

UNITED WAY OF HERNANDO'S EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE SUCCESS STORY

RESTORING STABILITY AFTER THE STORM



When Hurricane Helene swept through Hernando County, it left more than debris in its wake – it left vulnerable residents facing impossible choices. Among them was an 89-year-old woman whose home sustained significant storm damage, making it unsafe to live in.

With limited income and no immediate housing alternatives, she remained on her property – sleeping in the front seat of her car. At nearly ninety years old, she was facing homelessness for the first time in her life.

The situation became even more devastating when her grandson, who had been helping clear storm debris from the property, was seriously injured during the cleanup process. What began as a natural disaster quickly escalated into a compounded family crisis – physical injury, housing instability, and financial strain.



Through Hernando County's Long-Term Recovery efforts, chaired by United Way of Hernando County, her case was identified and elevated for urgent intervention. Disaster case managers worked quickly to assess her needs, verify documentation, and determine a safe, immediate solution.

Within days, a travel trailer was secured and delivered directly to her property. United Way stepped in to remove every barrier that could delay placement – covering the cost of towing, coordinating utility hookups for electricity and plumbing, and ensuring legal title transfer so the trailer would belong to her.

That same evening, instead of returning to her car, she walked into a safe, climate-controlled space with a bed, running water, and electricity. For the first time since the storm, she had stability.

The trailer now serves as temporary housing while long-term repairs and recovery planning continue. Just as important, she was connected to ongoing case management support to help navigate additional recovery resources.

This story reflects more than emergency assistance. It demonstrates how coordinated disaster response, donor funding, and community partnerships can restore dignity quickly – especially for seniors who may not have the capacity to navigate complex systems on their own.

Because of United Way supporters, an elderly neighbor who faced homelessness after disaster now has safety, security, and hope as she rebuilds.



UNITED WAY OF HERNANDO'S PARTNER AGENCY SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

YOU THRIVE

After the devastating loss of her mother, a young client was left grieving and in shock. Her sister quickly reached out to the Children's Advocacy Center for support. Our team provided immediate crisis intervention, advocacy, and trauma-informed counseling, ensuring the child felt safe and heard during an incredibly painful time. The CAC became a steady, calming presence for the family. When the child asked for her advocate and therapist to attend her mother's funeral, they honored that request—standing beside her in one of life's hardest moments.



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

NAMI



For years, Emily carried the quiet weight of anxiety and depression, often feeling isolated. While exploring resources, she came across National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). For the first time, she felt understood and supported. She began volunteering, giving back through programs and outreach, and found not only healing but purpose. When an opportunity to join the team became available, she applied. Nearly five years later, she continues her work with NAMI, helping others navigate their own mental health journeys – living proof that access to support can lead not only to recovery, but to renewed direction and lasting impact.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

YMCA

For the past six months, Nolan Bair has been actively participating in water safety and swim lessons, building both skill and confidence in the water. As one of three energetic brothers, access to this program has meant that all three boys have been able to learn essential water safety skills together – an opportunity their family may not have otherwise had. Since starting lessons, Nolan has become increasingly comfortable in the water and continues to make strong progress. Because of his growth, he will advance into our FLOAT lessons next year – an exciting milestone that reflects both improved swim ability and increased confidence in the pool.



SAFETY AROUND WATER

DEAF & HARD OF HEARING



After a workplace injury left a client without income, his workers' compensation claim was initially denied, putting his wife and three children at risk of eviction. DHH helped secure legal support, organized extensive documentation, and guided the family through mediation while advocating with their landlord for additional time. The client ultimately received a fair settlement, allowing the family to remain housed and move forward with stability.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS ASSISTANCE (CAA)



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ME

