

United
Way



Elle Hale discovered United Way of York County two years ago while working at Glatfelter Memorial Library in Spring Grove. Last year, she joined the Emerging Leaders Society looking to help build a stronger community through volunteerism, education and networking.

York County woman finds ways to repay kindness

by OUR YORK MEDIA

Elle Hale remembers feeling ashamed when her family used multi-colored food stamps to pick up groceries from the store.

“People knew you were on welfare when you pulled out those food stamps,” Elle says. “Taking that to buy food was more embarrassing than having an EBT card.”

As dark as those days could be, Elle remembers the bright spots, too. During the holidays, her family walked the few blocks to St. Elizabeth’s Church in Philadelphia to receive Christmas gifts from the church’s annual toy drive.

“I just remember how much it meant to have that gift from someone who didn’t even know me,” she says.

Elle left Philadelphia in the late 1990s. She attended Morgan State University in Baltimore before moving to York County in 2002.

All the while, she looked for ways to repay the kindness extended to her family.

“I can look back onto my childhood and say, ‘If I ran into a kid like that, what would I be able to do to help them out?’” Elle says. “Because of my childhood, I’m a more generous person. We can’t take our money with us, so why not do something good with it?”

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Last year, she joined the Emerging Leaders Society looking to help build a stronger community through volunteerism, education and networking.

Her favorite experience is the group’s annual toy drive – the same event she remembers so fondly from her childhood, only from the other side.

“Seeing parents whose faces light up because their children are getting at least one gift this year is the most rewarding experience,” Elle says. “It’s awesome knowing that we can make a difference in other people’s lives.”