

He's the 'face of the agency'

14-year-old is youngest volunteer at IMAA desk

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Mansour Mahadi's professional demeanor, commitment to helping others and bilingual abilities all stand out.

Especially when you find out that the volunteer at the Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association is just 14 years old.

Yet in spite of his young age, Panloeu Chim, who is serving as Mahadi's volunteer coordinator, saw him as capable of serving at the front desk, making him the youngest volunteer to do so, she said.

"I put him on the front desk and told him it's very important. You are the face of the agency," Chim said.

And while it took some mentoring in how to dress and what to say on the phone, Chim said she, like most other people when they find out Mahadi's age, has been impressed by his abilities.

In addition to sitting at the front desk and answering the phone, Mahadi, of Rochester, also has helped clients fill out job applications and served as an Arabic translator for many Iraqi newcomers with limited



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Mansour Mahadi, 14, volunteers at the front desk of the Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association in Rochester. He is the youngest person to staff the IMAA desk.

English skills.

The chance for him to give back to the community is what prompted Mahadi's parents to inquire about having him volunteer at IMAA earlier this summer.

When his family moved to Rochester almost 10 years ago from Sudan, Mahadi said they received support from IMAA.

"I know how his parents feel. You want to have your child be a good citizen," Chim

said. Yet, she told Mahadi that he deserves credit for following through.

Mahadi, who volunteers for a couple of hours a day at IMAA, said he's gotten a lot out of the experience.

"Everything here is cool," he said. "Once I started volunteering I felt like an adult."

And while he likes hanging out with friends over the summer, Mahadi said, "I put my mind into this more."