

Alternatives Federal Credit Union Members Quarterly



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Upcoming events

April

- 7 Leadership in our Midst: Recognizing and developing leadership in your small business
- 18 Building Diverse Relationships, Teams and Partnerships
- 20 Business CENTS: Coffee Talk

May

- 4 Leveraging the Power of Your Teams
- 5 Your HR Toolkit: The 7 things you need to know as an employer to stay legal and sane
- 10 Small Business Contracts Q&A
- 18 Business CENTS: Coffee Talk

June

- 15 Business CENTS: Coffee Talk

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

Artist of the Month

April

Mary Milne

May

Satya Celeste Stainton

June

Sylvia J. Bailey

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

Lisa Baechtle
Timothy Tillson
Susan MacKay

01 Taking action

In challenging times, to be part of Alternatives is an act in support of an equitable economy and cohesive community. At a time when some larger institutions are part of a status quo that leaves behind many people of modest means, Alternatives provides a method for low-income people to take steps toward control of their financial lives. Through its people, products and programs Alternatives extends the opportunity to build credit, increase savings and build assets to all, regardless of race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or other expressions of individuality. From humble origins, Alternatives has grown to over \$100 million in assets, proving that our products and programs meet a critical need and provide an opportunity to work toward a more secure future.

Like all credit unions, we are a member-owned, and not for profit. Unlike most others, we are a community development credit union, with a mission to serve underserved people and communities. As a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), Alternatives is certified by the US Treasury for the work we do. In 2016 we financed 48 first time homebuyers, served 169 unique micro-entrepreneurs through Business CENTS, provided financial and credit counseling to 568 and completed over 3,000 tax returns free of charge. Grants from the US Treasury Department's CDFI Fund help to make these and other activities possible.

This year, the proposed Federal Budget calls for funding to CDFIs to be essentially eliminated. We believe that CDFIs offer the most efficient and innovative solutions to persistent economic problems affecting lower income people and strongly urge Congress to restore funding for CDFIs across America, set in the 2017 budget at \$250 million.

We need your help!

- Write your Senators asking them to maintain appropriations for the CDFI Fund at \$250 million for 2017

and 2018. You may also call the office of **Senator Schumer at (202) 224-6542** or **Senator Gillibrand (202) 224-4451**.

- Donate to Alternatives Impact, which helps the credit union promote opportunity for all.

Thank you for your membership and support.

02 Board Elections

Alternatives' Nominating Committee has filed seven nominations concerning the five Board of Directors terms expiring this June. A brief statement from each nominee is included in the **April 1, 2017**, statement mailing. Nominations for vacancies may also be made by petition signed by 100 members (1% of the membership), should anyone else seek to become a volunteer director this year. Anyone interested in volunteering service for the mission of the credit union may also seek appointment to a committee of the Board of Directors, without petitioning. Each nominee by petition must submit a similar statement of qualifications and biographical data with the petition. The closing date for receiving nominations by petition is **May 1, 2017**. To be effective, nominations by petition must be accompanied by a signed certificate from the nominee or nominees stating that they are agreeable to nomination and will serve if elected to office. Petitions may be delivered to Alternatives' **General Counsel Eric Levine**, at 125 N. Fulton St., Ithaca, NY 14850, or via email to elevine@alternatives.org

03 Mobility+

By: Asif Chaudry

We are happy to announce an update to our Mobile Access app. If your phone is setup for automatic updates of your apps, then you don't need to do anything else. Otherwise, be sure to check out your App store, and download the update as soon as it is available. Better looking and easier to use, now you can pull up images of the Alternatives checks that you have, rather than just look at an amount and a check number.

Don't forget about Remote Deposit Capture, already possible with Mobile Access. Got a check to deposit, but want to keep enjoying a barbecue with family and friends? Just take the check, endorse the back with your account number and "For Deposit Only" then snap a picture of the front and back with your phone. Watch for the two emails, one to confirm it processed and one to confirm it was accepted. You can do this anytime, day or night, up to \$3000 per day (just be sure to hold onto the check for a few days, as certain types of checks don't work).

