

Library Workers Help Promote Financial Literacy and Job Readiness

Finding a job makes a huge impact on a person's life. And helping people find those jobs is something Flower City AmeriCorps member Antoinette Lubich-Claps likes the most about her work as a community navigator through the Rochester Public Library.

"Having a steady income helps you make more decisions in life," Antoinette said. "A large part of my work at Lincoln Branch is helping people search and apply for jobs."

First comes the résumé. Antoinette assists patrons with creating and editing résumés, shows them how to access their documents via email or a flash drive, and assists in uploading their résumés onto job applications. She maintains a database of businesses, including their preference for in-person or online applications, and how they accommodate Spanish-speaking applicants.

Antoinette finds her work most rewarding when patrons come back with news about their applications. "A young man I helped apply to Walmart was hired, a man I assisted with a Chipotle application in January got an interview, and last month I helped someone apply to Securitas and he was hired," she said.

Antoinette has been with AmeriCorps since October 2016, working part-time at the library while completing her studies at SUNY Geneseo. She will graduate in a few weeks with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and concentration in Public Administration. In July, she will begin with VISTA in the Rochester Youth Year program, working in program administration to round out her professional experience.

Antoinette is one of two AmeriCorps members specializing in financial literacy for the library. She hosts the roundtable discussions for the 'Let's Talk Money' series, offered at several RPL branch locations. This series provides information on credit, tenants' rights, social services, family services and child care, and job readiness. She has assisted patrons with applications for college financial aid, car loans, SNAP benefits, unemployment insurance, AARP registration, online DMV and general computer help. She also holds fun programs for youth, with instruction followed by a game such as 'This or That' and 'Financial Lit Jeopardy'.

"Financial knowledge is such a powerful tool for everyone to be able to make the best decisions for themselves and their families," said Sarah Lydon, RPL Community Services Librarian. "Within the library we play such an important role as a resource center in the communities we serve, and this provides us with the opportunity to help share this tool with so many people."

"I'm happy that I've built up a relationship with the patrons," Antoinette said. "That way, people aren't afraid to ask. Anything people need to look up, I'm happy to help. They know where I sit."

Antoinette has known the value of library resources all her life. As a child in Brooklyn, she was a regular patron and later a volunteer at her local library, playing games with the after-school crowd and assisting with the Reading is Fundamental program. As library resources were important to her then, they are now advancing her career while helping others find theirs.

The AmeriCorps program at RPL is made possible through the City of Rochester. FFRPL supports all RPL branch libraries with technology and other resources. Look for the new 'Support Your Library' brochure stand at each branch's circulation desk and please make a donation to FFRPL to continue this support. Thank you very much.



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