



## From Learning to Read to Reading to Learn A United Way Success Story in Education

United Way California Capital Region is helping kids read at grade level as early as possible so they will graduate high school. Research shows that proficiency in reading by the end of third grade enables students to shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Students who fail to reach this critical milestone falter in the later grades and often drop out before earning a high school diploma.

Through locally funded United Way programs and through our leadership on the local Campaign for Grade Level Reading, we are helping hundreds of kids learn how to read. As one of our nonprofit partners states, “it sounds simple as that, but it is within this simplicity that lives are changed every day.”

The Boys and Girls Club of El Dorado County Western Slope shared their experience with us and the successes they are seeing at their center.

The Club helps kids believe that they can and will be whatever they choose to be. Proving that all things are possible if you are willing to do more for those that need more and to instill in the kids to not let your situation define your tomorrow and to never ever give up on yourself.

At the Club, staff see daily the hopelessness of poverty and the hollowness that it brings into the eyes of the young people they work with. Providing tools to break the cycle is what they do for young people every day. These tools are in the form of a healthy snack, a helping hand with reading and a positive adult mentor.

Faith’s story below is just one example of transformation. The transformation illustrates the success associated with reading at grade level and ability to actively participate in the classroom.

Faith lives at home with her single father and five siblings. Faith’s mother has been incarcerated for the past two years on a drug charge and has never been part of her life. Now eight years-old, Faith has been attending the Club on and off for the past two years. It was just this past January that Faith started coming everyday and the results have been incredible. Her test scores improved dramatically over five months. She improved in every category and is now testing at grade level. This is a young lady who could not read very well at all before she started the program but is now at grade level. She used to be in trouble constantly, but that has also changed. She is a joy to be around and a true testament to what can be accomplished when you treat every kid like the only kid.

From executive director Sean McCartney with Boys & Girls Club

*The cycle of poverty and illiteracy is not broken by the parents or the grandparents; it is broken by the child. The child who determines that enough is enough. That drugs and incarceration are*



*no longer her reality. That unhealthy living conditions and an empty stomach does not have to be the way it has to be. United Way has stood hand in hand with us for many years and helped raise our young people up to a new reality and new purpose.*

For more than 90 years, United Way California Capital Region has brought people together as first responders on needs in the Sacramento region and changed the lives of hundreds of children, families and adults. Now United Way is mobilizing nonprofits, companies, schools, government and individuals across the region, state and country to make a collective impact in the areas of education, financial stability and health in Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties. To donate or volunteer, visit [www.yourlocalunitedway.org](http://www.yourlocalunitedway.org).