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Georgia United Credit Union Completes School Crasher Makeover for Chapel Hill Elementary & Announces Runner-Up Grant Winners



Georgia United Credit Union CEO Debbie Smith announces five Runner-Up Schools to receive school improvement grants -at the end of School Crashers Makeover Weekend at DeKalb County's Chapel Hill Elementary School on Saturday, July 26.

DeKalb County (June 28, 2014) This summer, Georgia United worked alongside the DeKalb County School System in partnership with 11Alive, Star94, and 790ESPN to provide our first School Crashers Makeover for Chapel Hill Elementary School at 3536 Radcliff Boulevard in Decatur, GA over the weekend.

Thanks to the shared strength and civic pride of over **150+** community volunteers and corporate donors, several significant improvement projects were completed on Friday, July 25 and Saturday, July 26. Professional Crew Leaders installed carpet, painted murals in the cafeteria, installed landscaping and benches, repaired and replaced the schools' entrance signage and painted. Volunteers joined in to complete tasks such as painting safety yellow curbing,

painting paw prints, spreading mulch and pine straw, painting windows, labeling and sorting books in the media center, replacing cafeteria furniture, and assisting teachers with bulletin boards and setting up their classrooms.

Special thanks also go to the following generous corporate donors/partners:

- **The Rayley Group** – Project Management and Construction Consulting
- **Middle Sister Marketing** – Provided all volunteer t-shirts, marketing consulting
- **Brandsmart** – Teachers’ Lounge TV & Microwave
- **Home Depot** - 200 bales of pine straw for landscaping
- **Dunkin Donuts** - Provided breakfast and coffee for volunteers
- **Mohawk Carpet** - Providing carpet for the media center
- **Crystal Springs** - Provided 1,000 bottles of water for Crash Days
- **Moe’s** – Co-sponsor of volunteer lunches
- **Rothschild Marketing Group** – Co-sponsor of volunteer lunches
- **Melaney’s Murals** – Cafeteria and front entrance murals
- **Ernie Morris Enterprises, Inc.** – Cafeteria tables

“Before” and “After” photos will be available at www.georgiaunitedcu.org/schoolcrashers soon and Chapel Hill Elementary parents and students will see the improvements when school starts on August 11. Chapel Hill was chosen from among **752** nominations from schools across the state to receive a School Crashers facilities makeover.

At the end of the Chapel Hill School Crasher work days, Georgia United President & CEO, Debbie Smith announced five School Crasher Runner-Up Makeover Grant Recipients:

- **Cary Reynolds Elementary**, Doraville – DeKalb County - \$10,000 grant
- **Valley Point Elementary**, Dalton – Whitfield County - \$5,000 grant
- **SAGE School**, Suwanee - \$5000 grant
- **Whit Davis Elementary**, Athens – Clarke County - \$5000 grant
- **East Laurens High**, Dublin – Laurens County - \$5000 grant

These five schools were selected from among the original School Crasher finalists and are just a few of the many deserving schools educating students in communities across the state. Here are additional details about each school:

