

# A veteran came home to fight an even greater enemy - addiction.

Richard proudly served our country in the Army in the 1970s and 1980s. Unexpectedly, while he was in the service some fellow soldiers introduced him to all kinds of illegal drug use as a way of coping with the stress of combat. Using these gateway drugs as part of his life after military service led to the use of crack cocaine, which consumed Richard's life with a deadly addiction.

Once crack cocaine entered Richard's life, it completely took over his world. Soon thereafter, his wife joined him in his addiction and all of their money and resources were used to satisfy their need for more crack cocaine.

Richard and his wife uprooted their children and moved from place to place, trying to stay ahead of landlords seeking the monthly rent. Each new place to live seemed more dangerous than the last. Eventually, the family found itself living in a shed behind a friend's house with no running water or utilities.

When they were eventually told to leave the shed, Richard's wife took the children and ran away from him. She later left the children at a friend's house and never returned.

With no income, no place to live and no family in his life, Richard realized he had no choice but to seek help. "I knew I had reached the end of my rope, and I checked myself in to a United Way funded agency to get cleaned up," he says. "All five of my children were wards of the state. My wife had left me and I had nowhere left to go. I knew if things did not change, I was going to die on the streets."

With the help of the United Way partner agency's rehabilitation program, Richard overcame his drug addiction and got back on his feet. He learned how to function in a work environment by becoming an employee for the same agency that helped him recover, where he continues to be involved in the work that helps people overcome drug addictions and become responsible, productive citizens again.

Your support of United Way helped Richard with his substance abuse issues. Richard's story is just one example of the changes that can take place in someone's life when a nonprofit program can help them in their time of need. Thanks to your gifts to United Way, Richard rebuilt his broken life and makes a positive difference in our Mid-South community every day.

The events, names and photos are changed to protect confidentiality.



Join with United Way's General Campaign Chairman **Kathy Buckman Gibson** and thousands of Mid-South volunteers who are improving our community through support of United Way's fundraising campaign.

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United Way of the Mid-South serves Crittenden, DeSoto, Fayette, Lauderdale, Shelby, Tate, Tipton & Tunica counties. This announcement made possible through the generosity of The Commercial Appeal.