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**Suncoast Credit Union Opens 24th Student-Run Branch  
at Sallie Jones Elementary School**

*70 Student Accounts Opened on the First Day*

PUNTA GORDA, FLA. (September 16, 2024) — Suncoast Credit Union, the largest credit union in Florida, celebrated the grand opening of its 24th student-run branch at Sallie Jones Elementary School in Punta Gorda last week. On the first day alone, a record-breaking 70 student accounts were opened, highlighting the school community's strong enthusiasm for financial literacy and engagement with this initiative.

Sallie Jones Elementary School welcomed the new student-run branch on September 4 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by school and county officials, including Superintendent Mark Vianello, students, and Suncoast team members.

In addition to the 70 student accounts opened, students collectively deposited over \$3,400 into their new savings accounts. According to the Institute of Financial Wellness, teaching children about money from an early age prepares them for financial success in the future. Beginning as early as a toddler, children can start forming key financial habits that will last a lifetime, including managing their own money.

This is Suncoast's second student-run branch in Charlotte County, following the opening of the first at Deep Creek Elementary in Port Charlotte earlier this year. The goal of these student-run branches is to teach children essential money management and savings skills from an early age, particularly in communities that are often underbanked.

"Starting to save at a young age is more than just a financial strategy—it's an investment in your future," said Kevin Johnson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Suncoast Credit Union. "With the opening of our new student-run branch, we are excited to offer young children a unique opportunity to learn about financial responsibility firsthand. By cultivating the habit of saving early, you empower yourself to achieve dreams, navigate challenges, and build a foundation of security and confidence. This is what we call important fun."

Through the student-run branch, students at Sallie Jones Elementary School will have the opportunity to open and manage their own savings accounts, make deposits, and learn about budgeting, under the supervision of Suncoast Credit Union staff. The program provides real-world experience in the financial industry while fostering leadership and teamwork skills.

"Teaching financial literacy at an early age equips our students with essential life skills that will benefit them well beyond the classroom," said Mark Vianello, Superintendent, Charlotte County Public Schools. "The student-run branch at Sallie Jones Elementary not only offers a unique opportunity to learn about money management, but also fosters responsibility, leadership, and

decision-making. This program is an investment in the future success of our students, preparing them to confidently navigate the financial aspects of adulthood.”

Suncoast Credit Union plans to continue expanding its student run branch program, with additional in-school locations scheduled to open this year.

### **About Suncoast Credit Union**

*Suncoast Credit Union is the largest credit union in the state of Florida, the 8th largest in the United States based on membership, and the 10th largest in the United States based on its \$18.5 billion in assets. Chartered in 1934 as Hillsborough County Teachers Credit Union, Suncoast Credit Union currently operates 78 full-service branches and serves more than 1.2 million members across Florida. As a community credit union, anyone who lives, works, attends school, or worships in Suncoast Credit Union’s service area is eligible for membership. In 2021, Suncoast Credit Union’s field of membership was expanded to include public K-12 teachers, college educators, and educational support staff from all of Florida’s 67 counties. Suncoast is passionate about community support. Since its founding in 1990, the Suncoast Credit Union Foundation has raised and donated more than \$45 million to organizations and initiatives that support the health, education, and emotional well-being of children in the communities that the credit union serves. For more information, visit [suncoast.com](https://www.suncoast.com) or follow us on social media: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).*

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