



**San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center
Volunteer Spotlight**

December 2010

Caren McDonald and Dominique Elissondo

Caren has been a wonderful and helpful addition to Tuesday evening Meal Nights. The youth instantly felt safe and respected by Caren, who was welcomed immediately into the Meal Night family when she arrived as a volunteer in September 2010. Caren always has a positive attitude and the ability to listen actively, something that's extremely important working with youth. Beyond that, Caren is authentic in her passion for aiding young people through their struggles during the most difficult times in life. Her background as a high school English and Drama educator, social worker, addictions counselor, and having 20 years sobriety have been extremely positive for the youth, as they often do not have positive and inspirational role models. Caren is always extremely helpful and not afraid to get her hands dirty, she is able to relate to the youth on a human level and is successful in building healthy relationships. Not only that, she is a pleasure to work with and has a great sense of humor!

Dominique was a delightful addition to the Youth Program during her volunteer stay. She and her teammate Frederico worked very well as a team as well as independently. They worked together as intake volunteers, making sure that each youth's needs and information were documented for analysis, evaluation, and advocacy efforts for our weekly Meal Night program. Dominique was especially helpful during program, as she was able to jump on tasks without being asked.

We were glad to have Caren and Dominique as volunteers, and the Youth Program sends them our best wishes!

- Beck, Youth Program Coordinator

What excites you about volunteering for The Center?

Something that excited me about volunteering at the Center was working the front desk. The fact that I would be helping the community was something that I was looking forward to. Working the front desk allowed me to learn more about what is out there that the city has to offer, and what resources that are available to people. Also it was interesting learning about the resources that are not available.

Do you have any memorable and/or favorite experience volunteering with The Center?

I found that my experience was very memorable. Working meal night allowed me to get a taste of what the youth on the streets have to go through every day. Knowing that they are getting at least one feel meal a week really brought me some relief. The fact that these youth have limited to the resources and I was there to help them find other resources that they needed. This made me feel good about the volunteering that I was doing.

- Dominique Elissondo