

Dear Utah Women's Giving Circle,

I was first introduced to People Helping People (PHP) in 2011 when I attended a job fair for single moms hosted at the LDS Employment Center. I attended reluctantly because I had always had success in the past getting a job and thought I already knew how to write a resume and present myself at an interview.

I had moved to Salt Lake City from California in 2009 and the job that I thought I had lined up disappeared as a result of the bad economy. I found myself in a custody battle with my ex and working as a restaurant server despite having a BA from the U of U and an AAS from UVU as a paralegal.

I remember walking around meeting the various employers at the fair but the part that really caught my interest was the speakers. First, Kayleen Simmons explained the mission of PHP which made me want to find out more. Then a woman got up and told her "story". She explained how she worked her way through the PHP program and what she had accomplished since then, a career that was supporting her family, purchasing a home, vacations, new car etc. It was truly inspiring. I knew right then I wanted to be a part of PHP and learn all I could so that I could get out of the rut I had found myself in.

I began attending the Saturday workshops and soaking in all the information. I found that there are women from all walks of life who are currently benefiting from PHP as well as those who have "graduated" and are mentoring others just getting started. Having been out of the work force for a while and up against a lot of competition, I learned to look at things from the employer's perspective and how to overcome gaps in my work history. Another critical part of the program was understanding my financial picture and knowing how much I needed to earn to be able to pay my bills and support my family. This knowledge helped me be more successful in my job search.

About a year later, I was at a PHP awards dinner and was talking with some people from eBay, who had provided the food. As a result of the conversation and knowing that PHP only partners with the best employers, I accepted a job there in January 2013. My family now has full benefits. I am earning vacation time and contributing to a 401k along with building a career at eBay.

I continue to participate in the programs at PHP because getting a job is just the beginning of the journey. There are many more skills needed to develop that job into a career. These skills are critical and often overlooked in other employment programs. Helping to fund PHP changes the lives of low income women and their children. It helps end the cycle of public dependency for families like mine and creates models of behavior with far reaching positive effects. It is a worthy and valuable program.

Sincerely,



Michelle Mitra
July 29, 2014

