

Destination: Graduation

When you first meet Clyde, you can instantly detect the confidence and motivation that drive this young man. With the help of United Way, this Dallas teenager is taking the steps necessary for success and setting an example for all of his friends and classmates. Like United Ways across the country, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas is increasing graduation rates and helping youth secure bright futures.

Dropping out of high school significantly limits the possibility for success. High school dropouts make up nearly half the heads of households on welfare and are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested in their lifetime. **High school dropout rates are a major concern in Dallas, where 43% of students dropout prior to graduating.**



“ United Way’s Destination: Graduation helped Clyde raise his PSAT score by 300 points.” “

Through an initiative called *Destination: Graduation*, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas partners with the Dallas Independent School District, Dallas County Community Colleges and other community partners to reduce the number of high school dropouts. This collaboration increases the high school graduation rate through engaging parental involvement, enrolling high school students in college prep courses and matching students with supportive mentors.

Studies show youth who have mentoring relationships demonstrate academic improvements and are less likely to engage in gang activity, violence, drugs or alcohol. United Way of Metropolitan Dallas’ *Destination: Graduation* also engages parents with programs teaching them how to support their child’s education. Because 58% of the students not graduating are Hispanic, *Destination: Graduation* works with United Way community partner, Dallas Concilio, an agency serving the Hispanic community. This partnership allows United Way to cross cultural and language barriers, making a deeper impact on the community. United Way unites the resources and talents of the community to improve educational and life opportunities for Dallas youth.

Thanks to United Way, Clyde is not only on track to graduate, but is also taking the steps necessary to gain college admission. **United Way’s Destination: Graduation helped Clyde raise his PSAT score by 300 points**, increasing his confidence and ability to get into college. Clyde is well on his way to a successful future. Through similar programs throughout the nation, United Way inspires and equips youth to take the same path towards success.

“*[Destination: Graduation]* boosted my confidence and I know I can do the work. I’ll say ‘I can do it’ and try to learn it. It’s nice knowing that now,” said Clyde. Clyde is a great example of how United Way programs are changing people’s lives right where you live.

- High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested.
- 75% of America’s state prison inmates are high school dropouts.
- Studies suggest a 1% increase in high school graduation rates would save approximately \$1.4 billion in incarceration costs.
- In 2002, the unemployment rate for recent high school graduates was 13% lower than for recent high school dropouts.