

## AV RON SUCCESS THROUGH RENTAL ASSISTANCE

“My life today is a dream, I am living a dream but that’s not quite how my story began,” says Av Ron. When he was younger, Av Ron and his family found their lives flipped upside down when his mother relocated them to a different part of town. She believed this new area on the northeast side of town would be a better environment for her children to grow up. This decision left Av Ron and his mother cut off from the family support system they had relied on before the move.

While this was a move for a better future, it negatively impacted their family’s ability to get to school or work, to have reliable access to food and more. Av Ron’s mother was doing everything she could for her family and it still seemed like it wasn’t enough for them to succeed in life.

Working long hours and without family to support her as a single mother, Av Ron’s mother didn’t have “access to anything.” Despite her hard work she struggled to make ends meet. Growing up with financial hardship, Av Ron did whatever he could as a child to help his family.



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“Watching my mom’s struggles as a kid was extremely hard,” Av Ron says. “I had next to nothing at the time. I would take a \$5 food stamp out of a book and buy something for 25 cents and give her back the \$4 and change because that was the only way we could pay for a cab or a bus. I kind of took on that responsibility as the second oldest child to do that for her.”

Enveloped in uncertainty and instability, Av Ron was determined at a young age to achieve more in his life. He saw how hard his mother was working to support them despite the setbacks that littered their path. He knew there had to be more to life than the struggles they were enduring.

"I felt defeated," Av Ron says. "I've got friends who have been executed, who've been murdered, friends who are in the prison system today and I didn't want to end up like that. That could not be the way that it went," he said.

Feeling trapped in a cycle of never knowing if they would keep a roof over their heads, Av Ron's mother finally discovered a United Way Safety Net Impact Partner who could provide them with rental assistance. This life-changing service gave her the support she needed to get her family's finances back on track.

"For my mom to finally reach out and say she needed help, that was humbling for her because she tried to keep a job and she wanted help but we didn't have access to anything. We didn't have access to a vehicle or basic necessities," Av Ron says. "The rental assistance helped us get the lights back on full-time and it provided her with the stability to be able to get to work, to find a higher-paying job. It changed our lives on so many levels and helped us as kids feel a little bit more comfortable in our skin," Av Ron added.

Today, Av Ron says he is working for his "dream company" locally and is a college graduate with his own family. His life today looks different than what he imagined 20 years ago, recently taking his mother on her first flight to watch him walk the stage as he accepted his bachelor's degree from Liberty University. "I truly credit the relationship that I had with my mom and the grit and inspiration she gave me. My hope was not just to make her happy and proud but to also to break some of the generational curses that keep people down forever," Av Ron said.



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Most of all, he saw his mother come out the other side of adversity. "Seeing my mom thrive and her still surviving, my mom is living proof that our story wasn't finished. I think the support my mom received through United Way is a huge reason why we are here today. United Way helped us be able to get our lives back together and from there, there was no looking back."

United Way's Safety Net Impact Area lends a helping hand to people experiencing life-altering events like job loss, rising rent, natural disasters and more. With resources that help families recover from the unexpected, everyone in San Antonio can get their lives back on track toward their full potential.

Av Ron is a member of United Way's Safety Net council, where he helps organizations in the community improve services offered to people in need using his experiences. "Most of us are one major life event away from needing the services of United Way. What United Way provides people is extremely critical. People are still suffering with these things and these are things we need to address," he says.

*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).*