

Community Technology Center Volunteers Share Their Stories By Scott Reed

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HPP client **Sally Lamus** was living in a shelter with her two children when she found out about HPP's Community Technology Center (CTC) and eventually made it her second home. "I had the freedom to look for work and housing on my own, my way. Help was always available when I needed it," she said. It was this support that motivated her to offer her time and bilingual assistance to other clients in the CTC. "I felt that the people who come here for help are in the same shoes that I was in when I first got here," she said.

The CTC is home to 10 computers, high speed internet, a scanner, and access to free black and white printing. Classes and tutoring are available in English and Spanish. Because clients come with pressing needs and varying degrees of computer literacy, volunteers are integral to making sure that the CTC is a supportive and helpful environment.

For CTC volunteer **Delia Fitzpatrick** (*photographed on the right with client **Jacklyn Hernandez***), preparing clients and Community Health Workers for the job market means helping them conquer the internet and gain confidence in their experience. Her Job Readiness class on Wednesday afternoon has been wildly successful in helping students improve their resumes (she calls them "masterpieces in the making") and land interviews.

"Communication has changed. Business people are doing all their transactions by email and not picking up the phone," Fitzpatrick explained. "So having email, remembering your password, and checking e-mail on a daily basis is imperative." It is this requirement of connectivity that excludes low-income and homeless parents who do not have easy access to a computer and the internet.

"Rewarding moments are when my students call me or email me when they have had an interview or received a job offer," Fitzpatrick shared. Once homeless and pregnant herself, she relied on the kindness and support of her church to step away from crisis and become employed and stable. "Everyone needs someone to help them and be an advocate for them in diverse ways," she said.

If you are interested in volunteering in the CTC, please contact Community Technology Center Coordinator **Scott Reed** at scottreed@homelessprenatal.org.

