



The Power of Community: Gary's Journey of Healing at a United Way Community Hub

After losing his wife of more than 60 years, Gary found himself alone for the first time in decades. A lifelong social worker and community leader, he was used to offering support—not needing it.

“I knew I needed help. But not just help—I needed connection,” he shared.

That connection came through Lehigh Valley Active Life in Allentown, one of five [United Way Community Hubs](#) across the region. Gary first came for a grief support group. What he found was a welcoming place where he could heal, reconnect and rediscover all he still had to offer.

“Here, older adults aren’t just participants,” said Rick Dougherty, Executive Director at Lehigh Valley Active Life. “They’re leaders, teachers and community builders.”

United Way Community Hubs are trusted, accessible spaces designed for older adults to stay active, independent and engaged. By connecting to healthy food, healthcare and social support, participants can delay the onset of chronic illness and improve their physical, emotional and financial well-being. Last year, more than 6,700 older adults received services like meals and housing support through United Way Community Hubs.

Today, Gary teaches wellness classes in the very place he found community. He’s drawing again, slow dancing and embracing a life filled with purpose.

When older adults like Gary are supported emotionally, socially and spiritually, they don’t just survive, they grow. Because when we’re **UNITED, we thrive.** [Give today.](#)

