# Blackhawk Community Credit Union Members Spread \$10,000 of Goodwill During the Holidays

1,000 individuals turn these 'unexpected gifts' into greater rewards

Submitted by Tammy McCaslin Krebs, Director of Membership Development
Blackhawk Community Credit Union

Throughout December, Janesville, Wisconsin based Blackhawk Community Credit Union "Santas" took to the streets to give away \$10,000 (in 1,000 envelopes each containing \$10) with a simple note of instruction: to pass on those dollars for a good deed, or to donate those dollars to a favorite charity.

Dedicated Blackhawk employees targeted nearly 50 events and activities as well as made random stops to deliver this unexpected \$10 gift to 1,000 individuals throughout Janesville, Edgerton, Delavan and Stoughton.

## **Gratifying Feedback – inside and outside the branches**

Not only did Blackhawk employees feel good about giving, recipients provided feedback on the program and where the money was used, via a special Facebook page and symbolic trees in each Blackhawk location. Blackhawk's Facebook page served to inspire others and expand the conversation within the local community and beyond. One recipient captured the giving message well:

I just wanted to thank Blackhawk Community Credit Union for this wonderful giving back to the community - this is what credit unions are about - helping people. We donated the \$10 to the Holiday Fund in Stoughton for whatever it could be used for toys, foods, etc. Thank you...

### **Unexpected Gifts Multiplied**

The Holiday Spirit Recipients of the \$10 gifts turned them into something even greater. Highlights include:

- One \$10 gift became \$375 when a business owner asked his employees to pay it forward a gift to benefit the SHARE food shelf.
- A grandmother took her granddaughter's suggestion to donate the \$10 gift to a "kindergarten buddy" who did not have any warm clothes for the season.
- A parent of an elementary student donated the \$10 to a student who needed school lunch money.
- Victims of a house fire lost their holiday gifts; this \$10 gift became \$150 after 'passing the hat' at a local Lions Club meeting.
- Many recipients made other families' holiday seasons more special, by passing on their donations to provide gifts, food and other necessities to those less fortunate.

"Blackhawk employees appreciated being a part of this program and loved handing out envelopes to surprised, yet very grateful people," noted Tammy McCaslin Krebs, Director of Membership Development. "This program gave many of us at Blackhawk the realization that there are many deserving people – and organizations – out there."

Sherri Stumpf, Blackhawk's President and CEO, firmly believes a program like this is essential for its communities. "Our philosophy of 'together we are stronger' has long been our mode of operation. The Holiday Spirit initiative is an example of our ongoing involvement and support of local organizations and activities. What an opportunity to make an impact in so many places," Stumpf noted.

### Plans to Expand Program and Community Outreach

The Holiday Spirit program is a continuation of what Blackhawk represents – making a difference in the communities we serve. Here are just some examples of how we are delivering on our community service promise.

- Financial literacy is a growing concern and young adults are in great need of guidance;
   Blackhawk provides hands-on experience to students as they operate two cooperative branches in local high schools.
- Blackhawk regularly holds 'Blue Jeans Benefit Days', where employees can dress down once a month in exchange for a \$5.00 donation to a community organization the employees select.
- Among many financial contributions that Blackhawk makes to organizations, scholarships are awarded to graduating high school seniors pursuing college.
- Annually, Blackhawk employees collect school supplies in the "Cram the Van" program.
   This year, over \$10,000 and 7,000 essential school supplies were distributed to area schools.

### ###

**Tammy McCaslin Krebs** is Director of Membership Development for Blackhawk Community Credit Union, a \$340 million credit union based in Janesville, WI. Blackhawk Community Credit Union serves its members through six branch locations and two high school branches (Craig High School and Parker High School). For more information, visit www.bhccu.org.