



Money Matters

Financial Literacy Workshop for Public School Parents

By Michael George

November 10, 2010 – New York City – Money is on everyone’s mind these days. Concerns about the economy are reaching a point of critical mass where people are just barely fazed by unwanted news of price increases on pretty much everything from food to cab fares. ParentJobNet’s most recent workshop, “Take Charge of Your Finances” - in partnership with Chase - gave participants an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of saving, budgeting and credit management, all tools in the relentless tug of war with the almighty dollar.

The PJN workshop was held at P.S. 84 in Manhattan on Tuesday, Nov. 9th, and the turnout was motivated and anxious for information on handling their financial issues. Linda Guzman, from Queens, was attending her first-ever PJN workshop, and was curious to see what the Chase reps had to say.

“I’m looking for work,” explained Guzman. “I signed up not knowing what they would talk about. I figured let me go and see what it’s about.” Guzman however was spurred by more than just curiosity. Working in sales selling perfume for the last three years, and just recently having had her hours reduced, she’s looking to a brighter future. Having solid information about her finances is essential to her goals.

“[Sales] is not where I belong,” said Guzman. “I have a plan. I keep myself busy and look for work. That’s why I’m here. It’s very important and I like to learn. Most people are not taught how to budget money and this is an educational experience.”

The reps from Chase, Daisey Gonzalez and Jeffrey Schroeder, had plenty to discuss and shared their expertise with a rapt audience. They touched on the differences between fixed and flexible budgeting, paying yourself first, flexible and fixed income, how to really save money and other practical ideas, including handing out samples of household budgets, to help the participants get their finances in order. Gonzalez, a banker for well over a decade, advised the participants to have an idea of what they want their finances to do for them.

“It’s important to walk into a bank and know what you’re looking to set up for yourself,” said Gonzalez. Several of the participants added to the workshop with their own tips about ways to save on food, clothing and even saving money. Manhattan’s Phyllis Lodge, a freelance editor seeking employment, attended the workshop looking for a few answers to common questions about money.

“It’s all about budgeting,” said Lodge. “I’m struggling through a difficult period in life and I want to move to a better place. This is a good place to start.”

Lodge has a philosophy that was really at the heart of Tuesday’s session. With money an issue for most people these days, Lodge understood the importance of the workshop for her and the other participants.

“Money is a form of energy,” said Lodge. “If you don’t know how to work with it, it can control you, but not if it’s working for you. When rich people have money, they make it work for them. It’s a different mindset. I intend on getting what I need. It’s just a matter of knowing how to put money away, and you’re never too old to learn that.”

The workshop will be held again on Thursday, December 9, 2010 from 12-2:00 p.m. in Room 132 at P.S 84 - 32 W. 92nd Street and will be limited to 25 participants. Register online at www.parentjobnet.org/financial-literacy-workshops.aspx.

For more information or questions contact the organization at 917-546-9104 or 917-546-0971. Or e-mail info@parentjobnet.org.