

Connecting With Dionne Pace

It's not often that Child Care Solutions' staff members receive Christmas cards from the clients we serve, so when Mary Lanno, Parent Services Director opened one from Dionne Pace, we took notice. "Ms. Lanno, I never forgot how you took the time to offer me a 2nd look at the United Way Scholarship. Thank you so much!" she wrote. What is a routine part of Mary's job made all of the difference in the world to Dionne.

Like so many families in Central New York, Dionne was struggling with the high cost of child care. She had previously relied on a "patchwork system" of family members and friends to care for her son and daughter. Aging grandparents and situations that "just didn't work out" left her in a predicament that is not atypical. "I earn too much but not enough," she told us. A Child Care Aware of America report on Parents and the High Cost of Child Care ranked New York the least affordable state in the nation for child care. In Onondaga County, the average cost of care for an infant and a four-year-old is \$23,000 annually. If you are a parent earning the median income of \$52,792, you will spend 45% of your income on child care. The thought of affording high-quality child care is overwhelming at best and unattainable at worst. How do parents like Dionne manage? To paraphrase the Beatles "They get by with a little help from their friends."

"I was panicked!" she said. Dionne had just passed up a spot in Crouse Hospital's nursing program to work full time for a national insurance company to support her family. "I felt like I was drowning trying to figure out how to pay for everything and felt like giving up." Then she called Child Care Solutions. She reached Mary, who told her about the United Way scholarship program that Child Care Solutions administers. Right before Christmas, Mary called Dionne and told her that she qualified and part of her child care cost was covered. Overjoyed, lifesaver, birthday present are all words she used to describe that phone call. That money is the difference between buying groceries, making a car payment or paying utilities. "People should know that they are not helping just me they are helping a family."

Dionne provides an example of the kind of person the scholarship program is intended for. She is a hard working mom doing the right things for her children. She just needed some short term help to aid her through a tough time. With the help of our parent services team, the United Way of Central New York, and all of the generous community members who support Child Care Solutions, she maintains a full-time job and has peace of mind knowing that her children are safe and well cared for. As Dionne told us, "Where there is a will, there is a way." We are glad that we could help her connect with the financial resources she needed to help put all of her pieces together.

About Community Child Care Scholarships
Parents must work 30 hours per week and have incomes within these ranges to qualify. Scholarships are funded by the United Way of CNY and the City of Auburn.

Family Size	2	3	4
Onondaga County Gross Annual Income Ranges	\$31,861-\$39,825	\$40,181-\$50,225	\$48,501-\$60,625
City of Auburn Annual Income Ranges	\$31,861-\$39,825	\$40,181-\$45,750	\$48,501-\$50,800

Donate
To Child Care
Solutions

