



Duval County Public School teacher awarded \$1,000 Community First Innovation Prize

Susan Burns will be honored with the Innovation Prize at the Jacksonville Public Education Fund's 26th Annual EDDY Awards in February.

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, December 19, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Community First Cares Foundation, the charitable giving arm of [Community First Credit Union](#), announces the recipient of the Community First Innovation Prize honoring creativity and innovation in classroom instruction in Duval County. Susan Burns will be honored with the Innovation Prize at the Jacksonville Public Education Fund's 26th Annual EDDY Awards in February.

Burns, a teacher at Fishweir Elementary School, will receive a \$1,000 cash prize for the creativity of her project, called "One Teacher's Trash..." aimed at reducing waste in the classroom while encouraging student entrepreneurship. She was surprised in her classroom today by a prize patrol of representatives from Community First and the Jacksonville Public Education Fund.

Her project was one of 20 Duval County public school teachers awarded \$500 PowerUP Jax grants. The winning proposals were scored by a committee of volunteers against criteria that prioritized hands-on learning, impact both in and out of the classroom and creativity. The committee also voted to choose the project they felt was the most innovative to receive the Innovation Prize.

"PowerUP has surpassed our expectations in providing both community engagement and classroom innovation," said Missy Peters, executive director of the Community First Cares Foundation. "The projects continue to impress the committee, and we believe PowerUP and the Innovation Prize foster an environment of competitive creativity that ultimately benefits our students."

Burns believes that making treasure out of trash is the answer to reducing the amount of waste coming out of the classroom. Students will collect paper waste from teachers and transform it into one of a kind, handmade ornaments embedded with flower seeds. The ornaments can be used for the holidays then planted in the spring to bloom. Students will sell the ornaments, learning how to devise budgets, maintain records, create marketing campaigns and evaluate the success of their own enterprise. One hundred percent of the proceeds will be donated to Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, continuing the second grade's friendship with the nonprofit.

The Innovation Prize winner will be honored at the 2017 EDDY Awards Gala and Ceremony planned for Friday, February 24, 2017 at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront.

"Innovative teachers inspire our students and encourage them to be innovators in our community," Trey Csar, President of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, said. "I know it was difficult for the committee to choose one winner. We are proud to be a part of this partnership which allows us to support and empower Duval County teachers."

PowerUP Jax and the EDDY Awards are part of a larger strategy for the Jacksonville Public Education Fund to elevate and celebrate Jacksonville's best teachers. Community First Cares Foundation is the lead funder and sponsor of PowerUP Jax, which was launched in October 2013. Since its inception, hundreds of innovative projects in subjects including STEM, English/Language Arts, Math, Music, Civic Responsibility and more, have been fully funded to make an impact in the lives of local students.

The Community First Cares Foundation is the only nonprofit foundation lead by a credit union in the region and one of only a few in Florida. Its mission is to help improve the quality of life in North Florida by supporting activities to improve financial literacy, quality of education, health and welfare and help the underserved.

About the Jacksonville Public Education Fund

The Jacksonville Public Education Fund is an independent nonprofit organization that works to inform and mobilize the community to advocate for universally high-quality public schools for all children. For more information, visit www.jaxpef.org or call (904) 356-7757.

About The Community First Cares Foundation

The Community First Cares Foundation, founded by Community First Credit Union, is a non-profit community foundation that grants funds to improve the quality of life in North Florida. The foundation supports activities to improve financial literacy, enhance the quality of our educational system, upgrade the health and welfare of our community and help underserved citizens. The Community First Cares Foundation makes contributions to nonprofit organizations that serve the communities on the First Coast. For more information, visit www.CommunityFirstCares.org or call 904-371-8090.

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