

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide CyberTax

April 21, 2017

To: All Volunteers of AARP Foundation Tax-Aide

From: Lynnette Lee-Villanueva, Vice President and National Director, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide

Subject: CyberTax TY2016-05: Thank You!

Dear Tax-Aide volunteers:

Thank you!

I know this season has taken a toll on you as you've worked with the new tax software. When you had to, you worked long hours to help the people in your community who rely on you. We have heard from so many of you about the pain of turning away taxpayers because things just didn't work the way they should have.

The staff and the volunteer committees share your dissatisfaction. The lack of confidence we currently have in the new software worries me, and we are addressing these concerns directly with the IRS and TaxSlayer with a long list of improvements that must be made before the next tax season. We have regular ongoing meetings with leadership in both organizations and those will continue. We are also joining forces with other VITA partners so that we can present a united front. We fully understand that it has to be better next year.

You and every leader in this program are to be commended for your service. I value the pride you take in completing accurate returns. It's an incredible and exhausting effort every year, but more so this year when some of the bumps became craters. I had hoped the early-season TaxSlayer issues would be a distant memory at this point, but I know that for many of us late-season issues have made them fresh again.

I'd like to share one particularly moving story from Idaho that occurred earlier this season. It is stories like this one that make us return year after year.

Chet, our Tax-Aide Counselor, had spent the latter part of an evening shift doing taxes for a couple during which he learned that the wife was a singer. Before she left, Chet asked the woman if she would sing. She picked the song.

Unbeknownst to those at the site, the dull hum of tax work changed to respectful silence and awe once they heard..."*Oh, say can you see...*" Yes, this young lady chose to sing The National Anthem! And what a stunning rendition it was. She had a beautiful voice, and with no accompaniment whatsoever, delighted all who could hear, inside the tax site and out into the mall. Many stood with hands over hearts, others' eyes welled with tears.

As Chet put it, "I thought it was cool to have a patriotic moment at the financial intersection of 'government' and the people."

What a gift she gave back to the volunteers that night.

I know many of you have moving stories of your own, the hugs and handshakes, cookies and donuts are all expressions of gratitude that you richly deserve. Thank you again for your service in your community and for your contributions to AARP Foundation Tax-Aide.