



Heart of Florida United Way and Police Athletic League - Improving Children's Lives

Despite his best intentions, Brandon* could not seem to stay out of trouble. It's not an easy thing for to do for many teens, especially those who come from troubled homes and lack positive role models.

That's why staff from the Central Florida Police Athletic League (PAL) took special interest in the young boy. Over the years, this United Way supported agency has fostered the development of thousands of local youngsters, ages 5 to 18, through education and recreation programs that foster self-esteem and respect for others and the community. With guidance and a little special attention, the boy's behavior and outlook soon began to improve. Not only was he calmer and more approachable, he learned about good sportsmanship when playing team sports with others.

PAL staff knew they could not change Brandon's home environment, but they worked with him to show how he could manage his emotions and make positive choices when faced with difficult circumstances. Thanks to positive interaction with police officers who play an integral role in coaching sports and other PAL activities, he also gained new respect for law enforcement.

Brandon's transformation is another PAL success story – one that shows how improving one child's life can have a positive affect on everyone around him, as well as the entire community for years to come.

* To protect the client's identity, a different name has been used.

By supporting Heart of Florida United Way, you help fund nearly 100 local agencies such as the Police Athletic League, whose programs are making a critical difference in people's lives. You also become part of United Way's work to prevent critical problems by focusing on four key areas: Building Safe Communities; Improving Financial Stability; Developing Healthy Children and Families; and Alleviating Hunger and Homelessness.