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***FAIRWINDS Foundation Announces Recipients of 2020 Grants***  
*Grant Recipients Represent New, Unified Direction for the Foundation*

**ORLANDO, Fla. (March 3, 2020)** – *FAIRWINDS* Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that serves as the philanthropic arm of *FAIRWINDS* Credit Union, today announced the recipients of its 2020 grants at an event held at the financial institution’s Downtown Orlando headquarters. The grants were awarded to eight regional organizations embodying the Foundation’s core purpose of inspiring generosity and improving lives through financial well-being.

“We are proud to support each of these organizations, and we look forward to the impact they will make in helping others achieve financial freedom through education,” said Elisha González, vice president of community relations and government affairs at *FAIRWINDS* Credit Union and executive director of the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation. “Through the positive impact of the causes we support, we hope to inspire generous living among both *FAIRWINDS* members and the communities we serve.”

The announcement of these eight grants represents a new, unified vision for the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation. Launched in 2017, the Foundation was formed to embody and further *FAIRWINDS*’ commitment to the Central Florida community.

Senior leadership from the Foundation’s grant recipient organizations and community leaders attended today’s event to celebrate the importance of this partnership and for a formal moment of recognition. Each of the selected organizations strives to foster financial understanding, stability and independence:

- **Seminole County Public Schools** will utilize its \$30,850 grant from the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation to impact the fiscal well-being of students through a financial literacy program aimed at helping middle school students grow up to be savvy money managers.

“Through this incredible partnership with *FAIRWINDS* Foundation, Seminole County Public Schools now has the capability to make a lifelong difference in the financial well-being of our students,” said Jean Van Smith, Seminole County Public School’s executive director.

- **Central Florida Urban League (CFUL)** received \$30,000 and employee volunteers from *FAIRWINDS* that will support its Meet the Bankers initiative, a program designed to provide a detailed path to financial stability and home ownership through education. As part of the partnership, the CFUL team and *FAIRWINDS* crewmembers will provide individual tailored and prescriptive

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financial pathways that will help participants develop household budgets, create savings plans, manage debt and avoid common pitfalls like predatory loans.

"We are thankful to have the opportunity to work with the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation to further develop our mission of equipping Central Floridians with the tools they need to be financially healthy and literate," said Glenton Gilzean Jr., president and CEO of CFUL.

- **Heart of Florida United Way** will receive a \$30,000 grant from the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation. Half of the Central Florida population falls into the ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) category, which means many are balancing on the cusp of financial ruin. Nearly half of the Orlando community is living paycheck to paycheck and barely able to afford necessities like housing, transportation and food. United Way's focus on financial stability, which includes education and training programs designed to help an individual increase their financial knowledge and utilize the information to make informed and effective decisions, aligns with the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation focus on teaching financial literacy as a means of improving the financial well-being of the community.

The grant from the Foundation will support the ALICE population. In response to this investment, United Way will provide financial literacy education and certification for up to 40 case managers in the service area for Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. United Way will work with its nonprofit and community partners to identify case managers who will benefit from becoming a Certified Practitioner in Financial Capability (CPFInCap).

"Nearly half of Central Florida's population falls into the ALICE population," said Jeff Hayward, president & CEO of Heart of Florida United Way. "Hardworking individuals and families live paycheck to paycheck and are barely able to afford basic needs like housing, transportation, and food. With the support of *FAIRWINDS*, we can further our fight for ALICE and increase financial knowledge through education and training programs."

- **MicheLee Puppets Inc.**, which has a 34-year history of empowering children to positive action through puppetry, received a \$30,000 grant to support the production of multiple entertaining and educational videos, as well as educational resources designed to teach grade students about financial literacy. The goal of this first-of-its-kind series is to inspire the next generation of savers, so they may learn best practices of financial literacy at home and in the classroom. MicheLee Puppets has partnered with Florida PBS Learning Media to distribute its proprietary educational resources to families and schools in Central Florida, as well as to educators around the country.

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"Thanks to the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation, MicheLee Puppets will have the opportunity to create video content that inspires children to make smart financial decisions where they are and establish healthy spending and saving habits that they will carry with them into adulthood," said MicheLee Puppets executive director Tracey M. Conner.

- **Stetson University's EDGE Program** prepares financially challenged students for the future through education and career readiness training, teaching them to make informed economic decisions after college. Through a \$23,651 grant from the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation, EDGE will be able to reach and connect with more students.

"With the support of the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation, EDGE will continue providing financial literacy education to those students who need it most," said Tim Stiles, executive director at Stetson's Office of Career and Professional Development.

- **Junior Achievement of Central Florida** will further develop its *JA Finance Park Virtual* program with \$15,000 in grant funding from the Foundation. As the banking sponsor of the program, *FAIRWINDS* supports a virtual simulation exercise for high school seniors in economics classes, better preparing them to make well-informed personal financial decisions.

"With a mission of inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy, we are proud to partner with *FAIRWINDS* and are grateful for the Foundation's support," said Kathy Panter, president of Junior Achievement of Central Florida.

- **University of Central Florida's (UCF) Cent\$ible Knight\$** is the university's premiere financial literacy program. As a longstanding partner and the official Student Banking Service Provider to the university, the Foundation continues to offer five \$2,500 scholarships to UCF students that complete the program.

"The support of *FAIRWINDS* Credit Union and its Foundation has been essential to the facilitation of our Cent\$ible Knight\$ workshops, which enhance students' financial knowledge and equips them with the tools they need to make sound financial decisions," said University of Central Florida Foundation's College of Business executive director, Susan Glenn.

- **Hispanic Heritage Scholarship Fund of Metro Orlando** will receive \$5,500 to support its program which has awarded hundreds of postsecondary scholarships to outstanding academic achievers of Hispanic descent. Such scholarships help relieve the financial burden carried by the recipients, allowing them to better focus on their studies and their families.

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“Thanks to the generosity of organizations such as the *FAIRWINDS* Foundation, we are able to impact students’ lives in a very significant way,” said Lizette Valarino, Hispanic Heritage Scholarship Fund of Metro Orlando board member.

To further grow the scope and influence of the Foundation, *FAIRWINDS* is now accepting donations directly to the Foundation itself. *FAIRWINDS* hopes to continue to inspire generous living that can make an extraordinary difference in transforming the lives of others in the Central Florida community.

### **About *FAIRWINDS* Foundation**

The *FAIRWINDS* Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, is dedicated to helping individuals achieve a path toward financial responsibility, security and freedom, and inspiring them to transform the lives of others by living generously.

Through education, financial contribution and volunteerism, the Foundation works with and supports organizations that align with its passion of improving lives through financial literacy.

For more information, visit [www.fairwinds.org/foundation](http://www.fairwinds.org/foundation).

### **About *FAIRWINDS* Credit Union**

*FAIRWINDS* Credit Union is a financial institution committed to exceptional member experiences that offers products and services that promote healthy saving and spending habits, providing its members the freedom to go further.

*FAIRWINDS* exists to help its members around the globe along the journey to financial freedom by providing sound financial advice, products and services that help members save more, eliminate debt and build wealth. The institution is also committed to inspiring members, both near and far, to live generously through the work of its *FAIRWINDS* Foundation, which is committed to supporting organizations that focus on improving lives through financial well-being.

For more information, visit [www.fairwinds.org](http://www.fairwinds.org).

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