

From the Tampa Bay Business Journal:  
<https://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/news/2020/11/13/see-how-suncoast-credit-union-gives-back-to-the-co.html>

# See how Suncoast Credit Union, a One Tampa Bay corporate philanthropy honoree, gives back to the community

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## Suncoast Credit Union

### Corporate Philanthropy

**Top executive name and title:** Kevin Johnson, president/CEO

**Local number of employees:** 1,413

**Total number of employees:** 1,913

**What is your corporate philanthropic mission statement? How is the philanthropic mission ingrained into the company culture? How is it measured?**

Suncoast Credit Union was formed in 1934 by a group of teachers in order to help one another gain access to affordable financial services. Our driving force is exactly what it was 86 years ago – we remain a not-for-profit financial cooperative that exists to meet the needs of our members. The corporate philanthropic mission statement of the Suncoast Credit Union Foundation is to promote the education, health and emotional well-being of children in our communities. Communities with strong education systems and access to necessary medical care are more viable and thrive. The Foundation is embedded in Suncoast’s DNA, as it is funded through



SUNCOAST CREDIT UNION

Suncoast Credit Union employees volunteering for a Keep Tampa Beautiful event.

our credit card and debit card programs. Each time a Suncoast member uses their debit or credit card to make a purchase, Suncoast donates two cents to the Foundation to fund education and health-related initiatives benefiting children in the local community. Suncoast employees follow these same principles of giving, by volunteering their time and talent at hundreds of local organizations and non-profits. Measurement outcomes are included below.

**What non-profits and charities was your company involved with between 2018 and 2020?**

Suncoast supports an endless number of non-profits and charitable organizations and it would be nearly impossible to list each of the approx. 400 organizations we serve in Florida. Many of our 1900 employees hold board positions with our community partners. Because supporting the community has been a priority from day one, we have supported hundreds of our partners on an annual basis and many of these for decades. Some examples of large nonprofit partners we have supported for 10+ years and hold board positions include the school districts in 21 counties through each counties' Education Foundation, the United Way Suncoast and American Cancer Society.

In addition, we have supported dozens of nonprofits supporting animals, environmental issues, education, family, diversity, arts & culture, health prevention, health research, aging services, etc. and again many of these we support on an annual basis and employees have board positions. Some of the local organizations we have supported continuously for approx. 5+ years include the Crisis Center, Seniors in Service, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Humane Society, Prospera, the Spring of Tampa Bay, Hillsborough County Aging Services, Heather's Hope Foundation, the Gasparilla Film Festival, Meals on Wheels, Florida Prosperity Partnership, the Tampa Bay Rays, OASIS Network, Children's Cancer Center, Hillsborough Alliance Black School Educators and dozens more. Some of our newer partners include Tampa General Hospital, Gigi's Playhouse, St. Pete Pride, Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch, Forgotten Angels, the Florida Tropics Soccer, SAGES (Senior Actors Guild and Education Services), Future Farmers of America, and the list goes on! Suncoast supports the credit union philosophy of "people

helping people” by encouraging employees to participate in community service. One of the biggest reasons we have developed such strong community partnerships is because the majority of the organizations we support financially, provide our employees with opportunities to volunteer.

That is crucial to building a strong community on multiple levels; in order to serve the needs of our community, our partners depend on financial support; in order to sustain their outreach, our partners depend on volunteerism; and in order to provide a variety of volunteer experiences to our employees, we look to our partners’ and their volunteer needs to share with staff. We want to help employees to find their volunteer passion because that connection may open the door to a new experience that we hope provides a more meaningful impact for all. As of the end of 2019, employees volunteered 33,325 total hours, equating to \$847,455 in community impact in 2019. Just a few shining examples of Suncoast’s impact are detailed below.

### **Pay it forward day**

Suncoast Credit Union launched its inaugural Pay It Forward Day on October 18, 2014. This initiative was designed to inspire employees to perform intentional acts of kindness and positively impact the communities where employees live, work and play. In 2019 more than 741 Suncoast Credit Union employees, friends and family members volunteered hundreds of hours in their local communities in the counties the credit union serves. Local organizations impacted by this initiative included: Metropolitan Ministries, A Kid’s Place, Habitat for Humanity, The Spring of Tampa Bay, American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, Trinity Café, Echo of Brandon and the Hillsborough Education Foundation. Other volunteer efforts included cleaning up parks and beaches, serving food at local homeless shelters, providing donations to local food banks, volunteering at senior and assisted living facilities. The 2020 Pay It Forward Day is being held on October 17, 2020.

### **Volunteer income tax assistance**

This 2019/2020 tax season marked Suncoast's 14th year with the VITA program with 41 hard-working volunteers in partnership with

the Internal Revenue Service and the United Way. Suncoast began its VITA involvement with employees volunteering at external sites in Hillsborough County. In our third year with the program Suncoast increased its commitment by sponsoring its own VITA site using our mobile unit and later expanded our efforts with two Suncoast-hosted VITA sites—one in Tampa and one in Chiefland. We have since expanded into seven counties with 43 Suncoast volunteers this season serving our communities at various VITA sites. We are proud to say our Suncoast volunteers dedicated over 682.10 hours to the VITA program this past season and we are looking forward to Suncoast's continued involvement in the VITA program in years to come.

### **Youth outreach**

Improving the financial lives of our members is our mission at Suncoast. We understand how adversity or hardship can make it hard for some to know where to start with personal finance. Throughout the year, our employees provided free financial education to people in need who were receiving help through our nonprofit partners. Through the dedication of our employees, we were able to educate and support a wide variety of organizations who work to help those in need. Teaching about budgeting, savings and credit provides more than just helpful information. These resources provide hope that things can change for the better and the skills ne

Starting financial education at a young age is the best way to instill good money management habits for life. Our Youth Outreach team makes learning fun with financial literacy presentations and games like Bling-O and Life Fast Forward. We hosted our annual Financial Football competition to give high school students the chance to earn financial prizes for themselves and their schools through an exciting financial education competition.

Suncoast operates 28 student run branches (SRBs) on elementary, middle and high school premises. These scaled down credit union branches give students hands-on financial experience at their own schools. Our SRBs teach about savings during school events like open houses, career days and parent teacher association meetings. Since our SRBs had more than \$79,000 in deposits in

2019, it's safe to say our message of savings was well-received by local students!

Digital banking was a trending topic at our SRBs last year. Our high school student workers hosted lunch and learns for their peers under the guidance of SRB coaches. Thanks to these presentations, 75 students downloaded the SunMobile app to better manage their money.

Teaching students crucial life skills in college is essential as it can be a vulnerable time for students' finances. As they venture out into the world on their own for the first time, it's critical to learn how to manage their money. We're proud to help them learn these skills with presentations tailored to their needs at this transitional stage of life. Some of our presentations include Personal Finance for College Students, Live Beyond the Weekend and Using Credit Cards Wisely. We worked with First Year Experience programs at local colleges to help 708 first-time college students learn about personal finance during their life skills courses.

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