

2010 Beacon Youth Financial Education Award

Nomination Form

The Beacon Award recognizes individuals, credit unions, and other organizations making a difference in their community with outreach efforts focused on youth financial literacy.

 Individual Entry **X** *Organization Entry*

INDIVIDUAL NOMINEE

Name:

Title:

Credit Union:

Address

Telephone Asset Size as of 12/31/09

Member or Volunteer?

E-mail address:

Submitted by (if different from nominee):

Name

Title

Credit Union

Telephone E-mail address:

CREDIT UNION / ORGANIZATION NOMINEE

Credit Union/Organization: Mission SF Federal Credit Union

CEO: Salvador Duran

Address: 3269 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

Telephone: 415-206-0846

Submitted by (if different from nominee):

Name: Margaret Libby

Title: Executive Director, Mission SF Community Financial Center, non-profit partner of Mission SF FCU

Credit Union

Telephone Asset Size as of 12/31/09: \$7,171,666

E-mail address: salvadord@earthlink.net/ mllibby@mission.coop

Entry Deadline: September 15, 2010

2010 Beacon Award Nomination *continued:*

Support documentation:

Describe your (if nominating yourself or your credit union) or your nominee's efforts to further youth financial literacy initiatives.

(Please send a hard copy and an electronic version with supporting documents)

Please submit by mail to: By September 15, 2010

RMJ Foundation / Beacon Awards

2855 E. Guasti Road, Suite 600

Ontario, CA 91761

Please answer the following questions, limiting your answers to a maximum of 300 words for each question:

- 1. Who was the target audience for this project and how many individuals did the project reach (with evidence of results)?**
- 2. What is the greatest benefit of your financial literacy project?**
- 3. What was unique and/or innovative about this project?**
- 4. How was the project communicated and/or presented to reach the target audience (i.e. medium used and forms of communication)?**
- 5. Outline of the Project and/or Curriculum:**

Best wishes to all nominees!

You are welcome to refer any questions regarding the Beacon Award process to

Tena Lozano, executive director, RMJ Foundation

800.472.1702, ext. 6057

Fax: 909.605.6962

tlozano@rmifoundation.org

2010 Beacon Award Nomination
Support documentation
Prize-Linked Accounts for Youth (PLAY) Program

Mission SF FCU is the only community-based financial institution serving the Mission District, the community with the highest concentration of predatory fringe outlets in San Francisco, with 24 of the 56 outlets. In San Francisco, 1 in 2 African-Americans and 1 in 2 Latinos are unbanked.

The goal of our Prize-linked Accounts for Youth (PLAY) program is to establish budgeting and savings habits among low-income youth and, in turn, to shift the financial practices of their parents and siblings. Mission SF targets children and youth growing up in low-income and immigrant families, with the goal of engaging those young people most likely to be growing up in un- and under-banked households and least likely to receive financial training. With PLAY, Mission SF pairs peer-delivered financial education and savings accounts with support and incentives to use them.

As part of the program, young people receive peer support to set and achieve a personal savings goal to buy something they want (such as a cell phone or school supplies). PLAY emphasizes shorter-term goals and personal uses for savings. In this way, youngsters are engaged and link their saving to something they identify as a purchase goal while building good financial habits.

Our goal with the pilot was to engage 50 young savers and compare their savings patterns with at least 50 additional youth that received financial education only (i.e., no accounts, no support with goal-setting and no incentives) to gauge the effectiveness of those elements in promoting savings behavior development. Mission SF sought to partner with up to four community-based youth organizations to deliver PLAY to youth and to recruit child savers to participate at our site. In addition to our goal of testing PLAY's impact on savings habits, Mission SF's aim was to learn implementation lessons and identify best practices for supporting adult staff and PLAY sites with participation.

We found that while there are many models for delivering financial education, there are none for offering youth accounts in a scaled manner. PLAY offers an opportunity to test a promising youth-centered approach currently working for a group of agencies and youth.

1. Who was the target audience for this project and how many individuals did the project reach (with evidence of results)?

The target audience was young people—ages 5 to 17 from both the community at-large and those involved with community youth groups/organizations. In particular, Mission SF targets children and youth likely to be growing up in un- and under-banked families, in particular low-income African American and Latino immigrant families.

Additionally, members of Mission SF FCU's peer financial educators serve in key leadership roles of designers, tellers that manage PLAY accounts, and trainers.

The program was launched in June 2009 with eight members receiving training and support to set a personal six-month savings goal. They had a chance to win an iPod shuffle if they met their goal—all eight did.

In January 2010, Mission SF launched the second PLAY pilot, and five youth groups and about 50 youngsters participated in the training and PLAY accounts, with another 125 receiving financial training only. From February to April 2010, the 50 youth with accounts saved more than \$2,600 toward their personal savings goals.

For the child savers, 81 percent of the anticipated deposits were made and 71 percent of the children met their savings goal. For the youth savers, 78 percent of the anticipated deposits were made while 40 percent met their savings goals.

2. What is the greatest benefit of your financial literacy project?

We were able to reach out to a large number of youth in the area, and seeing them become more empowered financially, and are planning to offer the program once again in the fall to even more young people.

