

Coach and Buddy Story

Christina, who has a background in finance and accounting, came to Budget Buddies looking to help her community. Musu fled to America from Liberia with her young son looking for a better life. Living in a low-income housing district in Lowell, she struggled to overcome the challenges of immigration and poverty as a single parent. A local community group encouraged her to join Budget Buddies.

“I was nervous to begin this journey, but ready to learn,” says Musu -- who adds, “I gained an American sister through Budget Buddies.”

Musu and Christina met at the program’s “*Getting to Know You*” workshop and attended the next 11 workshops together. In between the workshops, Christina met individually with Musu to apply the concepts they had learned to Musu’s specific financial issues. Because a disability with her foot made it difficult for Musu to walk, Christina took her to a local African supermarket and showed her how to save money by purchasing non-ethnic items at the local Market Basket. When Musu needed help finding a job, Christina set up and accompanied her to an interview.

Christina also helped Musu with her son, attending several school meetings to get him the services he required. He has since moved to a school that better suits his needs and is flourishing there. He takes drum lessons and is involved in other after-school activities.

With Christina’s help Musu has enrolled at Middlesex Community College, studying to become a teaching assistant. Once a kindergarten teacher in Liberia, she currently has a part-time job working with preschoolers and has become Red Cross certified. Her relationship with Christina has also played a key role in achieving citizenship for her and her son.

When they became citizens, “it was a day of hope, resilience, and pride,” says Christina. “Musu and her son have faced a lot of adversity, both in the United States and in Africa. But they continue to move ahead. I look forward to seeing where their lives lead next.”