



Easing the Loss

Most people in their sixties hope to enjoy retirement. Sadly, during that stage of life tragedy recently struck twice for Jerry and his wife Marlene. Their 40- year- old daughter died in May, then the following April, they suffered a fire that completely destroyed the home that they owned. They were now facing troubles with housing, meeting monthly expenses, the loss of their home, no insurance on the home or the contents, and the loss of four cats that died in the fire.

Fortunately, United Way funded services helped ease their loss.

The Disaster Action Team of the Dayton Chapter of the American Red Cross was there to respond to their emergency needs. These trained volunteers respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to assist disaster victims by providing motel lodging, meals, clothing, and other emergency services.

The day after the fire Jerry came to the Red Cross seeking assistance with finding affordable housing and replacing Marlene's medical equipment and prescriptions. The Red Cross provided the couple with food, clothing, medical assistance and motel lodging. The agency also provided mental health intervention through their Disaster Mental Health worker who contacted the family and provided crises intervention, referrals and a listening ear.

Knowing that they couldn't provide everything the Redford's needed to ensure their recovery, the Red Cross worked with the local network of services to meet their needs. Jerry was referred to Community Action Partnership (another United Way Agency) for utility assistance, to Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority for senior citizen housing, and to the Access Center for his wife's medical equipment.

Once the couple secured housing, the Red Cross provided the security deposit and the first month's rent. They were also given a complete bed including headboard, frame, mattress, box spring, and linens.

Jerry and Marlene's recovery in the face of the terrible tragedies they've faced is truly inspiring. With the help of the United Way network of services and other community partners, they have been able to get their lives back on track and begin enjoying retirement again.