



NEWS RELEASE

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Freedom Federal Credit Union selects eight educators as its 2022 Golden Apple Awards recipients

Educators from across Harford and Baltimore counties were honored on August 4

Bel Air, MD—At a reception held at Mountain Branch in Joppa on Thursday, August 5, 2022, Freedom Federal Credit Union honored Dr. Stacey Durkovic' and Ms. Jeanne Mackowiak, as the grand prize award recipients of the Credit Union's 2022 Golden Apple Annual Educator Award grant competition. Thanks to Freedom's recent expansion from Harford County into Baltimore County, the Credit Union doubled grant awards from four total awards to eight, four awards in each county. Golden Apple Award applications are evaluated by a panel of judges made up of Freedom employees, community leaders and representatives from the Harford and Baltimore County school systems.

Dr. Durkovic', Assistant Principal at Martin Boulevard Elementary School, was awarded a \$2,000 grant to provide Health & Wellness kits to families in need. Kits include first aid kits, thermometers, and lice treatments. Ms. Jeanne Mackowiak, art teacher at Edgewood Middle School, is using her \$2,000 grant to create a gallery of fine arts in the school lobby.

Freedom's Golden Apple Award judges elected to present \$1,000 awards to Ms. Kathy Flannery of St. Stephen School, and Ms. Brittney Horan of Churchville Elementary School, both teachers who emphasize science in their respective schools. Ms. Flannery plans to use her grant funds towards the creation of a new STEM Makerspace featuring technology that allows kids to integrate everyday objects into circuitry and inventions. Ms. Horan plans to use her award to develop a hydroponic garden in their outdoor classroom.

Four additional recipients were awarded grants. In Baltimore County, Ashley Montalvo, Resource Teacher at Martin Boulevard Elementary School, and Brocha Siff, Consulting Teacher for Baltimore County Public Schools, were each awarded \$500 grants to fund their respective initiatives. In Harford County, \$500 grants were awarded to Laura Hahn, History Teacher at Havre de Grace Middle School and PACE Club Coordinator, along with Colleen Kavanagh, Librarian and Gifted and Talented Teacher at Norrisville Elementary School.

Ms. Montalvo plans to purchase number counting racks called *rekenreks* and other resources that help elementary youth understand mathematics through tactile exercises and projects. Ms. Siff plans to initiate a new program designed to retain and support new math teachers throughout Baltimore County Public Schools.

Ms. Hahn plans to expand the PACE Club's Pantry which currently supports middle and high school families in need. This family support means elementary students are impacted, too. Ms. Kavanagh will be using her award to introduce coding robots to her lessons and plans to lead interdepartmental training for cross-curricular applications.

Mike MacPherson, President and CEO of Freedom Federal Credit Union, hosted and emceed the reception. "Today we are grateful to be supporting these eight incredible educators. They are an excellent representation of our long-standing partnership with Harford County Public Schools, a relationship that continues to thrive; and our new partnership with Baltimore County Public Schools, for which we look forward to continued growth," stated MacPherson.

Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources at Harford County Public Schools (HCPS), offered opening remarks to the attendees. "Thank you, Freedom, for 11 years of Golden Apple Awards. That's 11 years of direct support to our HCPS teachers and staff, who, thanks to your partnership, have been given an opportunity to explore new ways to educate and support the HCPS community," stated Richardson.

Dr. Darryl L. Williams, Superintendent for Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS), was also in attendance and offered closing remarks to the attendees. "It's an honor to be included in today's celebrations. Thank you, Freedom Federal Credit Union. We very much appreciate your support and look forward to your continued partnership with BCPS. Congratulations to the eight educators. It was my honor to listen to your creative ideas for your classrooms and our schools in both Harford and Baltimore Counties," said Williams.

The annual awards are intended to support Freedom Federal Credit Union members who are employed at a Harford or Baltimore County school and have a creative vision for education that can only be met with community support. All applicants were asked to submit an essay demonstrating how their idea would serve their students, class, school, or their local community.

(Editor's note: A photo of the Golden Apple recipients accompanies this release. Photo caption: Freedom Federal Credit Union awards grant funds to its 2022 Golden Apple Annual Education Award recipients (L to R): Ashley Montalvo, Kathy Flannery, Stacey Durkovic', Colleen Kavanagh, Brittney Horan, and Jeanne Mackowiak Not pictured: Brocha Siff and Laura Hahn. Photo Credit: Ashira Quabili, Freedom Federal Credit Union

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About Freedom Federal Credit Union

Freedom Federal Credit Union is a community-chartered federal credit union offering consumer financial services to those who live, work, volunteer, worship, attend school, or have family in Harford and Baltimore Counties. Additionally, Freedom offers a full-line of banking services for all businesses, associations, and other organizations that are based in Harford or Baltimore Counties. Freedom has been in business since 1953 and has six locations throughout Harford and Baltimore Counties. To learn more, visit freedomfcu.org.

About Baltimore County Public Schools

[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation's 22nd largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).

About Harford County Public Schools

The mission of [Harford County Public Schools](#) is that each student will attain academic and personal success in a safe and caring environment that honors the diversity of our students and staff. The vision of the Board of Education of Harford County is to inspire and prepare each student to achieve success in college and career.