



Monadnock
UNITED WAY

The Panico Family Finding Belonging at The Grapevine



When the Panico family moved to the region, they were looking for more than a place to live—they were looking for community. Their search led them to The Grapevine Family & Community Resource Center, where they found meaningful support for every member of the family.

Their oldest daughter connected with other teens through Avenue A, The Grapevine's youth center. Meanwhile, their younger children joined in seasonal family events like the Black Fly Community Art Celebration and Snow Families—traditions that helped them build friendships and feel at home.

But perhaps the most unexpected connection came around a campfire.

Like many parents who visit The Grapevine, James discovered something for himself: a monthly Dads' Campfire group, led by longtime facilitator Rick Edmunds.

"Dads' Campfire has been a great experience for me," James said. "We had that first thing in common—we're all dads. And we could relate to each other in that way."

Over time, the group became more than a monthly gathering. "We started talking about how we're doing life. We've had a chance to bond, and even enjoyed a hike together."

For the Panicos, community connection isn't a bonus—it's essential. When families, schools, and organizations work together, it helps everyone grow stronger.

"The Grapevine is full of people who are inviting and knowledgeable, with warm hearts," James shared. "Whenever I meet someone new in town, I always tell them to check it out."