04 15 STEPS



By: Carol Chernikoff

When **15 STEPS** celebrated their grand opening in 1982, owners **Bettie Park** and **Ken Jupiter** had no idea their vision for a store that featured local artists would become one of the mainstays of the **Ithaca Commons**. After they said goodbye to their guests and locked the door, they said "We've married Ithaca" which set the tone for who they were and who they would continue to be as business owners.

15 STEPS is an American handcraft gallery located on the Ithaca Commons featuring 30-40 local and many national artists. In addition to the items in their store, they specialize in custom design jewelry. They work with local and national jewelers to realize their customer's vision. By taking a personal interest in their customers, they are

familiar with their tastes, favorite artists, etc. Their store is a warm, and welcoming place, with coffee where they ask about the kids and get to know new customers. They are a retail business that is committed to building lasting relationships with their customers. Customers are always greeted by warm, thoughtful, and kind staff who listen.

Bettsie and Ken's business has a strong commitment to the community and organizations that make Ithaca a special, caring place. From the beginning, they have donated gift certificates. As their business grew, they continued their charitable efforts by "adopting" a not for profit. In 1990 10% of all purchases were donated to Aidswork one evening before Christmas. Lines were out the door, and the store was packed, a true testament to the impact generosity can have on the community. To maximize their impact, Bettsie and Ken decided to focus on one or two organizations while still donating and supporting other causes with gift certificates.

Since 1994 they have supported Hospicare by donating for their Staff Appreciation Day, becoming a corporate sponsor in 2015 for Women Swimming for Hospicare, and donating 10% of all purchases Friday, Saturday and Sunday after Thanksgiving, one of the busiest sales weekends of the year. They supported the SPCA by selling their annual calendar, donating gift cards and 10% of their sales one weekend in December. Recently, they added their support to the Ithaca Health Alliance & the Ithaca Free Clinic by becoming a "Community Business Rock Star" which is a three-year pledge to donate at least \$1000 per year. As part of this commitment, they donate 10% of their sales one Saturday before Christmas.

Bettsie and Ken are forthcoming about the ups and downs of retail business, but have never backed away from their commitment to Ithaca's not for profits. Even in hard economic times, they have continued their efforts and generosity. 15 STEPS is a community minded business that gives back many times over.

05 Business Services

By: Kathleen Clark

One of the most exciting and stressful times for a business owner can be hiring an employee. Unlike many other aspects of business growth, the process is not gradual depending on the size of your staff. One employee has the same human resources and payroll processing requirements as 10 or more. An employer must be prepared to incorporate a myriad of activities into their work load:

- Manage payroll
- Create compensation and benefits packages
- Write employee handbooks
- Create personnel files
- Stay compliant

It may make you wonder if the investment and risk is worth it or if it would be easier to keep doing everything yourself.

Of course, one must be certain that the cash flow of the business can afford this added expense. Don't feel as if you are on your own to navigate through these changes, our team is ready to help.

During our free 1:1 consultations with a **Business CENTS** advisor, **Kathleen Clark** provides the individual to assist you in analyzing your cash flow to determine if your business can afford to hire that employee. Scheduling an appointment is easy. Visit businesscents.org and use the contact option in the lower right corner.

Our upcoming workshop, "*Your HR Toolkit: The 7 things you need to know as an employer to stay legal and sane,*" was specifically designed for small business owners.

This class covers basic areas of Human Resources and HR Law and is intended for small business employers. Two local HR professionals will lead you through topics important to every employer including: employee handbooks, personnel files, hiring and firing practices, benefits, employment terms and conditions, unpaid interns employee versus independent contractor status, overtime regulations, and more!

Each participant will receive a HR Toolkit filled with resources, information and templates to customize for personal use. **Please join us Friday May 5th.** Register at businesscents.org/training.

