



United Way of Greater Houston

FOR GOOD JOBS

DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT



Mark's Story

Mark felt stuck.

He didn't have a skill or education and he was tired of living paycheck-to-paycheck. He wanted to build a better future for his two daughters and he knew that doing so would require him to do something different.

"You have to be willing to change and be willing to sacrifice," Mark says. And he was.

Mark signed up for GED classes and a United Way THRIVE job-training program. He started with a concrete technician certification class and continued his education and training, taking job-readiness courses, then enrolling in a core construction program and eventually earning his welding certification—and his GED.

"You start the welding class at 8:00 a.m. and you're at welding class until 1:00 p.m.," Mark recalls. "You take a lunch and then you are back at it on campus from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. and then from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., I'm doing GED – every day, week after week. But that's what I wanted. I knew this was what it was going to take to get where I wanted to go."

With the training he got and the certifications he earned, Mark was able to start a career as a welder earning more than double what he used to. And he didn't stop there.

Mark stayed involved with United Way THRIVE. He worked with his THRIVE coach to refine his goals, manage his money, budget, and save. He continued to take advantage of training opportunities, earning additional certifications, and moving up in his career.

Now, Mark earns more than enough to support his family and to think about things like saving for the future. His next goals are to go back to school to earn a degree in business management and to buy a home of his own.

"One of my main goals right now is to find a home," Mark says. "And I am confident that I can reach my goals because I am still under the wing of United Way THRIVE. I believe that I am a living testimony that you can have nothing and still make something of yourself."