

Louise Herring Award for Philosophy in Action

The Hawaii Credit Union League and Credit Union National Association are pleased to sponsor the Louise Herring Award for Philosophy in Action.

This recognition program identifies credit unions that demonstrate the credit union "People-Helping-People" philosophy through the practical application of credit union philosophy in daily internal operations.

Entrants in the Louise Herring competition compete with credit unions in the same asset category. Here are the 2009 national Louise Herring Award winners:

LOUISE HERRING PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION PROGRAM

Louise Herring (Less than \$50 million in assets)

First Place:

Communicating Arts Credit Union (MI)

Residents of Highland Park, Michigan, an area of extreme poverty and crime indices over four times as high as average, now have access to fairly priced financial services thanks to the commitment of Communicating Arts Credit Union. The branch office of Communicating Arts is the first financial institution to open in the community in more than 20 years. The credit union offers a menu of products and services that serves the financial needs of community members, and in doing so, has kept hundreds of thousands of dollars in their pockets -- money that would have otherwise gone to the area's predatory alternative financial providers. The branch is supporting itself financially, six months ahead of plan. A well-thought out physical design eliminated the need for bullet-resistant glass and includes a warm, open and welcoming lobby and a community room.

Second Place:

Cutting Edge Federal Credit Union (OR)

Educating members about the benefits of keeping their finances healthy is the goal of Cutting Edge FCU's Financial Check-Up program. Members are encouraged to schedule a private, one-hour appointment with credit union staff, who dress the part by wearing white coats embroidered with their names and "F.D." -- Financial Doctor. Behind closed doors, Financial Doctors address members' questions, review credit reports and scores, or suggest products and services that would be beneficial. At the conclusion of the check-up, members receive a "prescription card," which provides action items as well as answers to their questions. Often, employees follow up with phone calls or another appointment. The one-on-one treatment is well-received by members.



Honorable Mention:**Wyrope Williamsport Federal Credit Union (PA)**

Children discover both the tangible and intangible rewards of saving through the "Money Mouse Kids Club," introduced at Wyrope Williamsport FCU during Credit Union Youth Week. Club members who make a \$10 deposit receive a "money mouse dollar," which can be used to purchase prizes, ranging from gift certificates to fast food restaurants to a personal audio device. The credit union encourages Club members to save by providing a coin holder, a personal pass book and a drawing for a gift certificate to kids who are saving for a goal, such as bicycle or video game.

Louise Herring (\$50 to \$250 million in assets)**First Place:****Down East Credit Union (ME)**

Down East CU knew members were paying too much for credit obtained elsewhere. Its "Let's Find Some Missing Money, Yours" program offered members a no-obligation review of their credit reports. By refinancing loans, the credit union saved its members more than \$280,000 in just seven months. One member refinanced three loans and saved more than \$5,000. Magnetic posters in the lobby of each credit union branch are updated weekly to keep members informed of the amount of money saved, and serve as a reminder that the credit union has the best interests of its members in mind.

Second Place:**Family Trust Federal Credit Union (SC)**

To help mitigate the effects of the economic downturn on its members and the community at large, Family Trust FCU launched "Called to Care." This comprehensive plan included stepped-up efforts in its Credit Counseling Center, outreach to business partners through employee workshops, town hall meetings and a Webcast on the economy, and in cooperation with the United Way, publication of a brochure that provided tips on surviving tough times and where to go for assistance. Financial advice also was provided in a newspaper column written by a credit union staff member.

Honorable Mention:**Members Credit Union (NC)**

Members Credit Union created an innovative program to help its members reap the rewards of saving. Its "What Are You Saving For?" program seeks to make saving fun by incorporating an attractive interest rate based on account activity, the use of social media, and prizes. Members who sign up for electronic statements and make a net deposit of at least \$25 per month are eligible for double the regular share account dividend rate. The credit union built a blog on a Web site (whatareyousavingfor.com) to enable its members to openly discuss their savings goals as well as tips and strategies for reaching them. To maintain excitement, the credit union offers additional contests and prizes, including a "Biggest Saver" competition, with a grand prize of \$2,000. Since its launch, the credit union has helped 426 members set and budget for their savings goals.

Louise Herring (More than \$250 million in assets)

First Place:

Credit Union 1 (AK)

While many entities offer reward plans for spending money, members participating in the "1 For All" Rewards program from Credit Union 1 earn premiums for using a full array of financial services, including deposits, credit use and general money management. For example, members earn 1 point per \$100 in savings, 50 points for receiving E-statements and 500 points for each new loan with a balance of \$2,500 - \$19,999. Rewards include significant loan interest rate discounts and higher certificate premiums, as well as gift cards and travel rebates. Members are encouraged to set personal financial goals and choose their incentive for reaching those goals. Members also have the option of donating their points to local charities.

Second Place (Tie):

Centra Credit Union (IN)

The focus of Centra Credit Union's Helping Hand program is to offer members and others in the community the resources to help them cope emotionally and financially in the wake of unemployment or the loss of overtime pay or benefits. Helping Hand seeks to provide practical money management advice as well as assistance in dealing with the emotional issues related to job loss. The credit union created an information packet, conducted a workshop with area church pastors to help them assist members of their congregations, and sponsored a Job Transitions workshop, which offered tips on job hunting and paying bills without a paycheck.

State Employees Credit Union (NC)

State Employees Credit Union created a member-friendly reverse mortgage to assist its senior members who need additional income. To address concerns raised over typical reverse mortgages, the program features a fixed rate of interest, simple interest accrual on the loan, a substantially lower origination fee than the industry standard and no mortgage insurance requirement. The credit union produced a comprehensive consumer guide to give its staff and interested senior members the tools needed to assist in their decision-making. The reverse mortgage is not aggressively "sold" to members, but offered only when it is the best option to help them draw equity from their homes.

Honorable Mention:

First Community Credit Union (ND)

To offer expert help for members struggling with managing their credit, First Community Credit Union provided for credit union financial counseling certification of three of its staff members, and then launched a Credit Confidence program. The Credit Confidence program featured quarterly educational seminars in three different locations (a total of 12 annually) and individual credit counseling sessions with members. Topics covered included understanding credit reports, money management and discovering financial behaviors. A seminar was also offered to staff members and their spouses to enable them to better understand credit issues.