



Meet Ethan



He received life-changing surgery and support from United Way programs.

When five-year-old Ethan from Harrisburg was missing developmental milestones in his speech progression, his mother turned to **Contact to Care**, United Way of the Capital Region's community initiative to increase access to health care.

A community health worker secured an appointment with a pediatrician at Hamilton Health Center, who then referred him to a specialist at Penn State Children's Hospital where he was diagnosed with ankyloglossia, more commonly known as tongue-tied. A surgical procedure would correct Ethan's problem and enable him to attend speech therapy so he could get back on track academically.

A community health worker with **Contact to Care** worked with

Madelyn, Ethan's mother, to help ensure the barriers of language, transportation and understanding complex financial forms did not derail Ethan's surgery.

Last fall, Ethan's surgery was completed at Penn State Children's Hospital enabling him to speak clearly. He then began speech therapy through United Way's school readiness initiative.

"He felt stronger and more confident after his surgery," Madelyn says. "Finally, people could understand him."

Several months after his surgery, Ethan needed glasses. Through Vision Resources, a partner with the **Contact to Care** initiative, Ethan received a pair of bright red glasses – his favorite color – which he wears proudly.

When we met Ethan last fall, he was not on the same level playing field as other children. With the help of our **Contact to Care** initiative, Ethan is developmentally ready to succeed in kindergarten this year.

For Madelyn, saying thank you to United Way and our partners is not enough. She strives to pay the kindness forward by volunteering at a local food pantry weekly.

"When you help one person, that person can then help another," Madelyn says. "This is how we change the world."

Contact to Care is made possible by contributions to United Way. Thank you, donors, for helping to change Ethan's life.

For more information, contact United Way of the Capital Region at 717.732.0700 or visit uwcr.org.

