



"This is the story," says Stewart, "of how United Way saved my life."

## The Bridge Between Surviving and Thriving

Not long before his 50th birthday, Stewart was struck by unemployment, poor health, relocation and the death of his mother in rapid succession. He was in crisis. "I had to make the choice," he recalls. "Should I follow the urge to just walk away from everyone and everything?" Instead, he made a call that connected him with programs at a community agency, beginning his long journey to recovery.

Later, after another health crisis, Stewart had the opportunity to move into a subsidized apartment run by a United Way supported agency. The dozen people at his intake meeting quickly became Stewart's 'peeps.' "Once I was in my apartment," he says, "I took a breath and finally felt my road to recovery wasn't a dusty path, but a clear road to change."

A local community health program played a big role in that recovery and, in turn, Stewart became a facilitator for self-esteem, recovery and

anxiety seminars. "I experienced the amazing feelings you can only get from talking to people. The program's people-to-people approach took me the rest of the way, saving my life by showing me there was a reason to keep going." Now, Stewart works with TAMI (Talking About Mental Illness) in high schools and is a peer mentor. He's helping other people find the same path he did.

"Thanks to United Way's support," says Stewart, "these programs became the bridge between just surviving and thriving."

They not only changed my life, but the lives of the people I have tried to help."



**United Way**  
Halton & Hamilton

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