



Lifesaving medication or food?

Sally Kneiper, a retired nurse, never imagined facing that choice. But when health issues forced her to retire earlier than expected, the hundreds of dollars she spent each month on medication became a burden she couldn't afford.

Sally, a lifelong Reading resident, found it difficult to apply for public assistance on her own, and she eventually stopped taking her medication - a risky move that could have endangered her life. When her doctor insisted she begin taking her medicine again, she found herself back in the position of choosing between her health and nutritious food.

A friend suggested she turn to Berks Encore for help, and it was there, through a United Way collaboration called the HelpLink Network, that she found the assistance she needed to afford both her medication and nutritious food.

Through HelpLink, United Way works with 13 agencies across Berks County and with trained volunteers and staff to assist in determining the eligibility for public benefits for low-income working families, the recently unemployed and seniors. Rosa Valez of Berks Encore submitted an electronic application for food assistance on Sally's behalf, and she was approved.

"Rosa ran her sneakers off for me," Sally said. "This has been my savior."

HelpLink sites are located throughout Berks County. To learn more about the HelpLink Network, [click here](#) or visit our website at www.uwberks.org.

