

Workforce Recovery and Job Seeker Response: Skokie Public Library Case Study

Sheila is a single mother of 2 living in Skokie, IL. She recently lost her job as an Administrative Assistant at ABC Company when management was downsized in response to the poor economy. Having never experienced job loss previously, Sheila was unsure about where to start or what to do in order to find a new job or career that would enable her to provide for her children. In an effort to keep expenses down, she immediately cancelled her home Internet service and newspaper subscription which left her without an easy means to explore job opportunities.

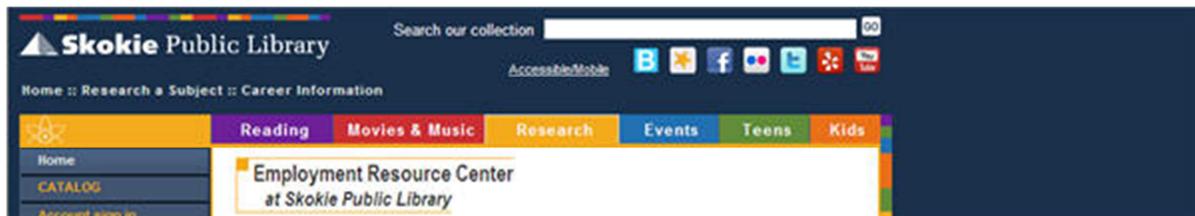
As she sat in a coffee shop trying to come up with a plan, Sheila picked up the Skokie Review hoping to find a list of job openings. In the Community Calendar section was an announcement about the *Jewish Vocational Service* offering a *Career Support Group* on the third Monday of each month at the Skokie Public Library*. The listing indicated that “Attendees network and share job search strategies and motivational tips with other job seekers,” which was exactly what Sheila needed right now.

After calling the contact number and explaining her situation, Sheila was told that the Skokie Public Library had other resources she could use, including an *Employment Resource Center* staffed by a Career Specialist, 45 computers with free internet access and local and national newspapers. While the kids were in school, Sheila took the bus to the library to explore and get a feel for what was there.

After asking at the information desk Sheila was directed to the library Career Specialist Michael Buhman. On her way to meet with Michael, Sheila noticed a bulletin board with job listings and notices of programs at the library and in the community for job seekers. She made a mental note to keep checking the board in future visits to the library.

Michael happened to be between appointments and was able to give Sheila a tour of the Employment Center and library, including how to use the computers, along with the list of job seeker web sites. Since Sheila expressed a desire to update her software application skills before applying for a new job, Michael also introduced her to two online tutorial resources – *Atomic Learning* and *Lynda.Com* – available for free to Skokie Public Library patrons.

Since Sheila had worked for the same company for a number of years, her resume also needed updating. Michael showed her the recommended web sites including *Career Center* on Tutor.com where she could find help with how to write her resume. He also told her about an upcoming workshop at the library called “*Building Your Resume: Your Passport to the Future*” and showed her how to find information on job support groups and presentations through the Skokie Event Calendar and SkokieNet.org. Sheila decided to sign up for two upcoming workshops – *Staying Motivated in a Tough Job Market* and *Tapping into the Hidden Job Market*.



Since it was about time to pick up the children from work, Sheila thanked Michael and told him she would be back soon to explore more of the print resources. Michael who told her she was also welcome to make an appointment with one of the career counselors who come to the library for a one-on-one meeting. Concerned about the expense, Sheila asked what it would cost but was told by Michael that it was free of charge.

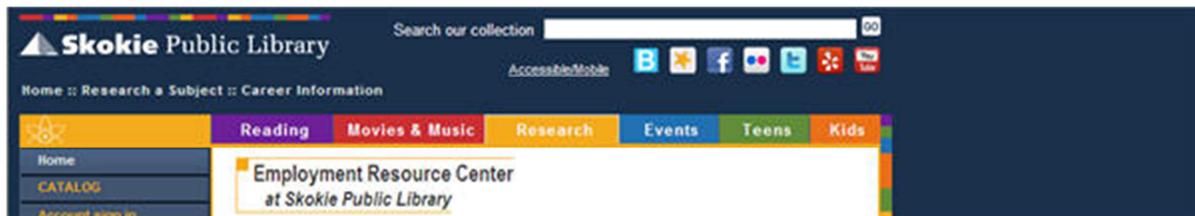
Before leaving the library, Sheila practiced using the computers by looking up the online list of *Major Employers in Skokie* on the Skokie PL web site and then browsing the want ads in the local newspapers. She left feeling a renewed sense of hope and encouragement knowing there were so many free resources available to assist in her job search.

Resources used by Sheila in her Job Search

1. Skokie Review Community Calendar
<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/skokie/lifestyles/currents/3032546,skokie-calendar-012711-s1.article>
2. Adult Computer Lab Usage http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s_about/How/Tech_Resources/index.asp
3. Employment Resource Center http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s_info/in_careers/erc.asp
4. Career Specialist – Michael Buhman – mbuhman@skokiibrary.info
5. Recommended Web Sites for Job Seekers on the SPL site
http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s_info/in_careers/index.asp
6. Tutorial resources at Skokie Public Library -
http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s_info/in_paths/tutorials.asp
7. Resume help –Recommended Resume helper web sites
http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s_info/in_careers/index.asp#resumes
8. SkokieNet.org – A calendar of community events sponsored by Skokie Public Library
<http://skokienet.org/calendar>
9. Major Employers in Skokie - <http://skokienet.org/taxonomy/term/1534>

Additional Resources

1. Skokie Public Library web site - <http://www.skokiibrary.info/>
2. ChicagoJobTalk.org – “The Definitive Chicago Area Job Guide” – created and supported by employees of Skokie Public Library, France Roehm, Librarian; Michael Buhman, Business Librarian and Career Specialist, Pat Gaines, Reference Librarian. <http://www.chicagjobs.org/>
3. Ask a Librarian – [http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s_info/getref.asp - 24/7](http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s_info/getref.asp-24/7) live chat with an SPL librarian
4. Skokie Business Portal - <http://business.skokiibrary.info/>



* Skokie is a village in Cook County, Illinois. It is a suburb of Chicago, located on the northwest border of Chicago. As of the 2000 census, the village had a total population of 63,348. Skokie Public Library serves one of the most diverse suburbs in the United States, in which more than 42 percent of residents are foreign born and more than 97 languages are spoken at home. The Library embraces the diversity of its constituency and takes great pride in tailoring its collections and programming to the many populations it serves. Through its myriad programs, Skokie Public Library has become an essential part of the Skokie community, offering all of its visitors—regardless of race, ethnicity, or ability—numerous opportunities to interact and learn.