

Employee Spotlight: Fransina Bolingo



Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

My name is Fransina Bolingo, and I have called West Michigan home for the past eight years. My journey to this point has been anything but ordinary. I started working with Public Works at Kent County in October of 2021. Originally, I am from the Democratic Republic of Congo and when war started, many of us were forced to move and find safety in Uganda.

It was there, in Uganda, that my children were born. We lived in a refugee camp, where we were recognized as refugees. Life in the refugee camp was very difficult. We were peasants and farmers, relying entirely on our ability to grow what we needed for survival.

After spending more than 10 years in that camp, hope appeared when we heard about a program that would allow some refugees to resettle in the United States. I remember the day we found out that our family's name was on the list—it was a mix of excitement and worry because I didn't speak English. I had no idea what to expect, but I was hopeful and thankful for the opportunity.

After arriving in the United States, we were fortunate to receive help in finding jobs. My first job here was with a laundry company that specialized in washing hospital linens and other items. It was a way into a new life, and I worked there for two years while continuing to search for other opportunities. That's when I discovered Fettig, a hiring company that connected me with Kent County Public Works. Initially, I was placed here through Fettig, but soon after, a permanent position opened up and I was happy to be selected as a candidate and even more excited when I got the job. The support and encouragement I've received from my leadership has been very good and I am truly grateful for the opportunities I've been given.

What is your position at Kent County and what individuals do you work with?

I am a line worker at the Recycling Center but recently I've taken on more responsibilities as a line leader. My job involves working directly on the line, where I am part of a team dedicated to making sure our recycling processes run smoothly. As a line leader, my job has grown to include overseeing the workflow on the line, dealing with any issues that come up, and providing guidance and

Employee Spotlight: Fransina Bolingo

Continued from page 1...

support to my team. When someone has a question or needs support, I'm there to help.

At the Recycling Center, my primary job is to sort through materials that come down the line. I focus on identifying and removing any plastic materials, glass, trash bags, or other garbage that doesn't belong in the recycling stream. As a line leader, I also cover breaks for my team and step in when someone is gone.

What do you like most about your job?

There are many parts of my job that I enjoy, but I like the trust and confidence that the management team has given me the most. When the opportunity came up for the line leader job, they saw my potential and believed in my ability to take on this new job. This recognition has expanded my love for the job and made me want to stay at Public Works even more. If they didn't see my potential, I might have continued searching for other temporary jobs through Fattig. Instead, I have found a place where I truly feel at home.

After spending more than 10 years in that camp, hope appeared when we heard about a program that would allow some refugees to resettle in the United States.

One of the things I like about my work environment is the support and respect I receive from my coworkers and management. As long as I am able to do the work, I have never felt overwhelmed or troubled with more than I can handle. I am confident in my job and the work I do, and I am happy about the strong communication within our team. Whether someone is being late or needing to take a day off, my team and management always make sure everything is okay. They really care about the workers, and I can feel that they want me to be a part of the team every day. This feeling of community and respect has made my job very rewarding, and I am proud to be a part of Kent County Public Works.