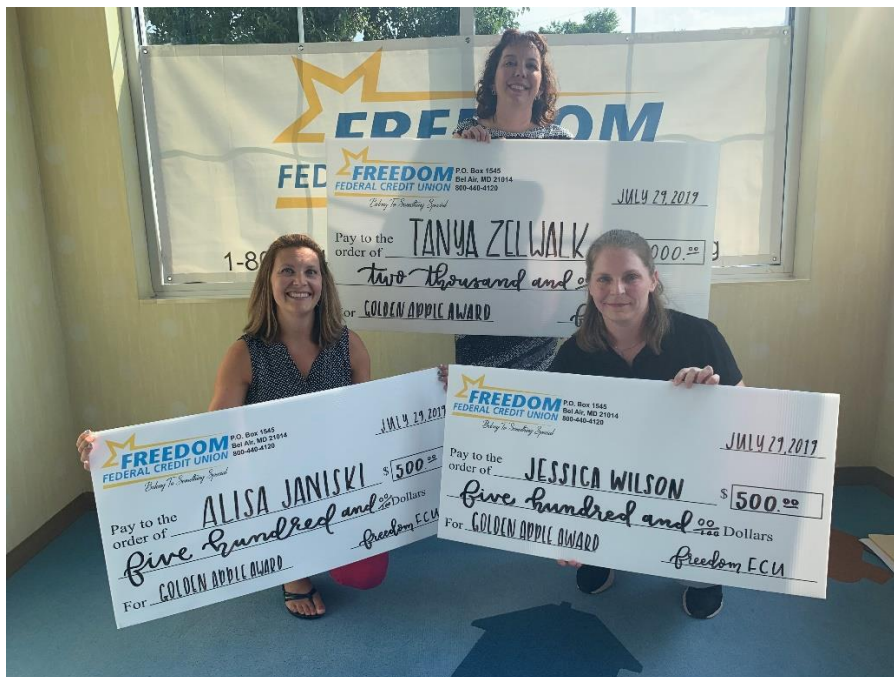


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Belong To Something Special

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Freedom Federal Credit Union awards grant funds to its 2019 Golden Apple Annual Education Award recipients (L to R): Alisa Janiski, Tanya Zelwalk, and Jess Wilson.
Photo Credit: Freedom Federal Credit Union

FREEDOM FEDERAL CREDIT UNION SELECTS THREE HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEACHERS TO WIN GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS

Winners Were Honored at a Reception Held on July 29

Bel Air, MD –At a reception on Monday, July 29, Freedom Federal Credit Union honored Tanya Zelwalk, as the grand prize recipient of the Credit Union’s 2019 Golden Apple Annual Educator Award grant competition. Ms. Zelwalk, who is the Learning Together classroom teacher at North Bend Elementary School, won the top \$2,000 grant for her plans to better serve her special needs students, provide additional resources to their parents, and to become certified as a children’s author. The Learning

Together Program serves 3-5 year-old special needs children in an inclusive and educational setting that adapts the current pre-school curriculum to the unique needs of these young learners.

Ms. Zelwalk's request, detailed an inspirational vision to help these young learners, who have a trying journey ahead, learn socialization, empathy, communication, behavioral, and pre-academic skills that will shape their future as older students and then as productive members of society in their adult lives.

Freedom noted that, although a record number of submissions were received this year, it was Ms. Zelwalk's thoughtfulness and consideration for how the award could affect positive change for her students, their parents, and for her own professional development that made her application stand out from the rest.

Additionally, two other recipients were awarded grants: Alisa Janiski, Gifted and Talented Resource Teacher at Church Creek and Roye-Williams Elementary schools, and Jess Wilson, Adapted Physical Education Teacher at the John Archer School. Both Ms. Janiski and Ms. Wilson will receive \$500 each to fund initiatives at their respective schools.

Turning ordinary days into extraordinary opportunities for learning is Ms. Janiski's specialty at Church Creek and Roye-Williams Elementary Schools. As a Gifted & Talented Teacher, Alisa Janiski, champions creative and memorable learning opportunities for her students.

Ms. Janiski asked Freedom to imagine walking into a classroom for a normal day at school, just to find that it has been transformed. Teachers are wearing surgical masks, desks have become operating tables, and nametags are preceded with the title, Dr. It is now up to the students to save their patients with an exciting day of practical reading and math applications. Ms. Janiski's Ron Clark Academy-inspired Room Transformations, allow students to experience immersive learning scenarios where they might find themselves immigrating to America at Ellis Island, surviving on a deserted island, or camping in the woods.

As the full-time Adapted Physical Education Teacher at the John Archer School in Bel Air, Ms. Jessica Wilson works with students ages three to twenty-one. All of her students have developmental disabilities, in conjunction with either a medical or physical limitation, or both.

Ms. Wilson has accepted the challenge to adapt Harford County's Physical Education curriculum to her students' unique needs and abilities. Like any children, the students at John Archer want to enjoy activities accessible in their community, such as miniature golf, but often need help learning the basic psychomotor skills to participate.

Ms. Wilson came to Freedom to ask for help in purchasing miniature golf equipment that could be appropriately modified to compliment the skill progression of her students as they learn to use the equipment, so that they too might enjoy the game in their youth and for years to come. When the equipment is not being used at John Archer, it will be available for use by other students with special needs around the county.

Mike MacPherson, President and CEO of Freedom Federal Credit Union, emceed the reception and congratulated the recipients on their achievement. "We value all of our members, and it is a special day when we can celebrate and support teachers from among our membership. They have set out to make a real and actionable difference in the lives of our Harford County youth, and it is our honor to play a part in supporting them and their ongoing initiatives."

Jean Mantegna, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources at Harford County Public Schools (HCPS), attended the reception on behalf of Dr. Sean Bulson. "The Golden Apple Award recognizes teachers who continuously seek new and meaningful ways to deliver instruction to our students. Thank you to Freedom for providing this opportunity to honor great teachers and create a positive and lasting impact in the classroom," said Mantegna.

The annual competition is intended to support Freedom Federal Credit Union members who are employed at a Harford 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 and the Harford County community. Entries were judged by a panel of Freedom employees, board members, and community leaders.

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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 County. Additionally, Freedom offers a full-line of banking services for all businesses, associations, and other organizations that are based in Harford County. Freedom has been in business since 1953 and has five locations throughout Harford County. To learn more, visit freedomfcu.org

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.