



*Unique and Dwayne Washington  
Volunteers, 2006 • Woodlawn Tax Site*



Unique Washington first found out about the Center for Economic Progress from the other side of the table—as a client. She said, “I had my taxes prepared [by the Center] for several years.” said Unique. “I looked into volunteering while I wasn’t working.”

Two years later, Unique was working at the University of Chicago hospitals and she and her son Dwayne began to volunteer weekly at the Center’s Woodlawn site. It was the Woodlawn site manager who first thought of involving Dwayne, 11, as a volunteer.

“I really wanted to help out,” said Dwayne, who started off by reading to younger children while their parents were having taxes prepared. Now he helps keep things running smoothly by shredding, copying and assisting with other tasks. “He got so excited,” said Unique of Dwayne’s first experience as a volunteer with the Center, “He couldn’t even sit still.”

After helping one couple claim more than \$5,000 in refunds during one session, Unique looks back on the experience as her favorite. The couple hadn’t claimed a credit in the previous year, so Unique and her site manager were able to go back and fix the return getting the couple the money they earned. “It makes me happy, and I feel like I’m giving back,” said Unique. Plus, says Unique, the Center is “really family-oriented.”

“It’s a great experience,” said Unique about volunteering with the Center. “It’s a great way to spend time. They treat you extra special—you’re not just a volunteer.” Even Dwayne agrees, saying, “It’s fun!”