



Bilingual Financial Coach Adrian Gonzalez and Lucy T. work on Lucy's financial plan.

Coaching Helps Build Financial Security

Bilingual Financial Coach Adrian Gonzalez spent the summer popping into program activities across CCSC to share information and tips on building strong financial habits.

Adrian joined CCSC's staff in May as our first full-time financial coach. "We added this position because we know that helping people understand the financial system and how they can set themselves on a path toward reducing debt, aligning their spending with their income, and saving for the future is essential for helping them find stability and achieve their goals," said Stefanie Lopez, CCSC's program director for employment.

Adrian teaches the business skills content of the Professional Home Caregiver Training Program and has also recently offered workshops for Martha's Way and JobNet clients. During group presentations, Adrian provides information about enrolling in coaching for individualized assistance.

Research shows that one-on-one coaching is effective in helping people achieve financial goals. CCSC's financial coach's role is to help participants set financial goals and create a plan for working toward them. The coach partners with clients, sharing information and tools from reputable sources such as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporations (FDIC). As a team, Adrian and the client work through challenges that arise; Adrian offers accountability, but he does not give advice about financial products or tell a client what they should do with their finances.

One of Adrian's current clients is Lucy T., a pulmonary respiratory therapist with 30 years' experience in the field. Lucy has experience running a business and would like to start her own respiratory therapy business. However, Lucy would like to build her understanding and confidence in financial management before taking that step. "I am coaching Lucy on how to strengthen her budgeting and saving skills by introducing her to tools from government resources such as [consumer.gov](https://www.consumer.gov)," Adrian said. "I am also helping her learn how to host Zoom meetings online."

"Most of our clients are navigating the financial system on a limited income with debt and savings issues trailing right behind them," Adrian added. "They are always eager to learn more about saving and budgeting strategies they can implement in their everyday lives."

Falling into Winter at CCSC's Garden

During the summer, CCSC Garden volunteers weather the heat and other elements to grow and harvest loads of quality vegetables and fruits for CCSC clients.

This produce is added to our nonperishable food packages and provided to neighbors in need at both CCSC food pantries.

As the summer growing season winds down, Garden volunteers are busy harvesting late summer produce such as eggplant, peppers, watermelons and okra while looking forward to the upcoming fall season crops.

"I am looking forward to the beds of Southern Peas that will be harvested in the next few weeks," said volunteer Margaret Weddle.

Volunteer Joan Wu likes looking at how the plants are like people. "I tend to see human qualities in the vegetables," Wu said. "Take the tomatoes—they are gregarious creatures, shouting 'Pick me!' with their brilliant red color.

"But okra is different," Wu added. "Despite its length, which can be half a foot, okra hides quite easily under gigantic leaves. As the Bible passage says, we cannot hide under a basket. Humans, like plants, are made to be of use to each other."

As the summer beds are cleared to make way for fall's cabbage, turnips, chard, kale, radishes, lettuce, beets, carrots and onions, we are grateful



Volunteer Joan Wu harvests okra from the Garden.

to our CCSC Garden volunteers. Their diligence and perseverance make this wonderful space productive and meaningful.

Visitors to our pantries continually tell us how grateful they are to receive the high-quality vegetables and fruits that nourish their families while lowering their food costs.

JobNet, Caregiver Programs Focus on Feedback

CCSC continuously works to improve its services. Toward that end, JobNet and the Professional Home Caregiver Training Program staff are holding focus groups to gain a comprehensive understanding of how we can best meet the community's needs.

Collecting qualitative data through these focus groups allows CCSC to gather richer feedback on community members' thoughts and experiences than is possible through other data collection methods.

During JobNet's focus group sessions held in



late August and we learned valuable information related to program performance and client needs. Here is what clients had to say about their job searches using JobNet services:

Lori C. -"Job searching is a job. I did not imagine how much work it is to look for a job. I had to track what I was doing and jobs where I had applied. If you are not prepared, it becomes overwhelming. I wanted to explore other career paths. To begin doing that, I needed to polish my Microsoft skills and try other things like LinkedIn. I found that it (JobNet) was very helpful. I was very afraid to apply online. I learned how to navigate, how to apply, and how to look for a job."

Gloria B. – "I definitely found what I was looking for. I had a great resume, I did Power Point, Excel, and refreshed my computer skills."

JobNet is holding additional focus groups in September with community members who have never accessed JobNet services.

The Professional Home Caregiver Training Program will also conduct focus groups this fall to gain insight on how to better meet the needs of both aspiring caregivers and those with experience. To date, 28 individuals have graduated from the Caregiver program, launched in fall 2020. After a year of operations, we look forward to gathering feedback on how to make the program more responsive to caregivers' needs. We hope to speak with people who are actively involved in caring for clients, whether through in-home private duty, working for an agency, or at care facilities, such as daycare programs, nursing homes or assisted living.

To learn more about JobNet or the Caregiver Training program, or to inquire about participating in a focus group, please call 713-626-8320 for JobNet, and 713-961-3993 for the Caregiver program, or visit CCSC's website.

Donate to Azalea Wine Pull

You can help make CCSC's upcoming Azalea Gala a success by donating bottles of wine to the Gala Wine Pull!

Houston Wine Merchant is offering 15% off donation bottles and 10% off personal purchases when you donate to CCSC.

This offer is valid through October 15—don't delay, donate a bottle of wine valued at \$25 or more today!

It's easy and fun to donate to CCSC's Wine Pull:

- Visit the store in person at 2646 S. Shepherd to make a cash donation or purchase wine.
- Call 713-524-3397 to make a cash donation or purchase wine.
- Purchase wine online (cash donations not accepted online).

The popular Wine Pull "cellar" will contain over 200 unique wines of varying styles, vintages and values (\$25 or higher). Check out the CCSC online Wine Pull registry at Houston Wine Merchant and donate your favorite bottle valued at \$25+.

[\[DONATE TODAY\]](#)

Special thanks to Houston Wine Merchant & the Azalea Gala Committee

Join Our Volunteer Family

CCSC's team approach to volunteering means you serve with the same group of volunteers each week or month, and that's how friendships are made.

Start building your CCSC community today, sign up for a volunteer position with our Emergency



Services or JobNet programs by emailing Erin Donohue at volunteer@ccschouston.org.



Our mission is to serve the poor, hungry, disabled, and otherwise needy while respecting their religious, ethnic or cultural differences.



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