

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH: Delya Holt



Delya Holt has worked at New Community in various capacities for more than two decades. She currently helps students at the Adult Learning Center prepare to obtain their high school diplomas.

Delya Holt has been part of the New Community family for more than 20 years, serving in different roles related to education. She currently is an instructor at the Adult Learning Center, where she teaches a variety of subjects in the high school equivalency classes four evenings per week.

Holt first became employed at New Community in 1997 as an education specialist for NCC's after-school program. In 1999, she took a full-time position with Newark Public Schools but continued working part-time for New Community's Youth Services Department. The grant she was working under ended, but NCC then received new funding for adult education classes in 2001 so she began teaching high school equivalency classes at that time and never stopped.

Education has always been an area of interest for Holt. She has a bachelor's degree in teaching and a master's degree in school counseling. She served as a third grade teacher for eight years, a fourth grade teacher for three years and is currently in her ninth year as a guidance counselor for Newark Public Schools.

During the day, Holt works as a guidance counselor at West Side High School in Newark, where she has been for about five years. Then she goes to the Adult Learning Center to teach classes Monday through Thursday from 5:30 to 8 p.m.

While initially it was an adjustment interacting in an education setting with adults rather than children and adolescents, Holt said she finds it easier leading a classroom of adults.

"When you teach children, you have to always make sure they're on task, you have to make sure that they're keeping busy and stimulated and engaged. And with adults, they're here because they want to be here. It's a goal that they've set," Holt said. "So they're a lot more engaged and they're kind of hungry for everything you're teaching them."

Holt said her favorite part of being an instructor at the Adult Learning Center is running into a former student who passed the high school equivalency test.

While going away this past summer, Holt noticed a woman looking at her in the airport. It was a former student who had obtained her high school diploma.

"She said, 'I'm here because of you,'" Holt recalled. "That makes it worthwhile."

Holt has dedicated her time to teaching adult education classes at New Community for more than 15 years and is a valued member of the team.

"Ms. Holt has always been very committed to her students, their learning achievements and our program," said Adult Learning Center Director Cristhian Barcelos. "And it is always very moving when we see Ms. Holt's students coming back to the school to share their high school diploma with her and the other students."

Working at New Community on top of her full-time job with Newark Public Schools doesn't feel like a burden to Holt.

"I like the mission and the vision of New Community," she said. "And I'm from Newark so I never mind doing anything in the city."

Holt currently lives in Orange. She's a member of a sorority and spends her free time doing community service. She likes to read, particularly romantic novels, and enjoys Lifetime television.