

Alternatives Federal Credit Union Members Quarterly



Happy Business Members: Ishka Alpern, Cos Alpern and Huck Milton

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Upcoming events

January

- 1 Money Wise Registration begins
- 9 Money Matters: Lending 101
- 21 Business CENTS: Coffee Talk

February

- 1 Member Appreciation: Financial Wellness
- 18 Business CENTS: Coffee Talk
- 22 Money Wise

March

- 17 Business CENTS: Coffee Talk
- 19 Money Matters: Student Loans 101

Details and how to participate are online at alternatives.org.

Alternatives Federal Credit Union is currently seeking candidates for our Board of Directors. If you are interested in serving, please contact: tcoffin@alternatives.org

Artist of the month

January

Tommy Beers

February

Don Ellis
lakepassage.com

March

Dee Sprague
etsy.com/shop/mermaidmessenger

A special thank you to our last quarter Artists of the Month:

Elaine Derby (elainederby.com),
Yvonne Fisher
and Selima Guirey

01 Payment Technology

As 2015 comes to a close, many new products and services have become available to our membership as we update our payments and mobile technology offerings. Check out our website or ask one of our Member Experience Associates about **Mobile Check Deposit**—now you can deposit your checks by taking pictures with your Smart Phone and using your secure Alternatives Mobile Banking app. Your Visa Debit card also gets a 21st century boost with **EMV** Chip technology (look for this enhanced security card to replace your expiring magnetic stripe card), as well as **Apple Pay** and **Visa Checkout**, employing new Tokenization technology to protect your card information. 2016 will see the release of **Android Pay** and **Samsung Pay** for our non-Apple using members, among other exciting developments—check back often!

02 2015 in Review

In 2015 Alternatives continued to meet the needs of our growing membership. In the expression of social responsibility through our 2015 Living Wage study, the implementation of conveniences like remote deposit capture and Apple Pay, and the introduction of products like Lucky Savers and Solar Loans, Alternatives worked to make a difference for you and your neighbors.

We have been investing in more training of our staff and new systems to better serve you. We are updating the look and content of our materials to better show our value to the community. You may have noticed some changes already, and a new alternatives.org website will be launched later in 2016.

We are working on behind the scenes improvements to create superior ease of use for you. Service in Collegetown being planned for later in 2016, and we will research opportunities to expand Alternatives' presence in underserved communities.

As a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative, we welcome your participation through volunteering, testimonials, critical feedback, or by making a contribution to Alternatives Impact.

Thank you for helping make Alternatives a vibrant community resource.

On behalf of our very dedicated staff and Board, we wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

03 Business Services

Alternatives is revamping its Business Services. **Kathleen Clark** joins Business CENTS as Consultant and Trainer. Kathleen brings considerable experience in business ownership, leadership, facilitation, and counseling. She will introduce new services and technological advances to expand CENTS, emphasizing accessibility across our membership area and expanding partnerships.

Joining Kathleen are Business Services team members: **Bob Anderson**, Senior Business Loan Officer, **Brendan Wilbur**, Community Programs Manager, and **Karl Graham**, Director of Community Programs.

To make course or content suggestions and requests, please contact Kathleen at kclark@alternatives.org

04 Lucky Savers



Alternatives is devoted to building wealth in our community. Because of that, we were happy to participate in the new Save to Win pilot program, Lucky Savers—a prize-linked savings program

that rewards participants with cash prizes for saving money. With each \$25 deposit in to your Lucky Savers certificate, participants are entered into an Alternatives and state-wide monthly and quarterly drawing, with prizes ranging from \$25-\$5000.

Since launching Lucky Savers we have had 97 members open Lucky Savers certificate, with savings of more than \$25,000! Eleven members have won prizes totaling \$425 to date. That's money back in our members' pockets!

Enticed by the cash prizes, Linda C. opened her certificate in September and was Alternatives' first state winner. According to Linda "It's a win/win! You have money that you saved and if you win, you have that, too—it's so easy!" And Linda is right!

Instead of playing the lottery, let that dollar stay right in your pocket! Enroll now at Alternatives, where good things happen!

05 Community conversations with Rubi Noe



A seventh generation Tompkins County native, **Rubi Noe**, Member Service Officer at Alternatives left once to see what else the world had to offer. She returned to Alternatives to help people make positive changes in their lives.

Rubi knows how savings can build credit, leading to greater wealth. With the Share Secured Loan, Rubi shows members how borrowing using their own

assets as collateral means using personal savings as a tool to establish credit. After helping people with their credit, Rubi refers them to our Certified Financial Counselors or mortgage lenders.

Families visit Rubi monthly or quarterly to talk about Alternatives' low interest Payday Loan, Back on Track loans for "unexpected" expenses or emergencies, auto loans and consolidation loans.

People introduce her to their child(ren) and extended family. She can see her impact ripple through the community. Folks ask her for financial advice in stores and at parties. She loves to see families and friend groups all supporting each other to build wealth.

Rubi starts community conversations. This year, make it a point to talk to Rubi about how you can advance along the Credit Path. Rubi's door is always open or you can reach her by email at rneoe@alternatives.org.

