

Making Choices Game: How will you invest your Resources?

INSTRUCTIONS

- Make a copy of the “game sheet” for everyone in the meeting.
- Provide each person 15 candies (Smartees work well because there are 15 in each roll). If you want, people can work in teams.
- Tell each participant or team their candies will become symbolic of their “budget” and not to eat their candies until the end of the game!
- Ask how many of them currently manage a budget?
- Explain that for the purposes of the game each person or team is to pretend they’re married with 2 children.
- One adult in the household is working full-time and the other is working two part-time jobs. Both make minimum wage.
- The family has a limited budget and only 15 candies to spend.
- They have some tough decisions to make.
- Each participant must study their choices in each row and invest their candies with 1, 2 or 3 candies depending on what’s most important to them.
- They cannot skip a row.
- After they’re done making their choices, ask the group how it felt to invest their candies. (Usually the response is, “There weren’t enough candies!”)

Unexpected Expense Occurs:

- Now tell them there’s been a change. One of their children has been diagnosed with diabetes and has to see the doctor. The family doesn’t have the insurance to cover this condition. In order to get the child the care they need the family must give up 2 candies.
- Tell the group to take off 2 candies and take a minute to adjust the rest as needed.
- Tell them there’s been another change. Their spouse who works full time just got laid off with no severance pay. Now they have to take off 4 candies to adjust.
- Take a few minutes: Let them go through the exercise of taking off the 4 candies and adjusting the rest.

How United Way Can Help:

How United Way Programs Can Help This Family:

- Ask participants for ideas of how this family can use United Way resources to help?
- If anyone says Georgia Highlands Medical Center – give them 2 candies back
- If anyone says call 2-1-1, give them 1 candy back, and then ask for other participants to name referral services from 2-1-1. (Hint: They can refer to the United Way of Forsyth County 2-1-1 Helplist. Make sure to ask your United Way representative for some copies to pass around!)

THE MORAL OF THE STORY:

Hardworking people make these kinds of tough decisions every day in Forsyth County.

United Way not only helps meet the immediate needs like hunger and homelessness, they also address the root causes of the problems. It's not enough to feed someone who's hungry. It's important to find out why the person is hungry in the first place and address the problem at its source.

United Way provides a coordinated, strategic, sustainable approach to solving the local community's most pressing issues.

Now let everyone eat their candies!