



When Paul became housing insecure, his greatest concern wasn't for himself - it was for his young daughter.

As their temporary housing arrangement ended, Paul found himself without a support system.

"We didn't have any place to go," Paul recalled. "I didn't know what direction my life was going to go. It was just me and my daughter."

With nowhere else to turn, Paul made one of the hardest decisions in his life. Carrying only backpacks filled with clothes, Paul and his then 7-year-old daughter arrived at Haven for Hope, a United Way Safety Net and Strong Individuals and Families Impact Partner. Their journey was just beginning, but they had each other and determination.

"It was tough, I had no idea where my life was going," Paul says.

The emergency shelter provided more than a place to stay-it gave them hope. "When we got our own room, I finally felt like progress was being made," he said. "You feel your dignity and your pride start to come back."

“

"We didn't have any place to go. I didn't know what direction my life was going to go. It was just me and my daughter."

For the first time in months, Paul could focus on rebuilding. With safe shelter and their immediate needs met, he and his daughter had the stability needed to begin working toward long-term goals.

"That's when the real work began," Paul said.

Working alongside a case manager, Paul developed a person-centered service plan, recovered vital documents, built a resume, and searched for employment.

After securing employment and spending 11 months at Haven for Hope, Paul and his daughter moved into a two-bedroom apartment of their own. Today, Paul works full-time and his daughter is thriving in school as she approaches her ninth birthday.

For more than a year, they have continued to build a life together, enjoying the everyday moments that once felt out of reach. Whether it's watching cartoons on the couch or sharing a late-night bowl of ice cream, these simple routines have become treasured reminders of how far they've come.

Every day Paul wakes up at 6 a.m. to get his daughter ready for school. Together, they navigate multiple bus routes to ensure they arrive at school and work on time. While the routine requires dedication, he embraces it as part of providing a stable and nurturing life for his family. His Monday-through Friday work schedule offers both financial stability and precious time with his daughter on weekends.

When Paul returned to Haven for Hope this past May for the first time since moving out, he reflected on how far they had come. Paul says it is surreal looking back on what he went through. "When I first came here, I didn't know if I could do this," Paul says. "But the people here saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. Once I saw that they believed in me, I started believing in myself."

Today, Paul shares his story because he wants other families facing similar circumstances to know there is hope.



"We are happy, really happy. Just having our own peace means a lot to us," Paul says. "I used to say 'that would never happen to me' but you never know what situations can happen in life," Paul added. "If my story can help even one family, then it is worth it."



"I used to say 'that would never happen to me' but you never know what situations can happen in life."

United Way invests in Safety Net Impact Partners that help individuals and families in crisis meet their most urgent needs. Programs funded through United Way's Safety Net investments provide safe shelter, case management, employment services, essential needs and other critical resources that create pathways towards full potential.

Because of support from United Way donors and partners like Haven for Hope, Paul has reached housing stability and created a bright future for his daughter.

"Those donations help people like me, single fathers, single mothers and families with kids," he says. "It goes a long way."

Today, when Paul tucks his daughter into bed at night, he does so in a place of their own, filled with safety, stability, and hope.

A place where a father and daughter can simply be together.

A place they can finally call home.

To learn more about United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County's work and to hear more stories, visit uwsatx.org.