Community Advocate (Volunteer) Position Description

LIFT serves to bridge the gap between the university community and the surrounding neighborhood. We are currently seeking motivated and committed college students to serve clients in our three locations:

Perry School Office  Columbia Heights Office  THEARC Office
128 M Street NW Suite 320  1420 Columbia Road NW  1901 Mississippi Ave SE
Washington DC 20001  Washington DC 20009  Washington DC 20200

What is LIFT? LIFT is committed to helping its community members achieve economic stability and well being through holistic and innovative solutions. Our mission calls upon our nation’s college students in this effort and places them in direct service as they help local community residents. LIFT recruits and trains a diverse corps of undergraduates, graduates, and young professionals who make a rigorous and sustained commitment to service. This volunteer corps operates a national network of service centers, where they work side by side with low-income individuals and their families to find jobs, secure safe and stable housing, make ends meet through public benefits and tax credits and acquire critical supports like healthcare and childcare.

In DC, our three offices serve nearly 1,700 families. Our Perry School office has entered its 11th year of client service, while our bilingual (Spanish) office in Columbia Heights has entered its third. In February 2011, LIFT-DC opened an office in Ward 8, serving communities and families east of the Anacostia River. On a national level, more than 30,000 clients and their families have been served in LIFT’s 12-year history. Currently, LIFT has offices in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, DC.

Duties and Responsibilities: LIFT volunteers (known as Community Advocates) are needed to work side-by-side with usually low-income individuals to address immediate needs (employment, housing, public benefits, health care, education, etc) and comprehensive, long-term support designed to help families break the cycle of poverty. Community Advocates are needed to:

- Meet one-on-one with LIFT clients assessing needs and providing direct and referral services. You might help somebody write their first resume, locate a G.E.D. program, find affordable housing or child care, research job openings in the area, or simply provide listening and support.
- Communicate regularly with clients to create goals, check in on client progress, update clients on new resources/information, etc.
- Take part in volunteer trainings and listen to prominent community guest speakers. Trainings focus on issues/challenges facing our client base including: understanding the public housing system, public benefits, mental health issues, and employment needs.
- This commitment calls for a minimum of eight hours in the office each week. Tools are provided in the office to help you guide your work, from resource databases to veteran volunteers with great ideas about projects you can initiate.

Qualifications: LIFT Community Advocates are bright, motivated students with a strong desire to get to know and give back to their community. We’re looking for people of all backgrounds who are determined and committed to helping others by lending their pro-active problem-solving skills. Community Advocates must be supportive listeners with a willingness to get to know people in the area and the services available to help them. (Note: Interviews will be required for this position).

Benefits to Becoming an LIFT Intern or Student Advocate: LIFT provides direct, hands-on experience with poverty, unemployment, housing, public assistance, and a variety of other issues, by working one-on-one with community members (clients). While volunteering at LIFT, there are many opportunities to gain and develop leadership skills in working with diverse groups of people, office management, public relations and event planning, and non-profit organization and management. You can make lots of contacts in the business and social services world and have practical skills to put on your resume.

Join us in making a difference in our community, one relationship at a time!

For more information, visit our website: www.liftcommunities.org
Contact Bock Szymkowicz via e-mail: bszymkowicz@liftcommunities.org OR call (202) 289-2525 to set up an interview!

Updated August 2010