

KEYSTONE

Extra

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Workplace Gardens Dig Camaraderie, Grow Relationships

It's spring and time to get growing. As home gardeners are tilling the soil and planting seeds for summer crops, a new trend in gardening is spreading across the country. Workplace gardening is gaining popularity as a way to help nurture camaraderie, cultivate wellness, hone new skills, and provide assistance to those in need.

In many companies, employees work together on the garden during their breaks and lunch hours, and before or after work. Some company community service programs allow employees a certain number of paid hours off of work to volunteer for projects of their choice.

Workforce.com explains how the garden work spills over into the work day. Employees may strategize about work while they're weeding, and relationships evolve that span departmental or functional lines. Employees also can learn new skills through serving on the garden committee leadership team or becoming a spokesperson for the garden. Different volunteers really become leaders by participating in the garden.

At the same time, lines between management and staff are blurred as everyone works together in the garden.

Workplace gardening also fosters health and wellness benefits, says Sara Trunzo, food and farm projects coordinator at Unity College in Unity, Maine, who has worked on various school and community garden projects. Part of it stems from simply getting outside.

"We all spend too much time behind computer screens," Trunzo says. Instead of staying cramped up behind a desk, being in the garden allows employees to use different muscles when they bend to weed or pick vegetables.

It also helps refresh employees mentally, Trunzo says, and taking that break "really can boost creativity."

The time spent working with others in the garden can also help forge bonds between employees as they do things like reminisce about their grandmother gardening or canning vegetables.

Some workplace gardens sell the produce back to the employees, and the funds that are raised are donated to a local food pantry, while other gardens donate the crops directly to food banks or soup kitchens.

In 2012, American Heritage FCU's Green Team worked with staff members to establish Employee Gardens on the grounds of the credit union as part of its Green Initiative. The credit union's landscaper helped lay out the beds and did the initial preparation to prepare the gardens. The various departments in the credit union were invited to sign up for a garden, and each group received a budget to use for the purchase of seeds and plants. Employees could add personal funds to cover additional expenses, as needed. The credit union provided the garden tools, hoses, and gloves.

Approximately 250 pounds of vegetables grown in the gardens (pictured below) were donated to Philabundance and Aid for Friends. In addition, some vegetables were sold back to employees



in the credit union lunch rooms with all proceeds going to the two organizations.

The credit union held two internal contests – the Best Employee Garden and the Best Scarecrow Contest. The criteria for Best Garden Judging was based on overall maintenance of the garden, variety of plants, use of color, and use of space. The criteria for Best Scarecrow was based on overall creativity and appearance. The Call Center and New Britain Office won “Best Employee Garden.” First Heritage LLC, the Human Resources/ Training Department, and the Horsham Office won the award for “Best Scarecrow.”

The gardens at American Heritage were also awarded first place honors in Best Community Vegetable Garden by the Philadelphia Horticultural Society. The Fox Chase branch of American Heritage placed second.

Flora Caranci, Vice President, Human Resources, said the best part of the project was that it helped the credit union’s wellness initiative as employees worked outdoors together and ate healthy. “The employees really took pride in their gardens, and are looking forward to getting the gardens started again this year,” said Caranci.

Throughout the year, credit unions support local charities and food banks through fundraisers, collections, and golf outings. They also participate in many outdoor projects to support their communities, such as PennDOT’s Adopt A Highway program; United Way Day of Caring projects; local parks and recreation clean-up; and volunteer opportunities to help organizations paint, landscape, and enhance their properties.

National Volunteer Week 2013, April 21-27, is about inspiring, recognizing, and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities.

Workplace gardens and other volunteer projects help grow employee pride and satisfaction, while giving back to the community.

New iBelong.org Website is Live

The new and improved iBelong.org website is live, designed in conjunction with this year’s credit union awareness campaign, which positions credit unions as the best resource for a loan. If you’ve not seen the new commercials, you may view them [here](#).

