



# Poughkeepsie Public Library District

## Public Computer Center

### Participant Statistics (September 2010 to March 2012)

- Open Computer Lab—2,197 attendees
- Computer Basics Workshops—290 attendees
- Microsoft Office Workshops—724 attendees
- Digital & Social Media Workshops—188 attendees
- Job Seeker Workshops—197 attendees
- Job Readiness Workshops offered to BOCES students—304 attendees
- ESL Workshops (commenced in October 2011)—364 attendees
- **User Satisfaction—98% of PCC users would recommend our services to others!**

### Program Summary

- Our PCC provides basic digital literacy training in the form of a series of classes that assist people in learning the basics of operating a computer and navigating the Internet—both of which are important skills for helping people find and apply for jobs in today's economy. This series includes *PC Basics*, *Internet 101*, *Internet 102* and *Internet Security*. For individuals who cannot attend one of our formal classes, we invite them to attend our open Computer Lab, which can provide digital literacy training on an individual basis. In lab we assist people in learning basic computer skills, signing up for an email account, performing job searches, filling out job applications, formatting resumes, filing for unemployment, and creating and editing Microsoft Office documents.
- The PCC offers a wide array of classes on Microsoft Office products, including *Microsoft Word 101 & 102*, *Microsoft Excel 101 & 102*, and *Microsoft Powerpoint 101 & 102*. All of these classes provide attendees with the chance to learn a new skill and increase their proficiency in these software programs—which will make them more appealing to potential employers.
- Microsoft Office programs specifically for small business owners include classes on *Microsoft Outlook*, *Mail Merge in Word & Excel*, *Summarizing Data in Excel*, and *Creating a Newsletter in Word*. These classes teach skills which help small business owners use technology to make their business more efficient and profitable, as well as market themselves to their potential customers. The PCC offers these classes to our patrons, and also markets them to our local chamber of commerce's career networking group (Career Connections for Professionals).
- Patrons have learned how to search for a job on the web and what is needed to create a competitive resume and perform well on an interview through the PCC's workshops on *Successful Job Searching* and *Resources for Creating Effective Resumes & Acing the Interview*. Individuals can also receive assistance searching for jobs, writing resumes and cover letters, and completing job applications in the PCC's open Computer Lab. In June 2012, our library will host *Working for the Government*, a workshop that will help attendees navigate the hiring process of working for state and local government. This workshop will be presented by New York State Labor Services Representatives.
- The PCC's computer lab has provided assistance to individuals completing coursework in distance learning programs, which are popular ways of earning degrees which help people get better jobs and advance their careers.
- The JobNow! database, which was provided to our PCC by the New York State Library, is highlighted on our PCC website. Also, JobNow! bookmarks are handed out at every Job Searching and Resume Writing/Interviewing class, and each time a patron comes to computer lab with an employment-related issue, JobNow! is promoted as a tool to assist with the job search process.
- Specialized training in digital literacy includes *Introduction to iTunes*, *Introduction to iPad*, *Introduction to eBooks & Audiobooks*, *Introduction to Facebook*, *Introduction to LinkedIn*, and *Working with Your Digital Photos*. All of these classes provide hands-on instruction in using today's popular technology and navigating current social media trends.

- ESL services include the open Computer Lab for Spanish Speakers, as well as courses in *PC Basics* and *Internet 101* in Spanish.

## Outreach Efforts

- The PCC has been very successful in attaining a good working relationship with six local organizations: BOCES, the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Dutchess OneStop, Dutchess Reentry, Taconic Resources, and The Center for Change. All of these organizations have recommended our services to their clients via distributing the PCC's publicity to their clients, listing PCC information on their website, and/or word-of-mouth. Specific services to our informal partners have included:
  - Offering job readiness workshops for BOCES & The Center for Change clients.
  - Offering Microsoft Office training workshops to members of the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, and clients of Dutchess Reentry and Taconic Resources.
  - Offering a LinkedIn class to members of the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce.
- Our relationship with Dutchess OneStop is mainly a mutual referral relationship. They recommend people use our services when they need help using the computer to search for a job, fill out a job application, and create a resume, since the OneStop does not have staff that can assist with these activities. PCC staff refers people to the OneStop when they need career counseling services and help finding retraining opportunities. In June 2012, the OneStop is providing the staff to present the workshop *Working for the Government* at the library.
- We had one relationship that was specifically related to digital literacy, and that was with The Family Partnership Center. The PCC offered a series of classes at the Family Partnership Center in the fall of 2011 to individuals who use Family Partnership Center services. These classes included *PC Basics*, *Internet 101 & 102*, and *Microsoft Word 101*, *Excel 101*, and *Powerpoint 101*.

## Best Practices Learned

- To provide the best experience for users, we have kept class sizes small (6 to 10 attendees) to ensure enough attention is given to each participant, we explain things in simple and straightforward terminology, and we try to understand where the patron is coming from when encountering a challenging situation—all of this serves to keep people happy and coming back for more help.
- Good volunteers are essential to the services we provide.
- Even if people cannot initially get into the classes they are interested in, if you keep them informed of the next available class, this will generally keep them a satisfied customer.
- Sometimes people who are comfortable with the format of the computer lab and the staff are still hesitant to ask a question. Therefore, we have learned to check in with people even if they seem to be content to work independently to make sure they understand everything they are working on.

## A Few User Quotes...

- I came to the workshop a little bit overwhelmed as to job searching. However I was able to feel more comfortable with the fact that even though I have not renewed my present resume, I am not out of touch with the terms. The class also clarified for me my next step.—Resume/Interviewing
- Excellent lessons on more stuff than I can remember...teacher had great attitude...when some teachers would have given up on my questions and computer problems.—Computer Lab
- I have a disability and am impressed of the quality of services the staff provided. Thank you.—Computer Lab
- I think that is a wonderful resource for those of us who can't afford to take these classes elsewhere. My instructor makes every subject seem so doable.—Creating a Newsletter in Word
- My instructor was great; she spent extra time helping me get going on the Nook. Thanks! Give her a new sign on her door : Queen of e-books!—eBooks & Audiobooks
- Mail Merge is going to be very important for my small business. Teacher explained everything very well.—Mail Merge in Word & Excel