

Your tax help can bring big returns

By JEAN HUNT

DURING THESE rough economic times, I'd like you to make a commitment to give some of your time to help low-wage families have a brighter future.

You can increase household income for hardworking families by volunteering for the Campaign for Working Families. You can help keep money in the wallets of Philadelphians and circulating in our local business economy.

As a volunteer tax preparer for the Campaign for Working Families, you can be part of a tremendous effort that brings \$20 million each year into the homes of working families.

You can help families buy winter coats, make mortgage payments, pay utility bills and save for homeownership.

During the last seven years, more than 2,500 volunteers have provided free tax preparation in community settings throughout Philadelphia.

These volunteers have brought \$124.2 million directly into the homes of low-income working families. And the volunteers have saved these families an additional estimated \$19 million in interest, fees and charges for tax preparation, check-cashing and loans.

THERE ARE many ways that you can help at the tax sites: complete tax forms, greet customers, organize paperwork and assist with other administrative tasks.

No experience is necessary — all training is provided.

Volunteer tax preparers will be trained by the Campaign for Working

Families and certified by the IRS.

The Campaign provides free tax assistance at 10 community-based sites throughout Philadelphia. Philadelphia families earning less than \$50,000 (in 2009) and individuals who earned less than \$25,000 are eligible for the Campaign's services.

Sign up now to receive free training classes in tax preparation — complete the training on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Jan. 18).

New volunteers are

assigned to work with a skilled site coordinator and other experienced volunteers.

Volunteers are asked to work at a local tax site in Philadelphia, a minimum of six sessions between Jan. 25 and April 15.

Typical sessions are three to four hours weekdays, weeknights or Saturdays.

The Campaign for Working Families helps families close the gap between their income and their expenses, and connects them to nonpredatory, quality financial services.

We also offer help with completing applications for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), new banking and savings products (including prepaid debit cards, savings bonds and savings accounts) and public-benefits screening.

Individuals interested in helping working families should visit the Web site at www.phillyfreetaxes.org for more information and to register online. Or call **215-851-1759** ★

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