Credit unions are encouraged to review their FOM and contact information displayed from the credit union locator. Please note credit unions have the option to link to specific landing pages within their website, such as a “How to Join” page. Should you have any questions or changes to your credit union’s listing, please send an email to jay.young@pcua.org.

Thanks to those credit unions that have contributed to the campaign. If you’ve not yet made a contribution, there is still time to do so. If you would like a copy of your credit union’s 2013 *iBelong* invoice, [click here](#) and a copy will be emailed to your attention.

Convention Countdown

Connect at Special Events

*Is there really a beer tasting at the Annual Convention?
Will there be an art exhibition and raffle this year?
Are there any events scheduled for spouses and guests?
Is the banquet entertainment the real Association band from the 60s?*

Yes, yes, yes, and yes! The Association’s **79th Annual Convention & Exposition**, May 16-18 in Hershey, has plenty of events to relax with your credit union friends at the end of each day or between educational sessions. Please note that the following events require special tickets for admission, and must be ordered on the official convention registration form.

On Thursday evening, join your friends for a beer tasting and unique brewing experience to benefit the Association’s political action committee, CUPAC.

The event will be held from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at Troegs Brewery in Hershey. Cost is \$100 per person. Shuttle service will be available during these times.

Your support of the Pennsylvania Credit Union Foundation’s 16th Annual Art Exhibition & Raffle, as well as its annual breakfast, will be appreciated. Breakfast tickets are \$50 per person. The art will be on display in the Chocolate Lobby.

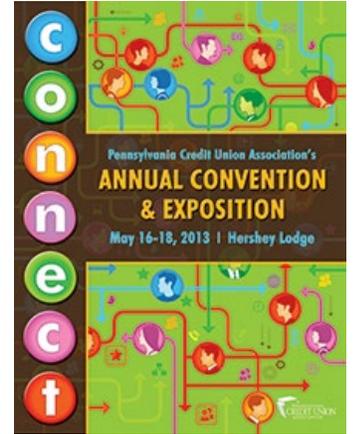
Spouses and guests can enjoy a tour of the beautiful Hershey Gardens on Friday, May 17. A tour of Milton Hershey School Visitor’s Center, located at Founder’s Hall, is scheduled for Saturday. Each event is \$45 per person.

The Convention will close Saturday night with the traditional banquet, presentation of the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Awards for Professional and Volunteer of the Year, and entertainment by The Association. One of the most popular and successful bands from the 60s, The Association’s No. 1 hits include *Never My Love*, *Windy*, and *Cherish*. Tickets for banquet and entertainment are \$80 per person.

Don’t miss this opportunity to **CONNECT** with credit union colleagues and experts, as well as your Association.

Make your [hotel reservation](#) by Monday, April 15, to take advantage of the special group rates.

Tweets @PCUA #PCUAconnect



Products & Services

Deluxe: The Best Choice for Your Members

Your members may not write checks every day, but at some point they'll need to. A check program with Deluxe not only rounds out your payment options, but it's also easier, more efficient, and more profitable than ever. Chock full of tools to help simplify check ordering for your employees and your account holders, consumers simply reorder through their choice of convenient channels including:

- [Deluxe.com](#)
- Your website, integrated with Deluxe
- Toll-free access to Deluxe associates

By outsourcing the check ordering process to Deluxe, you increase order values and member satisfaction. Deluxe has completed rigorous research, testing and analysis of the program are proven to enhance your incremental revenue and, because your employees don't spend as much time processing orders, staff efficiency and data accuracy go up while operational costs go down.



Get to know the new Deluxe, an Association strategic partner. Deluxe is known for its superior execution capabilities and first-rate products and services.

For more information about Deluxe, contact your Association [Account Executive](#).

Agility Products Aid Recovery

For more than 24 years, [Agility Recovery](#) has been in the business of physically saving businesses. Agility combines innovative products, affordable services, and great people to help you plan for, and recover from any interruption quickly.

