

PHILANTHROPY | ONLINE | OCTOBER 9 2020

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Local Financial Institution Provides \$30,600 in Support for First-Generation College Students

TruWest® Credit Union partners with Mesa Community College for a second year

TruWest Credit Union

TruWest Credit Union donates \$30,600 to the Mesa Community College First Year Experience program for the second year in a row, providing scholarships and support for first-generation college students and students needing support in foundational courses such as English, math or reading. The credit union helped to impact the education of 85 students this past academic year, as the program has seen 300% growth since its first year of activation.

The MCC First Year Experience is a year-long college program providing first-generation students with the services and support necessary to successfully transition to college. Participants must have attended one of six high schools in the Mesa Public Schools system and come from a family where neither parent earned a bachelor's degree.

"It is extremely important that we at TruWest are investing in the success of students' futures," said Chief Operations Officer of TruWest Credit Union, Gary Bernard. "The First Year Experience offers participants leverage for continued success and we are proud to support MCC as these students develop their skills."

For academic year 2020-2021, MCC has been designing more virtual program components because of the restrictions in place caused by COVID-19. With the assistance of TruWest Credit Union, five First Year Experience graduates are serving as ambassadors, assisting other students in transitioning to their first college experience. TruWest provides a generous stipend to each ambassador, acknowledging the time and effort expended to help incoming first-year students.

"TruWest really cares about the people in our community," said Melissa Carpenter, director of MCC Foundations for Student Success. "They continue to be generous by providing scholarships to students who really benefit from the financial support. It encourages students to stick with the First Year Experience program and succeed in their first year of college. Additionally, TruWest is a strong partner in teaching Financial Literacy skills that will help the students and their families plan for the future."

Along with monetary support for MCC students, TruWest representatives host financial literacy sessions for program participants and their parents, provide e-grocery gift cards to students in need and have committed to sponsoring the college's food pantry and clothing closet, the Mesa Market.

TruWest® Credit Union is headquartered in Tempe, Arizona, and operates as a cooperative providing its members with a lifetime of quality financial services and a culture of caring for its members, employees and communities. TruWest is a strong and sound financial institution with more than 96,000 members and assets totaling more than \$1.2 billion. TruWest® Credit Union has 13 branch locations – nine in metro Phoenix and four in Austin, Texas.

Mesa Community College is nationally recognized as an Aspen Prize Top 150 U.S. Community College and is known for service learning, career and technical programs, civic engagement and innovative approaches to education. The college serves as a resource for career readiness, transfer education, workforce development and lifelong learning. Host to more than 30,000 students annually, MCC offers degree and certificate programs online, at its two campuses, the Mesa Downtown Center and additional locations. Through the implementation of Guided Pathways with Integrated Support Services, MCC is transforming ways it champions student success, college completion, university transfer and career attainment for all students. MCC is a Hispanic Serving Institution. The diverse student body includes more than 400 international students representing over 60 countries. Award-winning faculty are dedicated to student success, providing the education and training to empower MCC students to compete locally and globally.

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