



United Way of York County

Glatfelter employee's past is his push to help others

by OUR YORK MEDIA

Stephen Mercado knows what it's like to have nothing. At 23, the young man struggled to support his infant son and girlfriend and believed an education could change the course of his life.

But the choice to go to college came with sacrifices. He sent his son and girlfriend to live with her parents while he put all he had into studying Computer Science at Millersville University.

For the next month, Stephen was homeless.

He often left class unsure where he'd eat next or where he'd sleep.

"It was one of the toughest times of my life," Stephen says, "and I only got through it because people were there for me."

Even when someone didn't have an extra bed or couch for him, they offered up their shower or kitchen so he could bathe and have a meal.

Today, Stephen's firm handshake and pressed suit give little indication of his life's journey. But it's thanks to the compassion of a community that he now pays it forward so others can find hope in their future.

Sharing his story

It's easy for Stephen to lend a hand thanks to the company culture at Glatfelter Insurance Group. It's where he's spent the past 18 years, most recently as a business analyst.

"Art Glatfelter really believed in making it possible for each person here to make positive contributions," Stephen says.

When he was approached about giving to the company's United Way of York County campaign, it seemed like a perfect fit.

"I love what the United Way does for people through their literacy programs," Stephen says. "In college, I discovered I had dyslexia and realized why learning had always been hard for me. I know that it's not just whether someone likes to read. There can be some very serious challenges that have made it difficult for someone to learn how to read."

Stephen's commitment to the United Way of York County went beyond his regular payroll deductions.

Several years ago, he participated in the United Way's Loaned Executive Program, which allowed him to see what United Way does behind the scenes. Loaned Executives assist the United Way staff with conducting employee campaigns and communicating the benefits of a contribution to the community.

"It's a great opportunity for me to share my story with people and let them know that what they give makes a real difference," he says.



Stephen Mercado and Peg Amspacher review United Way materials as they discuss Glatfelter Insurance Group's campaign.



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A resident from the Margaret E. Moul Home enjoys watching employees from Glatfelter Insurance Group while they complete landscaping work as part of their 2017 Day of Action volunteer project.

A company culture of giving back

Each dollar donated and each minute of volunteer work is a small step in a company culture that has made Glatfelter Insurance Group the second largest employee campaign for the United Way of York County.

“The support we receive from Glatfelter has always been tremendous,” says Robert Woods, United Way of York County Executive Director. “They really are making a difference.”

Peg Amspacher, program manager for Glatfelter Insurance Group, knows every contribution has a ripple effect in York County. It’s why she’s one of many people at the company who donates to the United Way and participates in other volunteer opportunities.



Glatfelter Insurance Group is one of the largest campaign supporters of the United Way of York County. It’s part of a culture of caring that was started by Art Glatfelter and is carried through by Tony Campisi and his leadership team.



“Individually, we can’t help everyone, but we can all help someone. The act of giving touches lives; it really does. It all makes a difference to someone.”

She regularly donates homemade jams and jellies to the company silent auction or brings items to the office food drive. All the money raised or food collected is then donated to a chosen United Way of York County partner agency.

“Individually, we can’t help everyone, but we can all help someone,” Peg says. “The act of giving touches lives; it really does. It all makes a difference to someone.”

And whether they know it or not, that someone may be like Stephen.

“Paying it forward is a personal mission for me,” he says. “I’m honored to be in a place where I can do that for someone else.”