



## MIKAELA AND ABIGAIL SETTING UP YOUNG STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

“As a family, I want us to grow together, to learn together and succeed together,” says Marbella. A mother of twin 8-year-old girls, Mikaela and Abigail, Marbella and her husband want to provide the best opportunities for their daughters. That’s why they explore out of-school-time programs to enhance their daughter’s learning, during summers and after-hours during the school year.

“We know that there is summer learning loss,” Marbella says. “That is a time when they can be creative, they can sing and dance and learn in a different way.”



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That’s when Marbella connected with United Way Successful Students Impact Partner, Good Samaritan Community Services, to enroll Mikaela and Abigail in their after-school program. Good Samaritan Community

Services serves the community by supporting youth, individuals and families as they work to overcome the challenges of poverty.

Research shows that students who attend out-of-school-time programs benefit tremendously. Students experience improved educational outcomes, attendance and better social and emotional learning. At the same time, students who participate in programs such as this show lower dropout rates compared to those who do not participate.



Marbella says her daughters experience in an out-of-school-time program has been tremendous for her daughters' emotional and cognitive development.

"It feels great for them to have a place that feels like home," Marbella says. "Where they feel safe, where they can learn and where they can be themselves."

Mikaela and Abigail's education is enhanced by out-of-school-time programming that focuses on STEM, literacy and recreational activities. Seeing her daughters grow has been extremely rewarding for Marbella. She says that they have shown more self-esteem and are more capable in all aspects of their social and academic lives.



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"United Way opens doors for students to be successful and reach their full potential," Marbella says. Her daughters are living proof of that. With a stronger foundation of learning due to out-of-school-time programs and the enhanced learning experiences that come from it, Mikaela and Abigail have a bright future ahead of them.

United Way's Successful Students Impact Area focuses on providing students with resource-rich environments so they can learn, grow, graduate and be successful in life.

One way of accomplishing this is by increasing the capacity of summer and after-school programs like the ones that helped Mikaela and Abigail thrive as students.

"My hope for my girls is that they are strong and passionate," Marbella says. "That they take on the world and that they do whatever it is that they dream of doing."

*To learn more about United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County's work and to hear more stories, visit [uwsatx.org](https://uwsatx.org).*

