

## **UNITED WAY OF THE OHIO VALLEY**

### **UNION COUNTY**

#### **PARTNER AGENCY: UNION COUNTY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**

In order to show the impact all FRYSC centers can have, we chose to tell you the story of Sam. All FRYSC coordinators have had the opportunity to work with Sam over the last several years.

Sam showed up at the Just Say No enrichment program last summer after having walked a mile to meet the school bus for a field trip. He was dressed in a long sleeve shirt that didn't reach his wrists and a pair of pants most kids would taunt as "expecting a flood". Even though it was a hot, sunny day and Sam was sweaty from head to toe in his winter clothing, his smile was broad and his excitement was evident. Sam would get to have a fun day that provided just a little respite from taking care of his family. This wasn't our first encounter with Sam: he has been "ours" for many years. Sam was born into a family filled with addiction and poverty. He and his siblings were removed from their home at a young age due to substance abuse and neglect. In and out of their home, they eventually were placed back with their biological father. A short time later, their father became terminally ill which prevented him from holding a job to support his family. Our FRYSC centers provided Sam's family several forms of assistance including food and utilities. When the FRYSC funds ran out, we did whatever it took to ensure the family remained fed and warm. This often resulted in asking area churches for assistance on behalf of the family. Even though he was just an 8-year old kid, Sam had the responsibility of his entire family on his shoulders, taking over all the cooking and cleaning for his siblings and father. At school, Sam's clothes were filthy. The FRYSC coordinators asked Sam how they could help him and he said he had no detergent to wash his clothes. From that day forward, FRYSC provided the family with detergent weekly. After a lengthy lesson on using a washing machine, Sam became a pro and always ensured his brothers came to school with clean clothes on, although they didn't always fit. We played such a role in Sam's life, that when Sam's father knew his time on this earth was drawing to an end, he contacted the FRYSC center to ask for us to help him find a family that could take Sam and his two brothers to raise. Sam's father's time was limited and there was no other suitable family to take them in. Having dealt with child services in the past, he did not want the children to be placed in foster care and Sam's father trusted us to ensure the love and care he so desperately wanted for his children. We were able to find a family who were eager to provide a loving and safe environment for the children. We set up a meeting between the family and the father. The family quickly developed a great relationship with the father and his boys. A few months and several legal proceedings later, the family proudly took permanent custody of Sam and his two younger siblings. Sadly, it was only a few short months prior to the father's death. Sam and his siblings are now growing rapidly and excelling at school and life in general. At this time they are emotionally healing, always have full bellies, and have a safe place to go home to every night. Sam and his siblings were assisted by FRYSC in many ways such as having their basic needs met through assistance with food, utilities, cleaning supplies, toiletries, transportation, and clothing. FRYSC was there to assist in achieving permanency for Sam and his siblings. One of the most impactful services that helped Sam was providing him with an escape over what could have been one of the worse summers of his life. This would not have been possible without funding from United Way.

#### **WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL YOUR INVESTMENT MAKE?**

With your investment of \$100 **Union County Family Resource Center** can:

- Purchase clothing for children when needed throughout the school year, or replace clothing lost in a fire, or provide a coat when weather turn cold
- Purchase hygiene supplies for a children who arrive at school dirty
- Pay for mileage to transport children to the doctor to resolve sickness

