



After leaving an abusive relationship, Dawn wondered if she'd ever feel safe. But a family resource centre helped her rebuild—and now it's how she gives back.

## How one woman found safety, community and belonging

A place to feel safe—and to belong. After fleeing an abusive relationship, Dawn worried she might never be able to get the fresh start she so desperately needed. She felt overwhelmed, alone and hopeless and couldn't imagine a better future for herself. "I didn't think my life was going to improve," she says.

After moving to a new community in Winnipeg's north end, Dawn connected with the Andrews Street Family Centre, a family resource centre supported by United Way donors like you. There, she found what she was seeking: safety, belonging and love. "I made connections with good people," says Dawn. "When I discovered that I was worth something, a whole new world of possibilities opened up."

The centre—a hub of activity and a vital community resource for local residents—made Dawn and her family feel welcome. She and her grandchildren shared community meals, including soup and bannock lunches, with others at the centre. Soon, Dawn was inspired to

give back, and used her skills to connect members of her local community with work opportunities at the centre. Today, Dawn works as a preschool teacher there and helps children, many of whom share her Indigenous heritage, get a good start in life. It's a safe and happy place where kids, families and local residents can access all the vital, wraparound supports they need to thrive, including nutritious meals, and Indigenous language and cultural learning. "We help plant the seeds of success," says Dawn. "I want kids to develop a love of learning so they'll do better when they get to kindergarten—and to develop skills that will help them throughout their lives." Dawn's sense of hopelessness is long gone. She's full of ambition and plans for a future she once believed was impossible. The help she received at the centre—and the role she's learned she can play in the lives of others—has given her a sense of worth and belonging. "When we help each other out, we can make a big difference. That's the definition of community."



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