

Kind HEARTED

your gift changed lives

Human Kind
Spring 2021



More than Surviving

YOU'RE THE REASON DONNA
AND HER FAMILY ARE THRIVING

**SHE DIDN'T GIVE UP –
DONNA WANTS TO MAKE
LIFE BETTER NOT JUST
FOR HERSELF, BUT
LEAD THE WAY FOR
HER CHILDREN.**

Donna Brown had a tough year. As the single income provider in her household, she had to keep everyone afloat while staying focused on her journey to financial stability. But she also had to focus on the basics; feed her family, be a mom and a caretaker for her ailing father – all in the midst of a pandemic. More than a year later, because of your unwavering support Donna hasn't given up. Not even close. And after successfully paying off her first car loan, she's now applying for another. Having another car ensures her college bound son can come home on breaks.

YOUR GIFT MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR FAMILIES IN CRISIS.

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“Before I found HumanKind, I was unemployed and on public assistance, with no car, no job, living with a family member. Every day I applied for jobs and had to pay people to take me to job interviews.” As a single mother of three children all on the verge of becoming adults themselves, she knew she had to lead the way. Her obstacle continued to be a lack of transportation. And with her current credit history, purchasing a car seemed out of reach.

“My goal is to be financially stable, with a steady job, reliable transportation, own my own home, with

“I have been blessed in so many ways this year because of good people like you. I just pray that I will be in a position to do the same for someone else, paying it forward.”

good credit and save money for emergencies. And not worry about how I'm going to pay rent, or if we're going to eat.”

One phone call to HumanKind and her journey began – but at the time she had no idea how far it would take her and become a lifeline for her family. “I had the privilege of purchasing my very first car. But gained so much more than I imagined.”

Then the coronavirus pandemic changed everything. Donna felt the impact; from reduced work hours to job changes, and supporting her children through this difficult time. And one of the most challenging parts was caring for her father from a distance, already battling health problems. Devastatingly, after having the coronavirus he passed away in September of 2020.

“Donna never quit even though covid really affected her family, she didn't give up,” shares financial coach Shanika McClelland. Donna's coach provided resources to keep her family safe.

Because of you, Donna had gift cards for groceries and gas, bill payment and rent assistance, help with a resume and even found new employment. “Being a part of this program and staying connected, I was able to find a better job that pays more. I have maintained and established more credit.”

Because of you she did it - made her final car payment in February of this year. But she's not stopping there. Her graduating son has multiple scholarship opportunities to go to college and play football. Donna plans to give him the car she just paid off making sure he can come home on breaks.

Her coach helped her get approved for a new car loan, and has continued to connect her with resources. Donna was just accepted into the *Start Up for Success* pilot program by partner Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) – launching emerging entrepreneurs. Donna is hopeful her dreams of becoming a small business owner are within reach. “My plans are to open a restaurant and make food to ‘feed the soul’. I want a flexible schedule, make retirement plans and be able to enjoy my grandchildren when they get here. I want to build my brand, save, and enjoy life while I'm here.”



You made it possible for her to get an affordable car loan and lay the foundation for financial stability. “I have learned discipline, financial responsibility, how to budget and make my payments on time while I build my credit. I felt accomplished every time I made a payment.”



Finding Refuge

YOUR GIFT PROVIDED SAFETY TO A CHILD IN CRISIS.

When schools closed down in March of last year, there were many kids left feeling uncertain. But Joseph was not one of them – the process of going to school each day had become a trigger for the abuse he suffered at home. For him the ability to eventually attend school virtually made learning easier and having a foster mom who also taught in the school was just a pure blessing.

Months before the world declared a pandemic, Joseph's life was already in crisis. For more than a year, department of social services was providing his family prevention services working to stabilize his home and keep it safe for him. At age 9, the physical abuse from his parents escalated and was witnessed in front of his elementary school. An emergency removal took place the first day of 2020 and he walked away from home with only the clothes he was wearing.

But because of your generosity, Joseph had a first night backpack in his hands that very first night away from home. He was able to walk into his new foster

Because of you this child had a foster family and safe home ready to meet his needs when crisis struck.

“This has been an unbelievably difficult time for all parents, but through it all these foster families are still opening their homes, opening their hearts and taking in kids who need a home,” shares HumanKind Foster Care caseworker Molly. Because of you, lives are transformed, and families are restored.

home with a few belongings of his own – pajamas, a toothbrush and toothpaste, and even a blanket to keep him warm.

Transitioning into a new school to start the year after such trauma was extremely difficult. He struggled with aggression, tantrums, and several behavioral issues in the classroom. Having his foster mom in the same school provided additional support, but not enough to ease the memories. And then the coronavirus set in, and schools closed.

School resumed after a few weeks – but only virtually. Suddenly the emotional triggers associated with attending school for Joseph were gone. His behavior and frustration subsided. He learned that fourth grade wasn't so bad. His grades improved and his foster family saw the blessing found in distance learning.

His biological family has been working hard, through rehabilitation services, to get better and complete the requirements of the child protective services plan. After months of supervised visits and making plans, a safe reunification is on the horizon.



Joseph, now 10 years old, is nearing the end of fifth grade – and has remained a virtual student. Thanks to you, Joseph had a safe space to live and learn, while his family got the help they so desperately needed and the opportunity to grow and solve problems to create a healthier family.



Letter from the President

It is only through your generosity children are safe, families are restored and lives are changed.

Robert S. Dendy Jr., MPH
President and CEO

This past year, amid a global pandemic our lives have drastically changed. Through this time of adversity the turmoil I'm grateful for you and your faithful support of this mission.

