



what matters.™

United Way Helps Provide Brighter Future

Theresa is 15 years old. At 14, she ran away from foster care several times, returning this last time with a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Concerned about her risk for other STIs, pregnancy, and especially HIV, her foster care caseworker referred her to AIDS Resource Center Ohio's Protecting Our Youth program. Through the Protecting Our Youth program, Theresa began to work with Natalie, a Risk Reduction Educator, who shared with Theresa information about HIV and how to reduce her risk.

Prior to working with Natalie and the Protecting Our Youth program, Theresa participated in unprotected sex and many other high risk behaviors including alcohol and drug abuse, running away, and not participating in school. Because of her work with Natalie and the Protecting Our Youth Program, Theresa now knows more about how HIV and STIs are transmitted and how to protect herself. Most importantly, she can identify her own risky behaviors and is willing to make the necessary changes to reduce them. Theresa calls Natalie when she needs complete and honest answers on abstinence and total sexual education. She trusts Natalie enough to encourage her friends to call for information about HIV and testing.

AIDS Resource Center Ohio is a comprehensive prevention, outreach, and support agency for people infected, affected, and at risk of HIV/AIDS. United Way of Greater Dayton provides funding for the Protecting Our Youth program which works directly with youth most at risk of HIV infection. Through the program young people learn more about HIV and identify their own behaviors which put them at risk for infection. In addition, young people work to reduce their risk by decreasing risky behaviors and increasing positive developmental assets.

Without ARC Ohio and United Way, Theresa would have continued on a destructive path. This path could have lead to dropping out of school...living on the streets...more sexually transmitted infection including HIV and even death. The streets are no place for a 15 year old.

United Way funding has helped make the Protecting Our Youth program possible and has given Theresa and other young people a brighter future.