Bethpage Federal Credit Union Relaunches "Difference Makers"

An empowerment initiative for the youth

Bethpage Cares, Bethpage Federal Credit Union's charitable giving arm, announces the relaunch of Difference Makers, its youth empowerment initiative first launched in Jan. 2020, but then paused as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Developed to empower young individuals to come together to support their local communities, Bethpage will provide mini grants ranging from $250 to $5,000 to individual students and student groups, ranging from the 5th grade through undergraduate college, who share their desire to develop a project-focused program to benefit the community.

"We want to invest in our children, the future leaders of our communities. Now that student activities have started to resume, it is important that we reinstate Difference Makers, which has the potential to make a big impact on many passionate young people," said Linda Armyn, Senior Vice President, Bethpage Federal Credit Union.

Throughout the last two years, we have been able to support some grant applications with a few highlighted below:

Syosset South Woods Middle School students and Jericho brothers, 14-year-old Ben Ellis, an 8th grader, and 12-year-old Aidan Ellis, a 7th grader, requested grant money from Difference Makers to install a summertime butterfly garden that can be turned into a sitting bench in the colder, winter months, when the flowering plants are dormant. With their grant money, and collaboration with the North Shore Land Alliance, Ben and Aidan were able to successfully develop and install their butterfly garden and planter/bench at the Wawapek Preserve located in Cold Spring Harbor.

Glen Cove resident, Elana Greim, a 17-year-old 12th grade student at Glen Cove High School, requested grant money for her Environmental Club, with the goal of implementing a school recycling program. With help from her Difference Makers grant, Elana and her club were able to purchase recycling bins for 115 school classrooms. Elana believes that it is more important than ever to create recycling programs to help combat global warming, and to help make the Earth a cleaner place, one step at a time.

August "Gus" Bresnaider, 18, who is currently a student at the University of Virginia, was an Eagle Scout with Troop 123 in Merrick and a 12th grader at Mepham High School when he requested grant money to improve a community garden at the Park Avenue Elementary School in Merrick. With his grant money from Bethpage, Gus and his troop created new garden beds, including two wheelchair-accessible garden beds so that everyone could enjoy and take part in the upkeep of the garden. They also re-mulched the area and created a "Park Pride" sign on the front fence of the garden.



The Ellis brothers Ben, left, and Aidan, right, of Jericho recently received a grant from Bethpage Federal Credit Union's Difference Makers program to install a butterfly garden and planter/bench at the Wawapek Preserve located in Cold Spring Harbor. Bethpage recently relaunched the mini grant initiative which empowers young individuals to come together to support their local communities. *(Photo courtesy of Bethpage Federal Credit Union)*

Bethpage encourages parents, mentors, teachers, family and friends to encourage the children in their lives to get involved in their local communities. To apply for a financial grant, visit Bethpage's website at: www.bethpagefcu.com/community/volunteer. Students will be asked to submit a brief business plan, their budget, a timeline and the community impact it will provide.

"We want to effect change and know there are many ambitious young people today that do too, but just need some guidance and financial support. We are excited to support them in their efforts today and hope this experience helps them as they embark on their future successes," stated Armyn.

Since 2002, Bethpage Federal Credit Union employees have volunteered more than 5,000 hours annually, supporting dozens of charitable organizations throughout New York. Bethpage invests in the community through large-sponsored events, volunteerism and charitable grants totaling over $2 million dollars annually.

Bethpage Federal Credit Union is a premier community financial institution committed to enriching the lives of its members, employees and the communities it serves for the past 80 years. Bethpage is the largest credit union in the Northeast Region, and the 14th largest in the nation.

As a not-for-profit credit union, Bethpage is committed to its members and the communities it serves. In addition to giving back to its members in the form of great rates and low fees, the Bethpage Cares program invests heavily in local, high-impact community programs that serve with an eye towards creating better communities through diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Named a Forbes Best Place to Bank in New York, the fifth Best Company to Work for in New York State by the New York State Society for Human Resources Management, and a Glass Door Top Place to work for Small & Midsize companies in the US, Bethpage is a federally chartered credit union, available to people nationwide who open a $5 dollar membership account. Bethpage offers a robust digital platform that allows members to bank from anywhere. Bethpage is a part of the national CO-OP network that gives members access to their accounts at over 30,000 free ATMs and 5,000+ shared branches across the U.S. As a financial cooperative, Bethpage offers the best-in market rates, lowest fees and world-class service, plus a full menu of personal and commercial financial services. For more information on Bethpage's robust portfolio of banking, borrowing, and investment services, visit www.lovebethpage.com or call 1-800- 628-7070.

—Submitted by Bethpage Federal Credit Union