The Power Lunch program hosts volunteer reading buddies for a one-on-one weekly or bi-weekly reading session with Denver Public School's 2nd and 3rd grade students. The individual attention the volunteer reading buddies provide helps early grade students become stronger readers and develop a love for reading. Thank you to our incredible donors and volunteers who make this program possible!

"Power Lunch has had such a positive impact on all of my students' learning. Every Wednesday, my students can't wait until 1:45 when they can meet with their buddies and enjoy some one-on-one reading time. I have one student in particular who has grown a lot. She came into my classroom very shy and nervous about her abilities. Now, after a few months of Power Lunch, she is reading more confidently and she has increased her level from a 4 to a 10. This program has been so wonderful for all of my students and their reading!"

— Molly, 2nd grade teacher

"The buddies have been great for building relationships, especially for those kids who don't have a positive role model in their lives. It also helps with those kids who don't enjoy reading. This is one of their only positive interactions with literacy that gets the kids excited about reading. They look forward to their buddies coming each week and the kids want to show what great readers they are to impress their buddy. All students in the class are always asking when their buddies are coming. As a teacher, it's really great to see all kids excited about reading!"

— Ashley, 2nd grade teacher

Are you interested in being a Power Lunch buddy next year? Contact Amy.Woolridge@unitedwaydenver.org to learn how.

"Power Lunch program has powerful impact on students, teachers, and volunteers"
In 2017, the top five needs the 2-1-1 Help Center saw were:

1. Access to Vital Resources
2. Support
3. Housing
4. Utility Assistance
5. Child Care

FOR MANY FORMER FOSTER YOUTH, STABLE HOUSING IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Anahi has been a member of the Mile High United Way 2-1-1 Team for over a year. She found her passion interning with the 2-1-1 Help Center Resource Team, and now goes back by helping individuals each and every day as a full-time employee. She supports 2-1-1 clients, and also provides essential bilingual support to various other lines operated by 2-1-1, bringing her compassion, knowledge and detail-minded thinking to all of the clients who speak with her.

When you support Mile High United Way, you support Mile High United Way’s 2-1-1 Help Center; providing a safety net for thousands of people in Metro Denver. Please consider making a gift today by returning the enclosed pledge card or giving online by visiting bit.ly/unitedwewin.

A letter from the President and CEO

Dear Friend,

Did you know May is National Foster Care Awareness Month? When youth exit the child welfare system at age 18, many don’t know where to turn. Mile High United Way’s Bridging the Gap (BTG) program serves these youth by providing them an independent living coach and a FUP (Family Unification Program) housing voucher, which when paired together, help ensure young people have the resources they need to thrive.

Before Mile High United Way’s Bridging the Gap program, Michelle struggled with homelessness and a lack of stability. She couch-surfed, stayed in rundown motels, and slept in her car when she had nowhere else to turn.

Today, through her hard work, determination, and support of her BTG coach, Michelle is going to school full-time to earn her degree in Biology, with the goal of attending pharmacy school in the future. She is also living in her own apartment and proudly advocates for former foster youth and low-income families.

Michaela says the hardest thing about being homeless was the internal struggle of having no one that cares about you or your family, and that you are just a number to people. She says BTG brought stability and a great quality of life; and allowed her and her family to work on their goals to improve their future.

“My life has changed tremendously since Bridging the Gap. I have completed a year in college. I own reliable transportation. I now have belongings and an actual home to come home to. I have started becoming self-sufficient and have started achieving my goals,” said Michaela.

We asked Michelle what she would want people to know about youth who have exited the child welfare system and she said, “The only thing a young person wants is to know that someone is rooting for them.”

Thank you for rooting for Michaela and the many other people Mile High United Way’s Bridging the Gap program serves. Your support ensures we can help every person that walks through our doors.

Warmly,

Christine Benero
President and CEO

MAKE YOUR DONATION GO TWICE AS FAR

We’ve shared with you incredible stories happening in our community, and how people like you are stepping up to help. Please consider making a gift today.

When you donate to Mile High United Way today, your gift will be matched 1:1 up to $35,000, thanks to FirstBank.*

Together, we are rallying around our community’s biggest challenges. Please join us, and double your impact today. You can return the enclosed pledge card or give online by visiting bit.ly/unitedwewin.

*Donations must be made by June 30, 2018