Mom. Brandy, Joey's Mom works two jobs and needed child care early in the morning and then after school as well due to the fact that her first job started at 7 am and job number two let out at 5:45 pm. Joey would arrive at 6:30 am without eating breakfast and showed lots of aggression towards our male staff members. Brandy asked us if we could "work especially closely" with Joey, as she knew that he had some "issues with some not so great men in his life." Our male director at the site really stepped up to Brandy's request and took time each morning to eat breakfast with Joey and the group, talking, laughing and just generally listening to each of them. Joey, over time, gave up his "all men are bad" attitude and turned around to have a caring and respectful demeanor towards the director.

Brandy has recently stated that "Joey will do anything for Mr. Pete; even his behavior at home is improved." The YMCA scholarship program has made a big difference to this family and they talk up the YMCA SACC program at every opportunity!




Partner Agency Success Story
Booker T. Washington
Awesum Youth Program

Emma Wetherbee is a 7 year old in our Explorers group who has been attending BTW since she was 5 years old. Last summer Emma was diagnosed with retinal cancer in her right eye. After many attempts to save the eye, it had to be removed to prevent the spread of her cancer anywhere else in the body.

In turn Emma had to leave the program for a while, but returned last year doing better than ever. Unfortunately she had fallen behind in school due to countless trips to her specialists in Philadelphia. When Emma returned, the educational component at BTW (homework help before program starts), helped her catch up on her work and successfully complete first grade. Emma's strong character never let her "disability" hinder the success she has had at BTW.

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Partner Agency Success Story
Salvation Army
Comprehensive Emergency Services

This client came to The Salvation Army after a diagnosis of cancer and the subsequent medical bills threatened to force the family into foreclosure of their home. Having never been on the receiving end of assistance, she had been to multiple agencies and repeatedly been told there was nothing that could be done for her.

When she came through the doors of The Salvation Army she was, quite literally, at her last hope. With assistance through church funds (she did not qualify for FEMA funding due to being 3 months behind on the mortgage) we were able to assist with one months mortgage. We assisted with emergency food through our food pantry, gasoline assistance to insure she was able to get to her doctors appointments out of state, and making contact with a Salvation Army office in PA to get assistance while at the 2 day treatment for her cancer.

Referrals were made to other agencies for utilities help. The seasonal assistance given through The Salvation Army's Christmas program brightened an otherwise gloomy looking holiday season. This family credits The Salvation Army for being able to get through one of the darkest times in their lives.

Partner Agency Success Story Girl Scouts NY Penn Pathways

"I can say that being a Girl Scout has helped make me a better person. Because of Girl Scouts I have more perseverance and now when I start a project, I know I will finish it – I didn't do that before I was a Girl Scout. I also think it has made me a better friend. I am more patient with others, and I like helping others. I really love camping, and hope to become a camp counselor in the future. I really like working with younger children. I am proud that I just finished my Girl Scout Silver Award."

"Years ago, a girl joined our troop as a shy and withdrawn 2nd grader, but could only come every other week because she was attending counseling appointments. Her family and counselor felt the troop experience was so good for her that the appointment time was changed so she could attend meetings every week. She went on to thrive in the troop for years and earned her Bronze, Silver and Gold awards!"

"My own daughter watched me grow in my leadership role as troop leader which gave her a model. I always insisted that girls try different leadership roles within the troop. I believe that these roles have helped give all the girls in the troop a sense of belonging. My daughter earned the highest awards and was recently asked to present a keynote speech at a council event – to talk about her Girl Scout experience! She also believes that the reason she was able to become a Resident Assistant at college was because being a Gold Awardee helped her to stand out among her peers."

"There was a girl who joined the troop as a Junior Girl Scout, and she was very, very shy and only spoke when someone spoke to her. After some time had gone by, our troop went on an encampment and this girl agreed to sing karaoke all by herself and did a great job. In middle school she tried out for the school play and went out for track. Girl Scouting helped her come out of her shell."

Partner Agency Success Story


SCAT Van

Mr. & Mrs. P have been married to each other for over 50 years. She is age 83 and he is age 85. They have lived in the same house in Auburn for over 45 years. They raised their children there and have many happy memories in that house.

Mr. P had been suffering from macular degeneration for several years, slowly losing his central vision. Five years ago Mrs. P was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. At the onset of her illness, Mr. P was able to drive himself and his wife to appointments and shopping, but he knew he would need help in the near future. He was considering selling the home and moving to assisted living when a friend told him about the SCAT Van service.

