



Success story: Christophe and Sherlie

Youth Conservation Corps

Christophe, age 16, and Sherlie, age 19, have only lived in Minnesota for two years, but they already have big smiles on their faces when they talk about school, their friends, and Tree Trust. Having moved here from Haiti less than a year after the devastating earthquake, the siblings – soon to be a sophomore and a senior in high school, respectively – are settling in and enjoying their new jobs at Tree Trust.

They are working on a staircase at Lone Lake Park in Minnetonka, a project they both are enjoying. Christophe likes learning how to properly use the new tools and equipment, and Sherlie enjoyed the challenge of the measurements and math required to properly construct the stairs. They describe their crew leader, Thomas, as very nice and really patient.

Sherlie shared with us what a “fortunate opportunity it was to do this as a first job” and talked about her struggles finding a job with no previous experience and with English as her second language. Christophe learned about Tree Trust from his sister, and talked about how valuable the skills are that he’s learned this summer. From tangible skills like measuring, shoveling, and hammering nails to intangible skills like working as a team and meeting new friends, both siblings said they learned a lot from their summer in the Youth Conservation Corps. They also loved the bonus of receiving school credit – particularly helpful to them as transfer students.

When Sherlie graduates high school, she hopes to go on to medical school and become a doctor. Christophe hopes to become a pilot and an actor. Christophe, the more shy of the two, concludes simply with, “I like Tree Trust, it’s pretty cool.” Sherlie is quick to remind him that without Tree Trust, they’d both be at “sitting at home, doing nothing all summer.”

Success story: Samir Hashi

Individual Employment Experience

Samir loves soccer, hanging out with his friends, and his job at TJ Maxx. His job was arranged for this summer through Tree Trust’s Individual Employment Experiences, a component of the Summer Youth Employment Program. At TJ Maxx, he unloads trucks, processes the shipments, and helps in the warehouse.

He’ll be a senior in high school this year, and is looking forward to another year of varsity soccer. A friend told him about Tree Trust’s summer job opportunities and says that although “you guys do a lot of stuff beyond that, this was a good fit.” He enjoys the work, and has learned many valuable skills such as how to work well with other people, time management, and communication skills. He has “the best coworkers ever. We work hard and have a lot of fun.”

Samir is happy to be making money this summer, and to be able to support himself and his family. He said the skills he learned this summer can be transferred to his home, his community, and his soccer team. "I've learned how to become a great leader in my community."

He has also found great value in his relationship with his "awesome, open-minded" Tree Trust case manager, saying he could call her anytime if he needed something. "She's not just my coworker, she's my friend."

"Keep doing this program," Samir concluded. "You help a lot of people."