



United Way
of Lancaster County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'THANK YOU FOR GIVING MY SON A VOICE' Teacher Thanks Community by Volunteering as Loaned Representative

Lancaster, PA (November 5, 2008) – When Amy Koring agreed to share her family's United Way story with her co-workers several years ago, she couldn't have imagined it would lead to this.

Koring, a seventh grade Family and Consumer Sciences teacher on sabbatical from her position at Manheim Central Middle School, has joined United Way as a full-time volunteer this fall. With the blessing of her district and local teachers' association, she is the first Lancaster County teacher to serve as a United Way Loaned Representative. Loaned Representatives are employees shared or sponsored by local organizations, or community volunteers who serve United Way as temporary staff members, assisting with its massive, county-wide fundraising effort. The Loaned Representative program allows United Way to keep its administrative costs at a minimum and invest more resources in the community, while program participants develop skills in leadership, management, sales, customer service, public speaking and problem solving that are beneficial to them and their organization.

Koring, a twelve-year teaching veteran, scheduled the 18 graduate credits she's taking during her year-long sabbatical during the summer, winter and spring so that she'd be able to participate in the campaign this fall and share her family's story with Lancaster County. "I'm not getting paid by my district; I'm not getting paid by United Way," says Koring, "But this is my way, and my family's way, of saying thank you, thank you for giving my son a voice."

Teacher Thanks Community

Literally. Amy and her husband became alarmed when their son, Aric, began “losing language” around his second birthday. A colleague suggested testing through the county’s Early Intervention services, and a few months later Aric was diagnosed with autism. The Korings were devastated.

“We didn’t have a lot of extra income. We didn’t know where we were going to get all the services Aric would need and how we were going to pay for them,” Koring explained.

At the recommendation of a friend, the Korings discovered Schreiber Pediatric Rehab Center, which, as one of United Way’s partner agencies, provides services for children with disabilities and developmental delays. At Schreiber, Aric received speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, says Koring. “And we were charged what we could afford.”

While Koring says her family will always face certain challenges in living with autism, Aric, now 9, can speak, will write, and is able to communicate with his family and teachers in a way they can understand.

Amy first decided to share this story with her fellow teachers at an employee meeting four years ago, at the gentle prodding of her campaign coordinator and friend, Mike Ronan. She hasn’t looked back, serving as a campaign coordinator, speaker, and now, Loaned Representative.

“Amy represents the Live United spirit,” says Susan Eckert, United Way president. “She has given to our community through United Way, she has advocated for her son and other children with autism, and, now, she has taken on one of our organization’s most significant volunteer responsibilities. She is creating change in Lancaster County.”

As far as Koring is concerned, it might just be part of a bigger plan. “I didn’t ask for a child with autism, but I’m a better person because of it. If this is a way for me to make a difference, maybe that’s why I was given Aric.”

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