<p>Cary Reynolds Elementary School, 3498 Pine Street, Doraville DeKalb County</p> <p>Principal: Jennifer Leupold, 678.676.6802</p> <p>\$10,000 Playground Grant Winner</p>	<p><u>An excerpt from just one of 17 Nominations for this school:</u> Our school is 53 years old and the playground has never been renovated. Our equipment is so old that it is not very functional. Our school has over 1,100 students in it and 99 percent of our students are living under the poverty line. These kids use the playground during the school day and on the weekends. It would be so nice to give these low income families a fun place to exercise and play. Most of our playground equipment is broken, unsafe, or unusable. We really need a playground renovation! Our kids work so hard during the school day and it would be wonderful to give them a fun place to relax and play. Our playground has three slides, a bridge, monkey bars, and a fire pole. That is it! The paint is chipping off of all the metal and the bolts are starting to stick up and come out of the equipment. There have been numerous incidents and children getting hurt because the playground is so old and outdated. Most of the time there are more than 200 kids playing in the playground area. I would love to give these needy children more space and nicer equipment to play on. When I drive by schools with nice playgrounds I get so envious because our kids deserve better than what they have. Please help us get a new playground!</p>
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<p>Valley Point Elementary Dalton, Whitfield County</p> <p>3798 S. Dixie Highway, SW, Dalton, GA 30721</p> <p>Contact: Doris McLemore, Principal 706.277.3259</p> <p>\$5,000 Playground Grant Winner</p>	<p><u>One of several nomination for this school:</u> We are situated in a low socioeconomic community. Our students do without so many things. We try desperately to meet all of their physical needs, while trying to educate their minds. Due to our tough economic situation, we use all available funds to meet both physical and educational needs of our students. Our teachers take money from their own pockets to make sure our students have their needs met. In the meantime, we have to neglect other things such as landscaping and playground clean-up and improvement. This is my first year as a principal and I have tried to build a culture of family and respect for others, our school and our community. We take pride in our school, but our time and energy is invested in our students. We would love to have a landscaping and playground make-over to demonstrate to our community how much we care for our school. The outside is the first thing everyone sees. We want to be proud of how our building and grounds look. Please consider us for a landscaping/playground makeover that we can be proud to call home. We want our school to be a picturesque place that everyone wants to visit. We know "we have it going on" inside our building and we want the outside to show the same thing. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
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<p>Sage School, Private School for Dyslexic Children in Gwinnett,</p> <p>1800 Satellite Blvd, Suwanee, GA 30024</p> <p>Contact: Joe Patton, 678.523.0341</p> <p>\$5,000 Playground Grant Winner</p>	<p><u>An excerpt from one of 21 Nominations:</u> I am a parent of a child with dyslexia. I knew my child was struggling to learn from a very young age. I sought advice from pediatricians, teachers, friends, etc. Everyone kept reassuring me that "he is a boy...they develop differently than girls...give him time...he will pick it up sooner or later." After having him complete a year of Kindergarten Prep in addition to regular Kindergarten...and he was still struggling to write his name and read simple words his teacher suggested maybe holding him back to repeat Kindergarten again. I knew at that moment I had to do something to find out what was wrong with my child. That next year we began searching diligently for answers. He had several rounds of testing done and in the early spring of 1st grade we found out that he has Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and ADD. His current school was not equipped to help him and he was already being teased from other students because he was not reading the same level books that they were. He would come home every day not wanting to attempt homework and not wanting to go to school because it "made him feel bad". So we began searching. It was through a close friend that I found out about Sage School. Sage became a beacon of hope to our family. We were welcomed in with open arms by Angela. There we found not only a place where my son could not only learn but also thrive. He is known, understood, and loved by every teacher and staff member at the school. 1 in 5 children (20%) have dyslexia. Most are undiagnosed and labeled as "lazy" and "just not motivated to work". Most drop out of school before finishing high school. Sage is the only school in the North East Atlanta area that specializes in education for children with this type of learning difference. These children are highly intelligent, very creative, and motivated to learn...but they learn differently and therefore need to be taught using different techniques. Sage is a new school (non-profit) and currently they do not have any sort of playground except for a parking lot with a basketball hoop. The kids find ways to entertain themselves through creative play (tag, imaginary games, etc.). Sage is meeting an unmet need in the community and these children could greatly benefit from and truly deserve a place to run, climb and play. We thank you for your consideration.</p>
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<p>Whit Davis Elementary School Clarke County</p> <p>1450 Whit Davis Road, Athens, GA 30605</p> <p>Contact: Derrick Maxwell, Principal 706.369.1036</p> <p>\$5,000 Outdoor Classroom Grant Winner</p>	<p><u>Excerpt from one of the Nominations:</u> Whit Davis is an amazing school! We have a very diverse population in every way and yet we all feel like family. I've served as PTO president last year and the support of our principal, teachers, and parents makes this a truly unique place. Our school was due for a major renovation and due to budget cuts we got an interior facelift but many areas that needed attention were not addressed. The outdoor spaces were essentially ignored. We have a track that is cracked and unsafe, only 4 swings for over 300 students in the 3rd-5th grades and ugly trailers that are needed for extra classrooms but at least be could be "beautified." We also have a very active group of teachers, parents and students that would like to work on a school garden, orchard and outdoor classroom space but we need additional help and funding to make this a reality. We are a Title One school and are trying to place an emphasis on health and wellness to the whole school population. This project could directly benefit our entire school- from introducing kids to where healthy food comes from to providing better facilities for outdoor exercise. Our principal, teachers, students and PTO are in full support of getting "crashed" and there would be people power to help. Thank you for considering Whit Davis Elementary!</p>
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<p>East Laurens High, Laurens County</p> <p>920 US 80, Dublin, GA 31027</p> <p>Contact: Eddie Morris, Principal 478.272.3144</p> <p>\$5,000 School Beautification Grant Winner</p>	<p><u>From one of the nominations:</u> We are a small high school in Laurens County. We have about 600 students that work hard every day to overcome many obstacles. Our school is comprised of 75% economically disadvantaged students. These students come from many poor families in our county. The great thing about our school is the students are at or above many of the state academic indicators. This is a testament of the relationships that are made between the teachers, students, families, and business partners in our community. We would love to use this makeover to make our school shine for our students and community. We want a school where the students can be proud when they arrive. We will use this money to beautify our campus. Because of the relationships that we have with our community we could have many volunteers to help us. Please consider our nomination, you will not be sorry. Thanks for all you do for the schools in Laurens County.</p>
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About Georgia United Credit Union

Georgia United Credit Union is ranked as one of the top credit unions in Georgia in both size and safety at \$990 million in assets, 128,000 members and 16 branch locations. Georgia United seeks to make members' lives easier by offering products, services and education to help members meet their needs and achieve their goals.