



Mandy and Joseph Lomen both had difficult childhoods. Mandy Lomen found her self homeless by the time she was 16, and Joe was living in the Salvation Army by age 18. Together they both got on their feet beginning their new lives together: marriage and transitional housing by Coulee Cap were huge accomplishments for these newlyweds. Determined not to continue the path they had started on, they began a family with the birth of Kiana and a year later D'Artagnan. Unfortunately, D'Arrtagnan was born with a hole in his heart. Being familiar with the family's difficult circumstances, their doctor referred them to the services of Family and Children's Center. There, the Healthy Families program taught them skills in child development, health and financial education. They were also taught how to access many community resources.

When asked, what the best part of having Family and Children's Center as a part of their lives was, they replied, "Having the guidance and support from the staff. With no family around to guide them, it was comforting to have a helping hand there when they needed it. Staff from the Family and Children's Center came to the Lomen's home and helped Mandy learn parenting skills and gave her someone to talk to while Joe was at work. Mandy and Joe were also given the opportunity to socialize with other parents in the program.

The Lomen's also learned how to set goals and plan for the future of the family. In the beginning of their journey they set goals to get a telephone and a car. When those goals were accomplished they decided to get out of the county housing program and move in to their own apartment. Now, seven years later the Lomen family will buy their first home. They credit Family and Children's Center for helping them to accomplish dreams they never thought possible.

Today, with their third child, Zennilynn, entering school in the fall, the Lomen's have graduated from the Family and Children's Center, Healthy Families program.

Family and Children's Center Healthy Families program has helped families all over our community. This United Way funded program is imperative to providing not only crisis intervention but also preventative measures.

Thank you to all the United Way donors to chose to invest in Great Rivers United Way. Because of your donations The Lomen family now thriving. From homeless to home owners let's give this family a round of applause.