

## EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH: Sommer Flood



Sommer Flood has been a Family Worker at Community Hills Early Learning Center since September 2018.

Parents and students at Community Hills Early Learning Center are greeted each morning by Family Worker Sommer Flood as they head to class. She serves as a liaison between families and CHELC.

Flood is the line of communication between parents and teachers. If parents need to speak with the teacher or relay any type of information concerning the child, they reach out to Flood and she passes along the message. If a teacher needs to speak with a parent, Flood contacts the parent and facilitates the conversation. She also is in contact with Newark Public Schools personnel, including speech therapists and social workers; conducts home visits with families; provides parent support groups; and helps prepare families for kindergarten.

In addition, Flood also connects parents to community resources. She recalled that a student's glasses broke in class

and she found the nonprofit ChildSight in Newark and connected the parent to that organization. The child was able to receive two free pairs of glasses. If families have issues with transportation, Flood will try to obtain bus tickets for them. The goal is to keep the children coming to school.

Flood sees her role as a support person and is always willing to help families. She handles four pre-K classes for a total of 60 students, ages 3 and 4.

"My favorite part of the job is being able to show students, parents and staff that I care, that I'm here to support them in any way that I can," she said. "I want to see everyone succeed. If one person succeeds, in my opinion, we all succeed."

Her work has been noticed.

"Ms. Sommer has created great relationships with our families and has created great ideas that involve our children and families," said CHELC Director Gloria Johnson.

Flood started working at New Community in July 2017 and held several temporary positions before taking on the permanent role of Family Worker at CHELC. She served as a teacher's assistant at Harmony House Early Learning Center, the receptionist for Harmony House and a temporary case manager at Harmony House.

"Basically I became part of the New Community family and I'm here now," she said. "I've always been interested in community development, community engagement, public service type of work. And that's what NCC does."

Flood graduated from Science Park High School in Newark and continued her education at Rutgers-Newark. She graduated from there with a degree in Public Administration. She was able to get the teacher's assistant job at HHELC because while in college, she worked for Kids Corp during the summer as a teacher's assistant.

She has held other jobs as well, all related to serving others. She has worked in retail and was a toll collector.

"I like customer service. I like showing people that I'm here to help them. So all of these jobs, if you need my help, I'm here to help you," Flood said. "I'm a public servant. I just like helping people."

In her spare time, Flood likes to go to the movies, go out to eat, go to museums, see jazz performances and read books. She also likes traveling and exploring places.