Field Site

I volunteered at the Community Action Development Commission (CADCOM) in Norristown, PA. CADCOM is the leading anti-poverty agency in Montgomery County. Among its programs are micro-enterprise classes, food resources, and income tax preparation.

Field Work

At CADCOM, I served as an IRS-certified tax preparer. My tasks included preparing the taxes of low-income taxpayers, answering volunteer questions, and handling drop-offs and pick-ups. I wanted to create a welcoming atmosphere where taxpayers felt empowered to understand their returns. In addition to tax preparation at CADCOM, I co-coordinated the Bryn Mawr volunteer side of the program.

Nothing is Certain Except Taxes

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance @ CADCOM

Thinking about...
Adaptability and problem solving during a pandemic
- more returns and less volunteers
- hosting on-campus pop-up sessions
- incentivizing volunteers
Incorporating social justice into the program
- Creating a teach-in on campus
- developing fall training sessions
Equity in tax preparation services
- why is filing for free on your own so hard?!
What structure does a volunteer program need for volunteers to return?

Personal Growth

What does adaptability in a leadership role mean?
- confidence in making changes
- being open about needing support
- taking advantage of resources
- learning to pump gas
Is the work enough?

“You tell me that it's a cruel world and we're all just running around in circles, I know that, I've been on this earth just as many days as you. When I choose to see the good side of things, I'm not being naive. It is strategic and necessary, it's how I've learned to survive everything... In another life, I would have really liked doing laundry and taxes with you.”

Ratatouille

“Everything Everywhere All at Once”

Elizabeth Zhao ’22
Social Justice & Social Change
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