In addition, we were able to work with various funding and community partnerships: Department of Children, Youth and their Families; Richard Myles Johnson Foundation; Friedman Family Foundation; and Bank on San Francisco; Mission Neighborhood Health Center; Mission Graduates; GirlSource; Literacy for Environmental Justice; United Playaz; Conscious Youth Media Crew; Jamestown; Bernal Heights MYEEP; Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco; Michael Sherraden, Washington University; and Nick Maynard, Harvard, Doorways to Dreams. The involvement of Michael Sherraden, a national leader in the asset development field and the creator of Individual Development Accounts, is significant for Mission SF's visibility and ability to generate resources to support PLAY's expansion.

Due to the success of the PLAY pilot, Mission SF received a three-year grant from the Mayor's Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF) to

support the program. Mission SF also received a commitment from DCYF to offer the program to its grantees over the next two to three years. And, the program was a finalist in CFED's Innovative Idea Champion award program for 2010.

Mission SF received a great deal of media attention, including a local ABC News clip, which has generated more interest from parents and children, as well as from local organizations. Two city-funded youth employment programs with more than 400 low-income youth participants have contacted us to offer PLAY through their programs.

3. What was unique and/or innovative about this project?

The PLAY program is considered to be the only one of its kind in the nation. It was designed using the prize-linked savings model developed by Harvard Professor Peter Tufano, founder of the Doorways 2 Dreams Fund (D2D Fund). With guidance from Tufano, the credit union supported a team of youth and adults to adapt the model for young savers and to incorporate youth development and leadership principles. Mission SF added the savings goal component, to include another incentive for youth and to make the link between savings and personal goals. PLAY is the only incentives-based savings model where youth themselves set their goal. Other programs have pre-set goals, which may limit youth engagement and ownership at the outset.

Our PLAY model places the young people in our peer financial education program in key leadership roles of designers, tellers that manage PLAY accounts, and trainers. We are not only empowering kids to become financially savvy, but training up future leaders as well.

As mentioned earlier, Mission SF's innovative approach to promoting saving and accounts among low-income children and youth has caught the eye of Michael Sherraden, whose seminal book *Assets and the Poor* (1991) and whose Individual Development Account model spurred the development of the asset development for low-income Americans field over the last two decades.

4. How was the project communicated and/or presented to reach the target audience (i.e. medium used and forms of communication)?

Mission SF created child- and youth-friendly marketing materials, including a brochure with a logo and tagline *PLAY 4 Your Future* to make the program sound fun and to emphasize the link between their future goals and financial education and saving.

The credit union also supported youth to design a more general brochure with the youth-created tagline *Gettin That Dolla 4 Tomorrow*, a more youthful way of describing saving.

PLAY materials include piggy banks, savings calendars and cards that youth tellers stamp each time the PLAY savers make a deposit.

In addition, Mission SF utilized youth trainers to deliver the message about PLAY directly to potential youth participants. Youth financial educators developed a training module that described PLAY and introduced goal-setting to generate excitement about personal goals and then link them to saving and money management. Mission SF staff also spread the word about PLAY to community-based organizations to identify potential PLAY site partners.

5. Outline of the Project and/or Curriculum:

There are two groups of “PLAY savers:” Big Dreamers (ages 5-10) and Money Makers (ages 11-17). In addition to setting a purchase goal, “PLAY savers” are encouraged to make deposits on time because each time they do, it “buys” them a ticket to win the PLAY Big Loteria prize.

To be eligible to win that prize, youngsters must make monthly deposits into their Youth Credit Union Program savings account (held by Mission SF), attend one Saturday training activity called Talkin Bout Money, and participate in PLAYAH’s Day and play La Loteria to win.

Before they can participate, Big Dreamers must attend an orientation provided by Mission SF’s peer financial educators, Youth Trainers for Economic Power. During the training, they learn about money management and setting a savings goal. They also decorate the piggy that they will bring home and bring in to Mission SF to make deposits. They participate in a mid-point training that covers the concept of interest and compound interest using an Interest Fairy and interactive games to ensure age-appropriateness of activities.

To reach high school-aged youth participants, Mission SF partnered directly with youth organizations. The Money Maker program includes four key components:

- PEER-TO-PEER FINANCIAL TRAINING. The four-part training series covers budgeting, saving, goal-setting, smart spending, financial institutions and financial justice—using hands-on activities and examples that resonate with low-income urban youth.

- SAVINGS ACCOUNTS. Accounts receive 3 percent interest, and are managed by Mission SF’s youth tellers.

- PEER SUPPORT TO SET A REALISTIC PERSONAL SAVINGS GOAL.

Using their new financial goal-setting skills, PLAY participants set their own savings goal. Savings goals have included bus fare to L.A. and a cell phone.

- INCENTIVES TO MEET THEIR GOAL. Each group received a \$200 mini-grant from the Bank on San Francisco initiative. The youth determine whether those funds will go to one youth that made all scheduled deposits or be used to cover expenses for a group celebration for meeting their goals, such as a dinner or trip to Great America. This youth-directed, decision-making further develops their level of engagement and offers another layer of incentives.