



Personalized Networking The ParentJobNet Way

*By Michael George
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ParentJobNet (PJN) understands that navigating the waters seeking employment is rarely easy and there are several paths to that goal. PJN's most recent networking event, held at a TD Bank branch in Manhattan, was in line with a definitive path through those waters known as "personalized networking."

Although larger job fairs, with scores of potential employers, elaborate booths and larger venues, are a great avenue for employment seekers, PJN's more intimate approach can be just as effective. The event at TD Bank, which featured guest speaker Alexander Couch from the FDNY Recruitment and Diversity Unit, drew a smaller crowd, however this allowed for more interaction with potential recruiters as well as PJN staff available for counseling.

"I like this better," said Alain Jean-Mary, 27, from Manhattan, observing the small setting. "You're able to have more one-on-one talking to people."

Jean-Mary, is currently employed in a maintenance job at JFK airport, but is looking for something more rewarding. He's optimistic that his five-month association with PJN and personalized networking will lead to more opportunities. "I want a higher paying job," he said. "It's a better chance to move forward. This has definitely been good for me. Smaller is better."

For some people just wading into the field of job-seekers, a smaller networking venue is tailor made. Gladys Williams, with a background in advertising sales and fashion publishing, found the TD Bank event to be a perfect match.

"I've never been to a job fair or networking event," said Williams, "This has been great, building up contacts for something down the road or I can find out what's needed. Sometimes you have to adjust your resume to what's out there."

Williams was very interested in what the FDNY was offering. "I like this informative setting," added Williams, "It's like starting from scratch, but I would absolutely recommend an event like this."

PJN's personalized approach to networking has proven itself a workable model in addition to larger job fairs. Fatima Velez-Fernandez, who attended the TD Bank event with her three children, has been involved with PJN for just a few months, and finds their attention to her situation a relief. Velez-Fernandez says the concern she's garnered from PJN founder Pat Craddick, is mirrored in the personalized networking event.

"They've helped me to find an apartment and Pat Craddick checks on me," said Velez-Fernandez. "It's very personal and Pat can relate to [employment] problems. You can't do that at a big job fair. This is my first [PJN networking] event and I will certainly come to another."

With five more personalized networking events scheduled over the next few months, the ParentJobNet approach to networking remains an inviting and viable means to connecting potential employees and employers.

Contact the organization at 1-866-541-3994 or visit their website at www.parentjobnet.org for more information about programs and services.