



**UNITED WAY  
RIGHT HERE.**

## Meet Meme.

Meme (me•me) Mihalovic was living the dream. She and her husband and their two teenage sons lived on a beautiful, tree-lined street in Onalaska. Meme had worked in the insurance industry for 13 years, and her husband was a nurse.

But then Meme lost her job, and her husband became the family's sole bread-winner. When low census hit and there simply weren't enough sick people to care for, her husband's hours were reduced. The family's dreams turned to nightmares, as they tried to make ends meet on a limited and unreliable income.

Meme's family didn't qualify for most government assistance programs because the minimal unemployment compensation she received put them just over the limit. As Meme describes it, they were "poor, but not poor enough." Finances were completely strapped, and those State and Federal requirements weren't considering one very important factor: Meme's eldest son is Autistic.

When Meme felt pressure to choose food over medication or food over therapy, she knew where to turn. United Way help fund WAFER's Food Pantry program. Visiting the pantry

**"My family and I always encourage others to pay it forward when they are in a position to give back."**

*-Mechele Mihalovic*

allowed Meme to keep food on the shelves of home with two growing boys. Additionally, the healthy food options offered by WAFER, such as fresh produce, helped Meme better manage her son's disorder. A healthy diet is a key component to living with Autism.

Meme says that the most beneficial thing about WAFER was that monthly trips there allowed her to stretch her food budget. Those trips were the difference between paying a bill or forgoing a necessary doctor's appointment, which had dire consequences for her son and a trickle-down effect on the emotional well-being of the entire family.

With one less thing to worry about, Meme was able to concentrate on returning to school, and she now works with adults who have long-term care needs. The Mihalovics believe in giving back, and they have organized several drives for WAFER, one of which collected more than 200 pounds of donations in one day.

Because of you, families like Meme's – who were once in need themselves – are able to give back. Thank you for supporting United Way. LIVE UNITED.

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**

**Great Rivers United Way**

[www.gruw.org](http://www.gruw.org)