It all starts with you. Your support makes it possible for those in need to find a place of refuge, safety, kindness and community

when they connect with our programs and services. You are the reason we are here to help them in their time of need.

In this issue's cover story, you'll hear Donna's testimony of how the Ways to Work program transformed her life and that of her entire family.

Her story is compelling because of you. You understand the challenges our neighbors in need like Donna face, and we're grateful you share the life-changing gifts of care and compassion.

In the heart of every story – I see you and the good you make possible.

Urgent + Ongoing Needs in Foster Care

Children are removed from their families every day because of abuse or neglect. Help ensure every child has a first night backpack when they come into care. You can donate items from the most needed list below.



ITEMS MOST NEEDED

All donated items must be new.

- Backpacks or duffle bags
- Clothes: we accept all sizes, male and female
- Pajamas
- Blanket
- Stuffed animals
- Coloring books and crayons
- Toothpaste and toothbrush
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Soap/body wash
- Deodorant
- Feminine products
- Baby items: diapers, wipes



DONATION MAIL-IN OR DROP-OFFS

HumanKind Main Campus | 150 Linden Avenue,
Lynchburg VA 24503

Open Monday – Friday | 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

To coordinate a group collection,
please contact Mitzi Dooley at: mdooley@humankind.org



THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Joy's supervisor proudly shares, "She is such a joy to work with and everyone loves her". Because of you, Joy found a career and a pathway to independence.

explained in different ways, how to keep a schedule and to communicate professionally with customers.

After working through the training and several delays due to the coronavirus, Joy was connected with an employer that gave her a chance to work a few shifts and demonstrate what she had learned. All the waiting and hard work had been worth it when Joy was offered a position.

With her hands-on experience working in a hospitality environment, Joy knew this is where she wanted to build her career. "She started in housekeeping and she moved up into a houseperson role and now has her own board with 10-12 rooms--and she finishes them all. When I gave her that responsibility she was elated!" shared Joy's supervisor Ms. Morrison.

Because of you Joy found the life-changing support she needed. She has found an art to her work in hospitality and takes pride in the details that go into a great guest experience. Now she can confidently spend her days finding delight in going the extra mile to bring joy to her guests.

Two years after first walking through our doors, she no longer has to rely on supplemental security income or live with her grandmother. Joy lives in her own apartment and now independently pays all of her bills. What a gift you have given Joy to experience life-changing moments at work and find so much satisfaction in a job well done. Ms. Morrison went on to share, "She doesn't know yet but I think I'm going to make her employee of the month. She has really blossomed!"

HumanKind is the operator for the Virginia Career Works - Central Region.

Carving a Path

YOUR GIFTS MADE SURE JOY HAD
A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD.

Joy knew she wanted to live independently and to support herself, but every direction she tried came to a dead end. She had hoped her artistic abilities would carry her into a career, but was struggling to find a pathway to do so. At just 19 years old, she had very little work experience and struggled in interviews. She applied for several jobs, but never gained employment.

But through your generosity, you made it possible for Joy to have access to resources that transformed her life. Because of you, the Virginia Career Works youth program and a coach were ready and willing to walk this journey with her.

Joy's coach led her through career exploration, resume building, interview preparation, and even search for a job that matched her skills. She was provided with soft-skills training where she learned how to communicate with employers and co-workers, how to ask for instructions to be

"She said this is the first job that she has held for such a long period of time, that she really feels a part of the family and this job is perfect for her." - Supervisor Ms. Morrison

Because of you, Joy had a place to turn for help to gain independence.

You can be a Lifeline

THIS FAMILY CAN'T MAKE IT ALONE,
BUT YOU CAN HELP.

The hardships are not over. The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic are still rippling through families. Every week there are new cries for help – and many of these people have never asked for additional assistance. They don't want to ask for help but they are hanging on as best they can. Right now they are just trying to keep their jobs and hold their family steady. Focused on survival.

Dolores has been committed to her substance abuse recovery and working to build a better life. But living just above the poverty line, she knows she can't do it alone. She's one of the people whose job was drastically impacted by coronavirus. When HumanKind talked with Dolores this month, we found out that she was in desperate need of a car repair and didn't have enough food or toiletries to get through the month. After months of suffering through reduced work hours, now she's worried she'll lose her job completely because her car is broken down.



Will you please make an urgent gift of \$25 to provide the emergency help she needs right now? Your gift today will provide a grocery gift card, a care package

of household toiletries, help with her car repair, or other emergency help so she can take care of her family. Your gift will even go beyond this to provide the emotional support that families need right now. And thanks to matching funds, your gift of \$25 will be doubled to provide \$50-worth of help!

And it's not just Dolores. The effects of the pandemic are hurting other families, parents and children. Many don't know where their next rent payment will come from, or how they will pay their insurance or car repairs, or how they will buy food or toiletries.

As we continue to anticipate the needs of families across our region, we know they are still in great distress. Your support is critical in meeting their needs. Parents like Dolores, cannot do this without you.

Please send in a gift today to help families like Dolores' keep working, feed their families, and weather this crisis.

Your gift of \$25 will be doubled to provide \$50-worth of help!

Yes, I'll help a family struggling from impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Here's my special gift to provide emergency help for food, supplies, bill payment assistance and support the good work of HumanKind.

- \$25, which doubles in impact to \$50
- \$50, which doubles in impact to \$100
- \$100, which doubles in impact to \$200
- \$ _____, which doubles in impact to help as many families as possible.

To give faster, please give online today: humankind.org/coronavirusrelief

Double your impact!