Impact In Action: ReadNYC®

Sharlene moved to New York with her six-year-old daughter Tatiana in search of opportunity. As a single mom, she faced many challenges. Wanting to do what was right for her daughter, Sharlene searched for a place they could find comfort and support. She found that place at P.S. 179—one of United Way of New York City’s ReadNYC schools.

Sharlene was concerned when Tatiana didn’t want to go to school. She was shy, quiet, and lacked the educational foundation for kindergarten. But when Sharlene found ReadNYC, her worries melted away.
“The ReadNYC team welcomed me and my child with open arms,” Sharlene said. “They weren’t just teachers and educators, but extended family.”

Starting school not reading on grade-level, Tatiana was quickly enrolled in ReadNYC’s Expanded Day program and Once Upon a Summer—that helped build her confidence, independence, and empowered her with the information she needed to grow her education. Once reluctant to go to school, Tatiana now reads aloud in class and isn’t afraid to answer questions. More importantly, she has raised her reading level to above grade-level.

“Tatiana is really happy,” says Sharlene. “As a mom, it encourages me to do more. I’m driven to help her progress.”

As Sharlene empowered her daughter, UWNYC helped empower Sharlene. ReadNYC helped her with her own education by connecting her to adult education classes and working with her to understand her finances through financial coaching and budget trainings. And when we found out that Tatiana and Sharlene were residing in a homeless shelter, we connected her with all the necessary supports to provide her family with permanent housing.

“Thanks to ReadNYC, I’m more focused. I know what direction to go and where to get help if I need it,” says Sharlene. “I’m a better parent for Tatiana and I am proof that ReadNYC and United Way are helping families progress.”

Moving low-income New Yorkers from barely surviving to thriving.

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