Feeling overwhelmed? We can connect you with our partner provider to collect quotes for necessary services including payroll and worker's comp. To learn more or get started contact **Kathleen Clark** at kclark@alternatives.org or **(607) 216-3423**.

06 Student Credit Union +BJM Fundraiser



By: Rebekah Scott

At Alternatives, we are excited about our ongoing partnership with our neighborhood elementary school, **Beverly J. Martin (BJM)**. Last September we wanted to help BJM start their school year right so we contacted **Principal Susan Eschbach** to find out how we could help. At that time we collected Kleenex, earbuds, and funds for the school and our **Student Credit Union** program.

Now we are expanding that connection and reaching out to our donors and credit union members to support author **Ty Allan Jackson's** visit to the students of BJM on **April 15**. BJM will provide a copy of "*Danny Dollar Millionaire Extraordinaire: The Lemonade Escapade*" to each student and fill the library with Jackson's other titles. Danny Dollar tells the story of a kid with a business plan, who will not let bullies get him down.

Jackson is the winner of the Dr. Martin Luther King Content of Character Award and received citations from the Governor of Massachusetts, Deval Patrick, Massachusetts Senator, Benjamin Downing and



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the House of Representatives because of his efforts to promote literacy. His books focus on self-esteem and confidence. As Jackson's book tells us, financial literacy is almost as important a life skill as reading.

We also promote financial literacy with our Student Credit Union program. In all Ithaca City School District elementary schools, including BJM, our SCU program brings banking experience to where they are learning, at school. One morning a week an SCU representative helps convert a room at school into a credit union branch. Students bring their weekly deposits for their accounts and experience saving, keeping a bank book, and adding up of their weekly deposits. Students can see first-hand that each deposit grows their balance, if only by a little, and that all these deposits can add up to a lot! Some students even get to volunteer as tellers.

We have been affirmed and inspired by the outpouring of support for literacy and the Student Credit Union throughout the month of March.

The campaign will continue until **Saturday, April 15.** givegab.com/nonprofits/alternatives-federal-credit-union/campaigns/bjm-scu. We are looking forward to including BJM students in our annual meeting this June. Stay tuned!

07 Northern Lights Learning Center

By: Rebekah Scott

Out of all of **Alternatives Student Credit Union Branches, Northern Lights Learning Center** is the only one to produce an Annual Report!

Established in April 2011, Northern Lights is the only homeschool student credit union branch (and, as their report points out, possibly the only one in the country). They have operated at various sites and started with 19 members. Currently, they have 16 active members and have processed over 675 deposits. They employ four tellers ranging in

age from 6 to 10. Qualities important to being a good teller include legible handwriting and good counting skills. Northern Lights trains tellers on the job by matching new tellers with more experienced ones. Their credit union day starts with setting up their teller stations and getting supplies. Then they do transactions, and finally, they give all the members stickers and encourage them to save the following week.

Three times a year, Northern Lights offers Magic Money Day, where members get a \$1 bonus with their deposit. That \$3 a year can add up!

Their annual report says that although they are too young to drive, they have offered drive-thru service to a member on a unicycle! One of their most challenging days was when they ran out of deposit slips. To solve the problem, someone drew one by hand and made photocopies of it. They write, "we think flexibility, and fun, are critical in being a successful youth credit union."

Support economic justice with a gift today.

Ways to donate:

- By mail to 125 N. Fulton St. Ithaca, NY 14850
- In-person at the N. Fulton St. Branch
- Online at alternatives.org/Impact

Name _____

Email _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone () _____ - _____

I want to become a Sustaining Supporter by making a monthly gift of:

\$25 \$15 \$5

or give a one-time gift of:

\$500 \$250 \$100 Other: \$ _____

Check (payable to Alternatives Impact)

or Credit Card (Visa/Mastercard/Discover)

Account # _____

Exp. date _____ Signature _____



For more information about how you or your business can support Alternatives Impact, contact:

Liz Hudson

Director of Development

(607) 216-3452