The ReadySuite® Solution

For a small monthly fee, when disaster hits, Agility provides access to all of its resources, knowledge, and expertise. Coverage begins the day your credit union becomes a member, with no long discovery process or plan development fee. At the time of a disaster, only out-of-pocket recovery costs will be billed. We handle everything else, freeing your credit union to focus on what matters most: your members, employees, and community. Unlike other programs, Agility has no disaster declaration or alert fees. Agility has not, and never will, profit from a member's disaster.

myAgility

myAgility is an exclusive online, password-protected planning tool. Members may store, view, and update pertinent recovery-planning information.

myAgility FAMILY

myAgility FAMILY is the free personal preparedness tool available to credit union employees, assisting them in developing their own preparedness plans, including online storage of key documents, alert notification system, and checklists.

For more information about Agility Recovery, contact your Association [Account Executive](#).

Making Major Life Decisions Takes Longer

TruStage™, the consumer brand of CUNA Mutual Group, is committed to better understanding credit union members and how their lives, buying behaviors, and mindsets continually change.

In January 2013, TruStage surveyed more than 1,600 credit union members and found a number of generational trends that show how it's taking longer to reach some major life events and purchase decisions.

In some respects, this may seem counterintuitive as "Buy Now!" options lurk everywhere and traditionally manual processes have been turbocharged with online speed. However, TruStage findings show the planning and buying phases of big ticket items and major life events now take longer than before and cost more to fund. For example:

- Generation Y, the most connected and tech-savvy demographic, actually takes longer to shop for a car than older generations.
- People date much longer before getting married, thus delaying wedding-related purchases, as well as

buying a home or car. In fact, 18–34 year-olds date on average a full year longer than those 55+.

- College graduates need more time to secure a job, thus delaying many major purchases or life events.
- 18–44 year-olds are underestimating how long it will take to graduate from college despite rising tuition costs and growing student loan debt.
- Retirements are taking longer to reach, necessitating better and earlier planning.

Factors like economic conditions and information overload can help explain the lengthening research and planning times, but for credit unions, the key point is that members' planning and decision-making processes are changing.

As TruStage Senior Executive Alan Bergstrom explains, "For credit unions, this encourages new thinking — not only about new forms of information and communications, but when those touchpoints occur. It's an exciting opportunity to connect and engage with members in ways that are very different from the past."



Right: More than 100 children attended the Westmoreland Community FCU's Easter Egg Hunt and searched for eggs filled with special prizes. In addition to having their picture taken with the Easter Bunny, they received coloring books and crayons, and enjoyed snacks.



The Easter Bunny stopped by MEADVILLE AREA FCU's annual Easter Egg Hunt and to get pictures with kids.



Brenda Raker, Manager/CEO of Northumberland County Schools FCU, met with 85 third-grade students at James F. Baugher Elementary School. She talked about saving money, setting goals, and the differences between credit unions and banks.



Traci Donahue, Horizon FCU CEO (center) and Katelyn Huling, Administrative Assistant, present a check to Thomas Szulanczyk, Chapter Executive of the Northcentral PA American Red Cross.



Above: Barbara Moore, Financial Services Clerk at TruMark Financial Credit Union, presents a \$1,000 check to David Ford, Director of Development, at Family Service Association (FSA). The funds were raised during two relaxed dress code days for employees.



John Hayduk (left), CEO, UFCW FCU, and Tammy Kopiak, Hanover Head Teller, present a check to Joseph Temeranz, Hanover Twp. Deputy Fire Chief.

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News stories and photographs are welcome. Submit information for publication to janet.johnson@pcua.org.



Events Calendar

April

16
Compliance Town Meeting,
Westmoreland County
Community College,
Youngwood

17
Sales & Service Program,
Harrisburg

18
Compliance Town Meeting,
Central Penn College,
Summerdale

25
Compliance Town Meeting,
People First FCU, Allentown

May

16-18
Annual Convention & Expo,
Hershey

June

18-19
Big Ideas Conference,
Bedford

August

4-8
Judge/Bradley Leadership
School, State College

Visit www.pcua.org
or contact the
Association's Education
Department for details
on education programs
and webinars.