

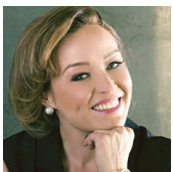
TruWest Credit Union's TruDifference

TruWest demonstrates its commitment to supporting the community in which it operates

by Tyler Butler

MCC'S YEAR UP PROGRAM RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS RECOGNITION FROM THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

In June 2021, Mesa Community College's First Year Experience program, a supportive year-long engagement with first-year college students, was recognized as a Program of Promise by the National Organization for Student Success. The NOSS recognition is given to programs using effective and promising practices promoting student success and development. The MCC First Year Experience is identified as an exceptional program exemplifying the NOSS mission to assist education professionals in making a positive difference in the lives of students, as well as engaging in promising practices and demonstrating positive outcomes. Since 2020, TruWest has donated more than \$70,000 to the program. thenoss.org



Tyler Butler is the chief social impact officer for the Weedmaps' corporate portfolio where she leads programs that positively impact humanity. She is also the founder of 11.11CoLab and is often cited as a subject-matter expert by *Forbes*, *SHRM*, *Entrepreneur*, *US News & World Report* and more. weedmaps.com

Steeped in Arizona history, TruWest Credit Union was originally established in 1952 as Motorola Credit Union. With more than 93,000 members and eight Phoenix locations, the TruWest of today is focused on building upon the rich legacy on which they were established and on building a stronger community. Operating under the philosophy "people helping people," the organization functions as a cooperative, providing members with not just financial services but also a culture of caring for its members, employees and communities.

TruWest is not only a provider of trusted financial solutions and services, but it also promotes its TruDifference. Through its commitment to community, TruWest lends a hand to local nonprofits while serving to educate and activate necessary programs to aid society. Helping the community is part of the fabric of the organization and is one of the pillars it was founded upon. The credit union is a member-owned organization. And with this comes an obligation to provide support for the community in which it is located. Over the years, its volunteering and financial contributions have grown and evolved to support larger organizations such as the local community college, Phoenix Children's Hospital, and the local chapter of the American Lung Association.

TruWest also believes in supporting the community through volunteer efforts. Each employee is eligible for up to eight hours of Volunteer Paid Time Off per year. While many employees take advantage of this program, in 2020 TruWest sought to increase participation and expanded the list of eligible organizations. These include Feed My Starving Children, local food banks, schools and school districts, charities and city chambers, allowing for greater opportunities to serve within the community. "We take pride in volunteering and supporting the community with open arms," says Jennifer Kimmell, senior vice president and chief marketing officer at TruWest Credit Union. "Giving back and prioritizing this is part of the culture at the credit union and is something we are very proud of."

Undoubtedly, TruWest's greatest strength as a good corporate citizen is its leveraging of its expertise and experience to provide necessary opportunities for education. TruWest is a strong advocate of financial literacy and supporting higher learning. It has been a major supporter of Mesa Community Colleges' Year Up program. This program provides assistance and scholarships to first-generation college students. In 2020, TruWest donated more than \$70,000 to this program alone.

Furthermore, TruWest representatives regularly host financial literacy trainings for program participants and their parents, providing gift cards to students in need, sponsoring the college's food pantry and clothing closet, Mesa Market and providing monetary contributions to help with tuition, fees and textbook costs for participating students. What's more, the credit union also actively hires interns and retains first-generation college students in the Maricopa Community College's Year-Up program.



TruWest funds also promote student leadership opportunities through stipends given to FYE ambassadors. Additionally, TruWest has provided part-time employment opportunities for MCC students. TruWest's partnership has become integral to the success of the community by providing stability for students so they can focus on learning.

The credit union makes it a priority to support the underserved communities in the Phoenix area. For eight straight years, TruWest's Workforce Initiative Subsidy for Homeownership program has given homeownership to households that range from very low to moderate income, the opportunity for a 3-to-1 down payment match and closing costs when they purchase their first home. Since 2014, TruWest has helped more than 570 families, distributing \$1.33 million in funds for matching grants toward the purchase of their first home through this program.

TruWest also awards scholarships to college juniors. The credit union has multiple opportunities throughout the year to participate in employee-contributed school supply drives, food, and toy donation drives. And employees visit schools to provide financial literacy programs multiple times throughout the year. Thanks to these efforts, TruWest has furthered the success of college students, their ability to "get ahead" from first-time homebuyers and enabled a better understanding of financial literacy.

Adding to and enhancing these initiatives are regular sponsorships and initiatives for local schools, social diversity causes and disaster relief efforts. "We are thrilled to have the opportunity to demonstrate the credit union philosophy of people helping people," says Alan Althouse, president and CEO of TruWest Credit Union. "Whether it's launching a backpack drive for young students returning to the classroom, volunteering our time or making a financial donation, finding ways to contribute and help is how we come together and make a difference in our community." Whether it's ensuring those in the community are educated about their financial goals or lending a hand at local nonprofits, TruWest lives and breathes the original credit union philosophy of "people helping people." ■

TruWest Credit Union truwest.org



In 2018, TruWest partnered with the local chapter of the American Lung Association to help in the support of lung cancer awareness and fight lung diseases. Through employee participation and donations made in the annual LungForce Climbs and Walks, as well as company donations and matching grants, TruWest contributed more than \$100,000 to the American Lung Association in 2021.