

EDUCATION:

A United Way Success Story

LIVE UNITED™

United Way
Metro Chicago



DURING THE OFTEN UN-SUPERVISED HOURS BETWEEN 3 AND 7 P.M., YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO COMMIT CRIMES, BECOME VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE, EXPERIMENT WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUGS AND ENGAGE IN OTHER RISKY BEHAVIORS. YET YOUTH WHO ATTEND STRUCTURED, HIGH-QUALITY AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO BEAT THOSE ODDS—GETTING BETTER GRADES, MAKING BETTER CHOICES AND ENGAGING IN MORE POSITIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Meet Debra.

Debra and her friends Anne and Alma grew up on Chicago's North Side in a neighborhood where a staggering number of youth drop out of school, join gangs and fail to achieve their fullest potentials. As Debra said, "We couldn't really go outside, because where I grew up it wasn't that nice."

By all accounts, Debra was the definition of "at-risk" youth, surrounded by negative influences and ample opportunity to get off track.

But with the help of United Way, she beat the odds. Throughout elementary school, she and her friends attended a United Way funded after-school program where they played basketball, received tutoring, went on field trips, discussed future careers and learned about all the positive options they had in life. Incredibly, after several years in the program together, they all graduated from their respective junior high schools as valedictorians of their graduating classes.

Today, Anna and Debra attend Lane Tech High School, and Alma attends Northside College Prep, one of the premier Chicago Magnet high schools. Each has big plans not just for high school, but for college and beyond.