



The stability of a permanent job was a dream Cristabel thought she would never be able to attain. For years she struggled to find temporary work to support herself and her four children. Many times, the tax refund she received was the way she could support her family throughout the year. Today, Cristabel works as a manager at the local Soup Kitchen to support her family. Now she is able to go to work every morning and do a job she is passionate about, while at the same time, allowing her to help others and give back to her community.

Cristabel first came to the VITA site after someone at her son's school suggested she could get free help filing her tax return. Prior to using VITA, Cristabel used a paid preparer so she rarely got any money back from her return because it was spent on tax processing fees. It wasn't until after she used VITA that she received a refund. Qualifying for the Earned Income Tax credit helped fill the gaps - paying bills, making rent. "Getting that extra money helped keep us off the streets, it's hard to make a living working in part-time jobs".

Cristabel knows the extra income that the Earned Income Tax Credit provides will help give her kids a better future. Being able to save for a home they can call their own and give her kids an education is very important to Cristabel. "Making sure my kids get an education is very important to me – the struggles in the world are real and I don't want them to struggle".

