

United Way Achievers For Life

United Way provides leadership, resources and focus to change lives in our community by creating sustainable improvements in education, income and health. United Way of Northeast Florida is a leader in ensuring:

- *Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed and students stay in school through graduation*
- *Individuals and families have the opportunity to achieve financial stability*
- *People have the opportunity to lead healthy and engaged lives*

In addition, United Way ensures that families in need have accurate, helpful information about social services through United Way 2-1-1.

WHAT: United Way's Achievers for Life (AFL) is a dropout prevention initiative focused on 6th grade students who are at-risk for academic failure. Dropping out is a gradual process with signs appearing as early as middle school. Components include one-on-one weekly mentoring and counseling for students, family support services, as well as parent training to help principals increase families' engagement at school. AFL addresses the challenges associated with keeping students on track for high school graduation.

WHY: Nearly one of every three students fails to graduate on time. The cost of dropping out of high school is high not only for the student, but for their families and the community. Dropping out of high school impacts the local economy and safety of neighborhoods. High school dropouts earn approximately \$9,634 less per year than high school graduates and are ill-equipped to enter today's competitive workforce. On average, households headed by a high school graduate accrue **ten times** more wealth and have better odds of weathering an unexpected financial crisis than those headed by a high school dropout.

RESULTS: Since implementing Achievers For Life in 2007, 2,860 students and their families have participated in Achievers For Life. Since the beginning, we have measured the results of AFL students. Results to date for Achievers For Life are:

- School absences decreased by 13% between fifth and sixth grade.
- AFL student GPAs improved 12% between fifth and sixth grade.
- The average promotion rate for all AFL students is 96%.

SUCCESS STORY: Linda struggled to keep her grades up, only earning a 1.4 grade point average in the first semester of school. Through United Way's Achievers For Life initiative, a dropout prevention strategy, she was matched with a mentor, who met with her faithfully. During their meetings, Linda completed unfinished homework and improved her study skills. By the end of the school year, Linda's GPA had increased to a 2.35 and her confidence in her schoolwork had grown. United Way is focused on helping students achieve and stay on track for high school graduation.