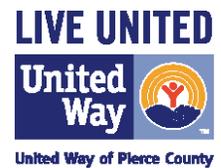


CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



PRAIRIE RIDGE

Prairie Ridge is an area that seemed to have fallen through the cracks. Residents describe that their struggle may have stemmed from the fact that they are a divided district: there are no businesses, churches, or community centers in their area, and the students are served by three separate school districts. Drugs and violence were heavily prevalent as well. They didn't feel as if they were important to the rest of the community, and it became a self-perpetuating mindset that moved them towards a cycle of poverty.

United Way of Pierce County's Community Conversation for their area changed everything. It gave people that wanted to help make a change a place to connect, get involved, and help move their previous efforts to the next level of action. And even better, the Conversation got more of the community, that hadn't been previously interested, involved in these changes as well.

After discovering what was needed the most in their area, United Way set the residents up with programs targeted toward meeting those needs. Low-cost preschool was brought to the area, and it was set up to be payable on a sliding scale so that all children would be able to attend. After-school programs were introduced so that kids get off the streets and have activities to be involved in. The community members began to feel more empowered, a sense of ownership over their neighborhood, and a voice to direct themselves toward a better future.

By focusing on working together to help young children and their families, we can remove the barriers preventing them from breaking the cycle of poverty.

Providing the basic needs and support that helps people get on their feet and move toward stability.

Why It Matters

144,000 people visit food banks each month. Nearly **half** of those are working families

It is estimated that **2 in 5 homeless** in Pierce County are children.

33 percent of callers to South Sound 2-1-1 lived in homes with children under the age five.

Food, shelter and utility assistance, basic needs, are the top resources needed by callers to South Sound 2-1-1.