After calling the office and asking his questions he decided to try the service. The first ride was with his wife to go to a doctor's appointment. After the ride he admitted to the volunteers he and his wife enjoyed the service and would call again when they needed to see a doctor. It was then the volunteers explained to Mr. P that the SCAT Van would transport his wife and him to *any* place they needed to go. They told him of the many places we transport to in Auburn and that with the SCAT Van he could do his shopping, get a hair cut or even go out to lunch. The van wasn't just for medical appointments.

That seemed to be what Mr. P needed to know in order to stay in their beloved home a few years longer. Today, 4 years later, Mr. and Mrs. P ride the van 2-3 times per week. They have a standing appointment for grocery shopping and for Mrs. P's hair dresser. One day, after shopping, the volunteers told Mr. & Mrs. P they had extra time because of a late cancellation and would they like to go for a ride. He asked that instead of a ride, could he take his wife to lunch. They hadn't done that (alone) for years. They were let off at Sunset (their favorite spot) and told the van would be back in two hours. They were both so happy to have had a spontaneous "date."



Partner Agency Success Story

Freedom Recreation Sibshops Program

This particular female sibling joined our group at age 8 or 9, struggling with the day-to-day frustrations of having a brother with autism. She was dealing with such things as her brother destroying her possessions, the embarrassment of his behaviors when they went in to the community and the extra attention that he demanded from their family.

Through the activities she participated in during our Sibshop program, as well as the acquaintances she made within the group, she discovered that she was not alone, was able to freely talk about her situation, and was able to come up with different ways to handle some of her situations. She also learned more about her brother's disability and understands why he exhibits some of the behaviors that he does.

This young woman grew to be a teen-ager that in the summer works as a Camp Counselor for our Freedom Camp program as well as helping other families with children that have the same disability as her brother, by babysitting. She recently "graduated" from the Sibshop program and is currently in college pursuing a degree to teach Special Education.

