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**FREEDOM FEDERAL CREDIT UNION CONGRATULATES #FREEDOMSPIRITWEEKS WINNER**

*Laura Carotenuto of Forest Hill Wins Grand Prize*



The winning photo portrays Laura Carotenuto's 10 year-old daughter, Maia, looking up at Kilgore Falls in Rocks State Park located in Harford County, Maryland.

**Bel Air** — Freedom Federal Credit Union has completed its most recent summer contest series, *#FreedomSpiritWeeks*. Laura Carotenuto, who resides in Forest Hill with her family and serves as PTA President for Forest Lakes Elementary, won the grand prize of \$250. The eight-week social media contest called for Harford and Baltimore County participants to post photos according to the theme of the week. Themes included *Grads Week*, *Tag Local Week*, *Chalk It Up Week*, *What's For Dinner Week*, *Project Pride Week*, *Back To Nature Week*, *My Purfect Pet Week*, and *Spirit Week*.

*#FreedomSpiritWeeks*, which replaced the award-winning contest *#SummerofFreedomFCU* offered by the Credit Union the previous two summers, was meant to celebrate the positive experiences of the community, during challenging times.

While weekly winners were chosen by random drawing, the grand prize winner was voted on by the public on Freedom's Facebook page over the course of a 24 hour live-vote held from August 13<sup>th</sup> to August 14<sup>th</sup>. Out of hundreds of entries, sixteen finalists competed for the final prize, but it was Laura Carotenuto's photo of her daughter, Maia, sitting in front of Kilgore Falls, that took first.

"During the time of the Coronavirus, my family has looked for different ways to spend time together outdoors whenever possible," stated Mrs. Carotenuto. "One of our favorite spots, is Rocks State Park, especially the Kilgore Falls area. Our winning photograph was one I took on a warm summer day at the Falls. Our daughter looked so content and peaceful sitting on the rock staring up at the Falls; I am glad to have captured that moment."

According to Mrs. Carotenuto, she had heard about Freedom Federal Credit Union's photo contest through Facebook and decided to enter her picture for their *Back to Nature Week*. To their excitement, they won the weekly \$50 prize and became a finalist. "When it came time for the grand prize, we rallied our friends and family and the votes poured in! We were so grateful for the support and were thrilled to win!" The Carotenutos plan to give a small amount of their winnings to each of their two young children, Maia and Jonah, and put the rest into their college funds. "Winning was definitely a bright spot during such strange, unsettling times!"

"These are difficult times, and while it would be easy to focus on the negative, we hoped with this contest, to draw a little focus to the positive, the small things that bring us joy," said Mike MacPherson, President and CEO of Freedom. "Mrs. Carotenuto and her family, and our many other *#FreedomSpiritWeeks* participants, are proof that our community is not only weathering this storm, but still staying positive and having fun through family, pets, nature, and sometimes, a good meal. We're proud to be a part of that summer fun."

Inspired by the credit union movement's philosophy of "People Helping People," Freedom Federal Credit Union is following up with year three of their volunteerism-themed photo contest for the holidays, the *#FreedomToHelpChallenge*.

The award-winning social challenge will commence November 6<sup>th</sup> and features a \$1,000 charitable award to a local non-profit organization. Follow Freedom's Facebook page at [facebook.com/freedomfcu](https://www.facebook.com/freedomfcu) or follow their Instagram or Twitter handle @FreedomFedCU.

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