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Extra Credit Union staff reads to 1,000 students, gives 1,000 books for March is Reading Month

Learning how to save, spend and share their money is the big lesson nearly 1,000 second-grade students in Warren and Sterling Heights will take away this March Is Reading Month.

Extra Credit Union staff members have been reading *The Berenstain Bears Trouble with Money* to hundreds of second-graders at schools such as McKinley, Westview, Pearl Lean, Angus, Crothers and Carlson elementary schools since the beginning of March. Throughout each reading session, the staff members discuss basic financial literacy lessons covered in the book, such as budgeting, allowances, saving, spending and sharing their money, and more. At the end, the staff members give each child a copy of the book to take home, too.

This is the third year the credit union has been taking on this initiative with an effort to read to 1,000 kids each March. The past two years, Extra Credit Union purchased the books, but this year the financial institution received a \$2,500 grant from the Michigan Credit Union Foundation to cover the cost.

“March is Reading Month is one of our favorite times of the year,” said Ruthann Varosi, marketing manager at Extra Credit Union. “It’s a time we get to have some fun with the students and engage in great conversations with them, teaching them the very basics about money and financial responsibility. For many of these students in areas where most of the school is on free/reduced lunches, these may be one of the very few books they own. We hope they take these books home and read them with their families to further discuss what they learned with their parents/caregivers. This is just one of the many fun ways we teach financial literacy lessons in local classrooms from preschool to high school.”

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Extra Credit Union (www.extracreditunion.org) was founded in 1954 by a group of educators with \$856 in assets. Today, with two full-service offices in Warren and Sterling Heights, Mich., Extra Credit Union (ECU) has more than 20,000 members and \$231 million in assets. Extra Credit Union works with the local community and educators to provide hands-on learning, financial fundamentals, and customized services to help students and educators make good financial decisions. In addition, ECU provides solution-based lending and credit education programs to open lending possibilities to people of all credit backgrounds in Macomb, Oakland,

St. Clair and Wayne counties. Deidra M. Williams serves as President/CEO, leading the credit union in its mission.