Partner Agency Success Story

Senecayuga ARC

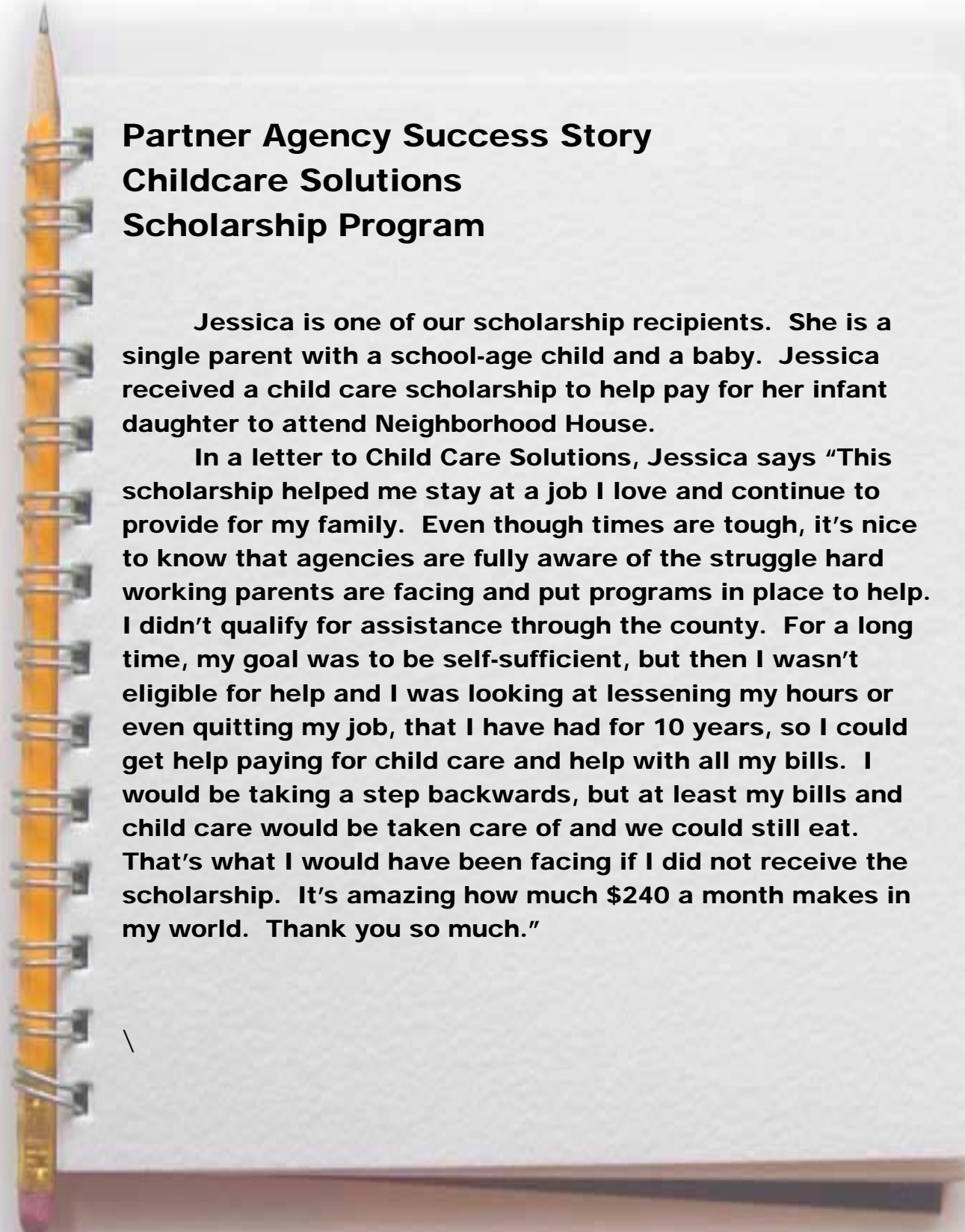
Camp Columbus

Alec is 7 (I am sure he would like you to know he is almost 8.) This year is the first time his mom was sending him to summer camp, just like his siblings. She was a nervous wreck. She had 20 questions and then 20 more. Then she signed him up. "I'll sign him up for 2 weeks" she said "but if he doesn't do well the first week, can I get a refund?" With all assurances in place, Mom and Alec and his service dog Ziti, came to meet the staff before camp started. They trained the staff on how to work with Ziti, Alec's Autism service dog. "Pet Ziti" everyone repeats as they see Alec reach out to pet his dog. In no time, Alec and Ziti were scooped away by two counselors who gave them a tour of the camp and were chatting with Alec like an old buddy. They were bonding.

The following week when Alec and Ziti arrived at camp on the bus, the staff was looking forward to their arrival. I had promised to look in on Alec and report to his motherlike a spy. His first morning I dropped in to see how things were going for the pair. Alec was sitting with a counselor, quietly going through a math book he frequently uses to focus his attention and avoid the activity around him. He was doing ok in the new environment. This is normal for any young child in a new place. It takes time to warm up. After getting a little work done I peeked in to see if things were progressing for everyone. There was Ziti laying down relaxing and Alex shooting hoops with another camper bouncing a ball next to him. As the week went on, lots of noisy activities were going on which didn't seem to cause Alec to get upset. This surprised his mother as this may have upset Alec in the past. Yet still Alec didn't show much interest in getting involved in activities with other people.

By the time the first week of camp was over, Alec was talking to Mom about camp when he was home. She felt much better about her decision to have him attend and began asking about a third week, which we arranged. By the time I visited with Alec during the third week of camp, he was calling people by name, clapping for other's successes, stepping into a kick-ball game to play with others, taking turns, and getting involved in a variety of activities. He was checking out what others were doing and choosing what he wanted to do. He no longer separated himself from other campers, he was right in the mix.

Alec was able to have three weeks of summer camp. He could bring Ziti and have a safe place to try new experiences at his own pace. Without the expectations of a parent or a school setting, campers like Alec can get to know more about their own abilities and preferences. Alec took some social risks he may not have taken in other environments. He became "one of the gang." I expect we will see Alec and Ziti at Camp Columbus again next year.



Partner Agency Success Story Childcare Solutions Scholarship Program

Jessica is one of our scholarship recipients. She is a single parent with a school-age child and a baby. Jessica received a child care scholarship to help pay for her infant daughter to attend Neighborhood House.

In a letter to Child Care Solutions, Jessica says "This scholarship helped me stay at a job I love and continue to provide for my family. Even though times are tough, it's nice to know that agencies are fully aware of the struggle hard working parents are facing and put programs in place to help. I didn't qualify for assistance through the county. For a long time, my goal was to be self-sufficient, but then I wasn't eligible for help and I was looking at lessening my hours or even quitting my job, that I have had for 10 years, so I could get help paying for child care and help with all my bills. I would be taking a step backwards, but at least my bills and child care would be taken care of and we could still eat. That's what I would have been facing if I did not receive the scholarship. It's amazing how much \$240 a month makes in my world. Thank you so much."