



Finding her calling, and a place to call home. A little love and mentorship can go a long way.

MAKING GREAT FRIENDS.

When Katona was a child her family moved a lot so she had a tough time making friends. By the time she was on her fourth or fifth new home, getting close to anyone had become a scary prospect.

As a teen, Katona moved with her family to a community with United Way supported programs that gave her a part-time job, homework help and the opportunity to go on summer canoe trips. These programs connected Katona to mentors who supported her, inspired her and pushed her to work hard in school. She began to get "amazing" grades and find stable social connections for the first time in her life.

Katona says she was able to laugh and cry through tough times with the support of her "agency mom," a mentor at one of the programs she attended. "You're welcome from the jump," she says. "You get shown love."

When the family moved again, Katona made the difficult decision to stay in the community that had become a real home to her. At 18, Katona is now a community engagement outreach worker, helping young people connect to the same kinds of programs and services that changed her life. Katona plans to use the leadership and time management skills she acquired from United Way supported programs when she attends college in the fall.

United Way mentors Katona has met have played a big role in her life through instilling stability, success and ambition.

My mentors gave me bits of themselves.



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