

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. Oct. 2003 – Since beginning its partnership with the Normandale Hills Elementary School late last year, United Educators Credit Union has nearly one full year under its belt of credit union visits, classroom lessons, and school involvement.

In December of 2002, UECU announced its involvement in the “Prepare Bloomington” program, coordinated by the Education Foundation of Bloomington in partnership with the Bloomington Public School District and the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce. The mission of the program is to enhance the quality of education in the Bloomington schools and the quality of the work force for businesses by establishing and maintaining high-caliber and creative partnerships between schools and businesses. The program was established in Bloomington’s District 271 in 1994.

“It’s a great way for young kids become financially literate early on, and the students benefit from learning about a wide variety of money matters from credit union employees who have first-hand experience,” said Andrea Molnau, UECU Marketing Director. “It’s also a way to educate the community on the credit union difference.”

Every business involved in the program works with an individual school to coordinate its own partnership activities. Currently, all 15 schools in the district are covered by 24 businesses. Over the past year, the credit union has organized tours of the credit union, spoke at PTA events, and worked at book sales, carnivals, fundraisers and more. The credit union also periodically contributes articles on youth financial literacy to be published in the school newsletters that go home to parents.

But despite all the work UECU has done with the Normandale Hills Elementary, Molnau said that the affiliation with the school has “truly been a partnership.” The elementary school students have provided artwork for the credit union offices and have also supplied articles for the credit union’s youth newsletter. “It gives the kids a lot of different ways to be able to contribute to a business in their community,” she said.

“It is a wonderful partnership that has been established with the credit union in the past year,” said Debbie Belfry, Career Development Coordinator for Bloomington Public Schools. “They are very enthusiastic partners and have come up with all sorts of ways to benefit each other.”

On deck for UECU is a PTA book sale fundraiser, and the school’s annual “Our Town” activity. The third grade social studies classes set up a mock town where students are responsible for various business operations, including running their local credit union. UECU staff are on-hand at this event to teach students the “real world” aspects of working at a credit union.