

## **Researchers still speculate: How strong is the correlation to single parent households and poverty? Together we can prove them wrong.**

By James W. Horne, Jr.  
President/CEO, United Way of Greater Union County

As a result of the growing number of out of wedlock births, some researchers speculate, the number of single-parent households living in poverty is getting larger. According to Investors.com, an article published entitled “Single-Parent Families Threaten America's Future”, states that there are one in three mothers living in poverty and 24% of all families are headed by a single mother. There are a few items mentioned that directly correlate to a single parent household. For instance, children growing up in single parent household are more likely to live on welfare, will lack in educational opportunities and resources, have a difficult time socially and are 3 times more likely to end up in jail.

Unwed parents are not the only contributing factor to some of the environmental attributes that are contributing to this growing trend. The researchers speculate that today’s “marriage crisis” is a big problem and if people were getting married and raising children in two parent households, there would be less people living in poverty. The other factor that needs to be discussed here which is mentioned in the New York Times article entitled “Births to Single Mothers Are Down, Except for 35 and Older” brings to light that women who are older are also making the decision to have children without the father present in the household. The birthrate for women over the age of 35 has continued to grow since the early 2000’s.

For us at the United Way of Greater Union County, our role is not to judge someone’s choices in life, but to identify ways in which we can help families in need, regardless of marital status. We often track data that will inform our strategies and help us build collaborations to meet the needs of families. No matter the circumstance, women who are single mothers have either worried or experienced some spectrum of financial distress throughout the years. Some women worried about their children growing up without fathers. The dynamic between a father and mother living under one roof raising a family, the article suggest, will result in higher levels of education, which leads to higher income among other things. Women who wait until they are over the age of 35, argued that although they became a single parent, they felt more confident with their decision and their parenting skills and did not regret their decision.

Our Family Success Center programs offer hope for many single-heads of household. They can find resources to help them stabilize their lives for themselves and their children. After all everyone succeeding in life helps a community become stronger and will help children achieve greater than what the data “insist” will be their destiny. Together we can prove them wrong.