06 Member spotlight: Cayuga Compost



Cayuga Compost is a business with a mission: to promote an environmentally and economically healthy and sustainable lifestyle for people in Tompkins County and surrounding areas, as we face the reality of climate change in an ever-smaller world.

A business loan from Alternatives assisted Cayuga Compost in the expansion of its commercial compost facility. Before the upgrade, Cayuga Compost had a

permit to process 1,850 tons of compost per year. This capacity has increased to 5,000 tons per year.

Loan proceeds helped reach this goal by funding a variety of construction projects. Cayuga Compost did foundation construction to accommodate the installation of new scales needed to weigh larger trucks. They performed site preparation and foundation work for a new building to cover and protect finished compost from weed seeds and inclement weather. Additionally they reconstructed an extensive pad area, where the windrows are organized by various stages of processing on the way to becoming finished compost.

Improvements to the facility have allowed Cayuga Compost to expand into new markets. They produce a variety of compost and soil blends for various uses including a garden mix that is a combination of compost and topsoil—ideal for professional landscapers. Other customers include homeowners, home gardeners, farmers, construction companies, and highway departments.

Cayuga Compost produces and delivers various specialized soil blends upon request or customers can pick up the premium compost and soil blends at their Agard Road, Trumansburg facility.

Cayuga Compost and The Tompkins County Solid Waste Division work in partnership in the diversion of organics from our landfill. Cayuga Compost processes collected residential and commercial organics into nutrient-rich premium compost that is sold in bulk and bags at many locations throughout the county.

Cayuga Compost is a division of P&S Excavating, LLC. Cayuga Compost was Alternatives' Business of the Month for September 2015. For more information, please visit cayugacompost.com or "like" them on Facebook.

07 Volunteering in the Community



Carol Chernikoff, Chief Lending Officer, says yes to volunteer opportunities. During Carol's 25 years at Alternatives, she has volunteered for countless organizations. Volunteering supports the many community services Ithaca offers to meet people's diverse needs, providing a chance to learn, grow and connect.

Carol regularly volunteers for: Hospicare's Women Swimmin', The Cancer Resource Center (CRC), and Share our Strength—supporting Taste the Nation and No Kid Hungry. CRC gives caring support in people's time of need. Hospicare provides palliative care to 75-80 clients each month, regardless of ability to pay and they provide a place for grieving people to feel understood, including services for children.

Volunteering is fun. Carol has been on the merchandising committee of Women Swimmin' for seven years and loves the collaborative and creative nature of working with a designer and other committee members. Each individual adds to the success of an event just by giving a few hours of their time.

Alternatives encourages our staff to volunteer by allowing up to three hours paid time per month for volunteer activities.

Alternatives Impact appreciates all the volunteers who help make our Free Tax Preparation Program and Student Credit Union branches successful!



Where Good Things Happen

08 Free Tax Preparation Program

It's your money. Why not keep it?

Open to community members, our Free Tax Preparation Program is dedicated to ensuring you receive your whole refund—no fee and no credit union membership required. If you worked in 2015 you may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit—file your taxes to find out.

Call 2-1-1 or toll free (877) 211-8667 to find out if you are eligible and to make an appointment at the most convenient location.

Alternatives has offered free tax preparation and filing since 2003.

January 17 – April 15, 2016

Check list for tax preparation

- 2015 income information:
 - W-2 forms for every job you worked in 2015
 - All 1099 forms
- Social Security or ITIN cards for:
 - Yourself
 - Your spouse
 - All qualifying children/dependents
- Picture ID
- Any health insurance forms (1095 A/B/C)
- Account and Routing (ABA) numbers for checking and saving accounts for direct deposit
- The most recent tax return (if you filed)

- Total amount of rent paid in 2015
- Documentation of higher education expenses:
 - Tuition and student fees paid
 - Bursar bill and 1098T
- Student loan interest payments
- Daycare expenses and the provider's name, address, and tax ID number
- If you own your home:
 - Charitable contributions
 - Mortgage interest
 - Property taxes
 - Medical expenses
- All other tax mailings

Alternatives IMPACT

Alternatives Federal Credit Union's Community programs are supported in part by contributions to Alternatives Impact, the 501(c)3 affiliate of Alternatives Federal Credit Union. We rely on your donations to sustain our Financial Wellness Programs, Free Tax Preparation Program, Student Credit Union and Business CENTS.

Alternatives Impact is delighted to introduce our new Development Director, **Liz Hudson**. Liz brings experience at the Library Foundation, an economics background, and an abiding interest in credit unions, financial wellness and social justice.

To understand what you can be part of, reflect on the words of Certified Financial Counselor **Tierra Labrada**:

"As a counselor with lived experiences, not only am I able to counsel people on taking control of their finances, but also help them to understand that there is no hole that is too deep to get out of! Offering fresh perspectives, new ideas and holistic approaches to money management is something that Alternatives has been doing for years and I hope to continue the tradition. Alternatives changed my life when I began working here four years ago and I am deeply honored to pay it forward to our membership and community."

For more information about how you or your business can support Alternatives Impact, visit alternatives.org/Impact or contact **Liz Hudson**, Development Director at lhudson@alternatives.org or **Rebekah Scott**, Program and Development Assistant at rscott@alternatives.org, or call (607) 216-3426.