

Focus On People Serving People

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Providing the Skills for Self-Sufficiency

"Without a resume, you're going to have a hard time getting out of low paying jobs." This statement is heard by many of the adults staying at PSP. PSP's staff has always wanted to help residents find a livable wage job and help that person move toward self-sufficiency. In the past, staff would occasionally let a resident use their computer to finish their resume, but it was difficult for the staff member to get his own work done. One of the problems was the children at PSP had no outlet to use their school-based technology knowledge at their PSP home. PSP pieced together an antiquated computer lab filled with old computers with obsolete software for residents to work on. This obviously was not going to be a long-term solution. With the help of longtime IBM volunteers, Mark Englen and Andre Renfro, PSP was given the gift of an IBM Young Explorer Computer.



PSP then became aware of IBM's Teaming for Technology (T4T), "a national partnership among IBM, United Way of America, and AmeriCorps VISTA to develop leadership and technological skills among nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve." This program fit exactly what PSP staff had envisioned for a computer lab. Beginning in 2004, PSP worked with IBM and their T4T liaison, Ken Nelson, to develop the Client Technology Enhancement Program (CTEP). The CTEP was created to be a volunteer-driven program where volunteers would write and teach educational programs and run the lab during open hours and training hours. The CTEP plans passed IBM's standards and PSP was granted IBM's in-kind donation grant of \$21,000 to equip the room with 12 desktop computers, a server, two laptops and printers.

As an added bonus, both Piper Jaffray and Thrivent Financial have joined the pursuit of our dream. Piper Jaffray came on-board to help with the technology and lab design components. Piper Jaffray is supporting the lab with tables and chairs, a white board and two cabinets. They also agreed to design and layout the computer lab and purchase paint for the room. Their technology crew is installing all of the software including the server set-up. Piper Jaffray has committed to support the lab on a continual basis with troubleshooting and regular maintenance as needed.

Thrivent Financial is another initial supporter of the CTEP. Their grant of \$10,000 supports the internet fees, added electricity, additional programs and software, and general supplies required for the needs of the residents (paper, ink, etc.) and volunteer training supplies.

At present, the CTEP program is completely dependent upon the support of volunteers. Mentors are needed to supervise the lab during open lab time and class time as well as work with the residents with questions and assist instructors. Volunteer instructors are needed to teach classes varying from the orientation course to Microsoft Word, and Internet Researching.

We Need Your Help

These volunteer opportunities are designed for adults (18+) who can commit two hours, twice a month for at least 4 months. If you do not feel skilled to volunteer in this area, we also need volunteers to help in the Library, Rec Room, and our Children's Activities and Tutoring Programs.