

Bishop Sullivan Center

NEWS & REFLECTIONS

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YOUR SUPPORT OF CENTER HELPS PEOPLE LIKE THIS *SHE WENT FROM HOMELESSNESS TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY*

By Kathleen Kennedy

I was surprised when Michelle called me. I had not heard from her in nearly a year. She had come to Bishop Sullivan Center then to enter our Employment Services program.

At that time her life and her job history were in shambles. She had a drug addiction and had a

felony conviction from this. She was homeless and living with an elderly couple who believed in her. She had feelings of guilt for not being there for her children, who were now young adults.

She was in her early 40's but had never held a job longer than a year. I took a liking to this client from the get-go and we established a wonderful working relationship built on honesty and trust and a good deal of humor. I advocated for her quite a bit while definitely holding her accountable. She shed many tears of regret in my office during the process, but she never gave up.

She has some wonderful gifts - a great sense of humor, a strong positive spirit, and tenacity. As hard as the road got, and after four long months of diligent searching, she landed a decent job.

Fast forward to her phone call to me. She not only was still working at the manufacturing job with whom we helped her connect, but she was celebrating her first year on the job and her first paid vacation week that she ever had in her life! She has her own place now and is able to pay all her bills. She has managed to stay clean and sober.

To top it off, not only does she like her job, but she recently received a promotion and is now making \$2.00 more per hour. She may actually make enough to get out of poverty.

Michelle is the mother of three and grandmother of five, and I am so proud of her and the way she has worked so hard at turning her life around.



Michelle went from homelessness to a steady job and an apartment.



LOTTERY WINNER WANTS TO WORK

SHE WON THE AMERICAN DREAM

People buy lottery tickets in this country in the hopes of winning millions of dollars. In Togo, Africa you buy a lottery ticket to get a work visa from the United States. After a couple of years of trying, Ayawoavi “Charite” Senyo’s name was drawn from the lottery in her country.

Living in a violent and life-threatening environment in her homeland, she came to the United States in 2003 with a legal work visa in hand. When she first came, she stayed with another family from Togo. They kept her virtually enslaved to provide childcare. She escaped from them and was found distraught on a park bench by the police. They took her to a social service agency in the neighborhood.

She started learning English and we helped her find a job working in the kitchen at a domestic violence shelter. She started working part-time and lived in a small apart-

ment within walking distance from her work. She eventually was offered full-time work with benefits from the same employer. This summer she will have been on her job for three years. She has moved into a bigger apartment and her English is getting better. She seems to have made a home for herself here in Kansas City.

Charite is a delightful woman who has overcome many obstacles in her life. We are glad our Center could assist her in finding employment and feeling more at home.



Center helped Charite land a job. She’s held down the same job for three years.

BISHOP SULLIVAN CENTER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES STATISTICS

(For the last three months)

Number of people who obtained jobs through our program	70
Average number of days to find a job	50
Top three most common jobs obtained (in order): Food service, Warehouse, Janitorial	
Average wage for jobs found	\$8.90
Percent of those jobs that do NOT provide benefits	90
Percent of job seekers who have less than a college degree	98
Percent of job seekers who depend on the bus for transportation	64

CENTER’S MISSION: HELP PEOPLE BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT THROUGH EMPLOYMENT



Job seekers use the computers in the Center’s resource room to look for job openings on the Internet or to type up resumes. Each colored paper on the wall behind them lists the name of a person we helped find a job and their new place of employment. New job seekers are motivated by this and frequently say, “You’ll see my name up there soon.”



For those who donate to United Way, please consider designating Bishop Sullivan Center as the recipient.

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