600CS

By Cliff Peale

versity senior who graduated from Ursuline Academy. "But after doing it last year, I just really liked the fact that I could help people in a way that was unique to me. This is something not anybody can do." Russo works with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, where Xavier accounting students have helped people from Norwood, Evanston and Avondale for 19 years tax returns seems natural to Kara Russo. That's why she likes it. "At first it was a way to get credit while eople," said the Xavier Uni-

from Norwood, Evanston and Avondale for 19 years.

QUESTION: How did you get involved with the VITA program?

ANSWER: I got involved after taking my tax class with Dr. (Priscilla)
O'Clock. She had been overseeing the program at Xavier for years and brought it up during class. She shared with us how much it meant to her, which made me curious to find out what was so rewarding about doing peoples' taxes. I was also very interested in tax accounting so I terested in tax accounting, so I thought this could be a good way to get more exposure to the subject. Not to mention we could receive credit.

Q: What's the best thing about helping people fill out these forms correctly?

. The best thing is getting to know axpayers that we are serving,

and helping them get as much money back in their refund as possible.

Many of our taxpayers are low-income clients that have a bigger need for a sizable refund. One taxpayer that I had the pleasure of helping was disabled and was hoping for a large refund to help buy a vehicle more suitable for her situation. After finding her refund to be more than what she expected, she did the best she could to get up and hug me. It was in that moment that I realized what this meant to people, and why Dr. O'Clock worked so hard for this program.

Q: Have you faced any unusual tax problems that you didn't anticipate?

A. Sometimes we will have a client come in with returns that need to be done for several years back. Most times these clients did not realize that they had to file for years, and then upon realizing it, decided they need help. Other times there have been clients who are from other states, and since we are mostly familiar with the Ohio return, their state return often takes more time to figure out.



Xavier student Kara Russo helps
Evanston's Maurice Jones with his tax
return. THE ENQUIRER/AMANDA DAVIDSON

TAX HELP

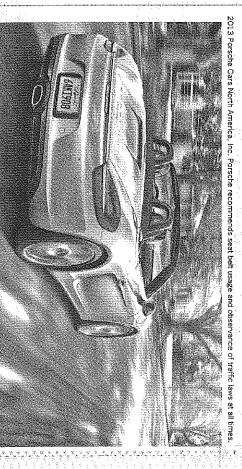
To get an appointment with the Xavier University Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, call 745-2828 or email vita@xavier.edu.

Q: Has this program changed your career goals at all?

A: This program hasn't changed my career goals, but has enhanced them. I knew that I wanted to be in tax accounting since I declared an accounting major, however, VITA has given me even more affirmation that tax is where my interests lie.

Q: Do you get the same thrill when you get through with those form as the rest of us?

A: Of course! Even though I like working out the "puzzle," I am always anxious to finish it so that I can move on to the next.



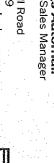
it's going straight to voicemail. Unless it's the road calling,

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By Kelly McBride

Healthy habits, one step at a time

Wyoming High School students are taking a step toward fitness.

Through a United Health Heroes grant, Wyoming Youth Services has purchased pedometers for students as part of a program that supports youth-led projects, including walking, running and hiking.

It's part of an effort to help fight

childhood obesity. Youth Services
Executive Director Kimberly Hauser
said the good habit is something kids
can incorporate now and carry with
them as adults.

Grants of up to \$1,000 were awarded to youth-led, community-based
programs that include activity (kids
count their steps) and service (to
increase awareness of childhood obesity). The Wyoming project will focus
on grades 8-12.