



PA 211: Mary's Story

Like many people who come through New Bethany Ministries' doors, Mary didn't expect to end up homeless. The single mother had been working full time before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I lost my job. I didn't have child care and I didn't have any income. I just wanted a place for my daughter," she said, wiping away tears.

All across our region, families like Mary's are working hard, but still struggling to survive. Before the pandemic, reports showed that 40 percent of Pennsylvania households were living paycheck to paycheck with no savings for a rainy day, leaving them one illness, emergency or job loss away from financial crisis.

"The first thing I did was call 211 for help," she explained.

Through PA 211, the health and human services helpline powered by United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, Mary connected to New Bethany Ministries, a Bethlehem provider that offers food, housing and other emergency services to anyone in need.

The team at New Bethany Ministries supported Mary and her daughter with emergency shelter and helped them find and furnish a new apartment.

"They helped me get back on my feet. My daughter has her own room now and her own toys. I cook every day. I missed that a lot," she added. "It feels amazing to know there are people out here in our own community that help."

Because of you, United Way is there for families in times of crisis. Today, even more families are facing financial insecurity and the demand for emergency services is on the rise. PA 211 served 14,500 callers this year and requests more than doubled during the pandemic. This is a vital service in our community and it can only continue with your support. Give today to the Fund for Community Impact to help your neighbors when they need you most.

