January 2014

Dear Credit Union Manager,

As Desjardins judges and members of CUNA’s Awards Committee, we thought it might be helpful for you to know how we evaluate the entries that CUNA receives each year for the Desjardins Youth and Adult Financial Education Award Programs.

First of all, we would like to congratulate you on your commitment to your community and to your members. You can be very proud of the efforts you and your staff have expended.

As we conclude our judging session each year, we take the time to discuss the entries received and share our overall impressions. The general consensus among the judges is we all look for those undertakings that are unique. It’s better to describe—and substantiate in detail—your single best program than to list many smaller activities or events. Being able to focus on one extraordinary program or project with well-defined, measurable goals and proof of effectiveness makes the judging and scoring more equitable.

Keys to a Successful Award Entry

* Make your project a unique undertaking
* Focus on your single best program (who, what, where, when and how)
* Define measurable outcomes –why did you consider the project successful
* Complete entry form in its entirety
* Provide relevant supplemental information

There’s nothing wrong with using commercially-prepared educational materials, but be sure to show how you adapted the materials to the needs of your particular member or nonmember audience. What made your credit union’s or chapter’s efforts unique and worthy of national recognition.

Each of us judge all of the entries, and our job is made easier if the program entry form is filled out completely in the original format, typed, and placed at the front of your entry. Strengthen the information in your submissions by stating specific goals, expected outcomes, and your ultimate achievements. Attention to detail counts.

Lastly, volume is not an element we consider important – more is not necessarily better. The supplemental information provided should be essential to the success of your project. T-shirts, buttons, expense vouchers, and videos are interesting but don’t have much impact on our scoring based on the criteria for these projects. Please see the attached “Secrets of a Winning Desjardins Entry” document for what we look for in a winning entry.

Again, we would like to congratulate each of you in providing leadership within the credit union movement on behalf of youth and adult financial literacy. We look forward each year to reviewing and judging your entries, and we remain impressed with the many unique programs and projects that you document.

Sincerely,

CUNA’s 2014 Awards Committee