



The ParentJobNet Process

By Michael George

November 5, 2010 – New York City – Although it's a cliché that a journey of a thousand miles starts with one step, ParentJobNet recognizes the truth in that statement as they help guide participants towards gainful careers and employment. It's a process done in steps that may not seem gargantuan in size but have a destination. PJN is here to help you on the journey towards that destination, whatever or wherever it may be. Undoubtedly it's a collaborative effort between PJN and the participant, however the participants have more gravity attached to the outcome as they embark on a potentially life changing experience.

PJN is invested in the outcome for the participants. Sometimes though all outcomes don't have the desired results, which for PJN is finding the right job for the right person. Along the way there can be as many obstacles, situations and disappointments as there are successes and positive conclusions. There are common and shared experiences, however everyone's experience has its own uniqueness. We decided to follow the PJN experience from beginning to end through the eyes of a volunteer job counselor, Lisa Chan, and two participants, Susan and Nathaniel, who are just taking the first steps on a journey of a thousand miles. We'll monitor the individual progress of the participants and how PJN helps guide them along the way.

Chan, an Executive V.P. at an international software company, volunteers for PJN once a week and her duties often make her the point person for first time participants. She is the first person they encounter as they began the intake process.

"I help people to identify their job readiness and interview skills," said Chan, who has seen people approach the beginning process with a variety of attitudes. "Some people come in very optimistic and others are desperate or not happy because they've been looking for a job for one or two years. Our job is to encourage and make sure they have hope for their job search."

Participants enter PJN with a variety of expectations. Some have unrealistic visions of mega-salary dream jobs, others are looking to change careers completely and still others are clueless about what they want. "We're trying to be the bridge between employers and clients," said Chan. "We want to help the clients get their feet wet."

On the day we started this series, Susan, a mother from Manhattan, was making her second visit to PJN for a session concerning her resume. Dressed in a business suit, and looking a little nervous, Susan, had also signed up for the Computer Skills/Job Readiness workshop being conducted that afternoon. Susan informed Lisa of her activities since the last meeting. Lisa reviewed Susan's resume and went over it line by line, pointing out a few discrepancies and weaknesses. After discussing the resume, Lisa shared some ideas, gleaned from examining the resume, that would aid Susan in her pursuit of employment. Lisa reminds Susan, who has been looking for work since July 2010, that one her assets is her ability to solve problems, but that trait needs to be presented in a more concise manner on her resume.

"I'm definitely, definitely feeling positive," said Susan after the resume review. "This meeting helped me understand that I have a lot inside of me and problem solving, well that's just me. I just want a job that allows me to grow."

Susan's background is mostly working with non-profit companies and she would like to stay in that arena if possible. She understands however that more work is needed on her resume before it's determined that she's ready for real interviews, and she wants to be prepared.

"In two or three weeks, I hope to have a finished product and be really prepped for interviews," said Susan.

Nathaniel, on the other hand, was making his initial visit to PJN, however he was all ears as Lisa explained how he has to be an active participant in the process. Unemployed for the last two months, Nathaniel's last job was in maintenance, but in examining a hastily constructed resume, Lisa discovers meaningful experience as an office manager in a bookstore and supervisor at a drug rehabilitation center, experience that needs to be highlighted on his resume. Nathaniel, eventually revealed that he has experience as an entrepreneur and a real interest in working on environmental issues and with people. However, Nathaniel's journey has brought him to PJN and he's ready to restart his life.

“I’ve been looking at job training programs and I want something that’s solid,” said Nathaniel. “I’m getting serious. I’m looking for a career, instead of just accepting whatever job comes along.”

Nathaniel’s attitude and enthusiasm about finding PJN might help him get what he wants. Lisa gave him some assignments that require going to his local library and researching career choices. He’s got work to do on his resume and determining his employment objectives, but these first steps were solid for him.

PJN will continue to follow the sojourn of Susan and Nathaniel, and input from Lisa, over the next few months. They all look forward to sharing their experiences with us, and we promise to stay tuned to see what happens.

For more information or questions call PJN at 917-546-9104 or 917--546-0971. Or e-mail info@parentjobnet.org.