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**CONTACT:**

Ruthann Varosi  
Extra Credit Union  
Phone: 586.276.3151  
Email: [rvarosi@extracreditunion.org](mailto:rvarosi@extracreditunion.org)

## **Extra Credit Union Receives Overwhelming Gratitude**

### **Back-to-school efforts support hundreds of teachers and foster students**

Dozens of teachers and hundreds of foster students across Michigan will be starting the school year with the tools they need to succeed thanks in part to two separate back-to-school initiatives at Extra Credit Union.

**Extra Credit Union collected nearly 1,500 school supplies and \$750 for foster kids in Michigan, supporting [Big Family of Michigan](#)'s annual backpack giveaway.** Items were donated by credit union members and staff.

**The financial institution also fulfilled Amazon Wishlist items for 83 teachers in its first Random Acts of Classroom Kindness giveaway, with gift cards totaling nearly \$5,000.** Extra Credit Union posted a request for interested teachers to post their Amazon Wishlist link on its [Facebook page](#) before the August 13 deadline. The initial intent was to choose at least five random winners to receive items off their wishlist. However, after seeing the number of wishlists that were posted, the credit union decided to fulfill items from every wishlist. Four teachers won a \$250 Amazon gift card and 79 teachers each received a \$50 Amazon gift card. Most teachers were local, although a few were out of state.

"Every year, teachers spend so much out of their own pockets on all sorts of needs from getting their classrooms ready and picture perfect to create a comfortable learning environment for their students to endless equipment and supplies throughout the school year that aren't covered by their school's budget," Extra Credit Union's Assistant Vice President of Marketing, Ruthann Varosi, said. "We had an overwhelming response from this effort, and an overwhelming amount of gratitude from the teachers we were able to help. We were more than happy to help these teachers kick off their school year on an 'extra' positive note."

Tracey Bailey is a teacher at Wolfe Middle School in Center Line. She was one of the Amazon gift card recipients.

“So grateful for everyone at Extra Credit Union,” she wrote on Facebook in response to the giveaway. “They are always finding ways to support the teachers, students and school in any way they can!”

Big Family of Michigan filled and distributed 1,532 backpacks so far this year. McCaughrin estimated that Extra Credit Union’s donations helped about 350 foster kids/teens for the upcoming school year.

The request for filled backpacks from Big Family of Michigan have dwindled, although the nonprofit continues to fulfill requests from foster care agencies across the state into the beginning of the school year.

“It’s wonderful to know we are able to help foster children and give them something extra ... it’s just something that they need,” said Sharon McCaughrin, President and COO of Big Family of Michigan. “We have so many generous donors that help us out every year, like Extra Credit Union. We are very thrilled that we have been able to serve that many children, especially during the uncertainty of the pandemic.”

The \$750 donation to Big Family of Michigan came from Extra Credit Union’s staff through its Jeans for a Cause Fund which allows staff members to pay to wear jeans to work daily. The collection of funds, in turn, are donated to various local charities.

“This project is near and dear to our hearts,” said Deidra Williams, Extra Credit Union’s President and CEO. “We have been glad to support Big Family of Michigan for several years and we were grateful to see the support we received from our staff and members. We know that these foster students are often working through many challenges of their own and school supplies shouldn’t be one of them. We are thankful they have the tools they need to succeed, and we hope they have a wonderful school year.”

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**Extra Credit Union** ([www.extracreditunion.org](http://www.extracreditunion.org)) was founded in 1954 by a group of educators with \$856 in assets. Today, with a full-service office in, Mich., Extra Credit Union (ECU) has more than 19,000 members and \$322 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.