



Media Release

For Immediate Release:

Gibsons BC February 7, 2012 Financial Literacy Program launching on the Sunshine Coast

Sunshine Coast residents will soon have access to *Money Skills*, a new financial literacy program introduced through a partnership with Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre, Sunshine Coast Community Services Society and Sunshine Coast Credit Union.

"Many residents work part time or have two part time jobs; this is the nature of this region," said Tracy Wiseman volunteer program director with Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre. "In addition, the living wage is similar to the Lower Mainland but in some cases, without the same level of opportunity, creating challenging financial situations for some residents. We began to talk about the need we were seeing here on the Coast in terms of access to financial information. Based on these needs, our goal was to offer a program that delivered on a practical skill set; one that empowers individuals with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions in an effort to take control of their finances."

Vicki Dobbyn, Executive Director for Sunshine Coast Community Services Society agrees: "We see a strong need for just this kind of practical information for many Sunshine Coast residents, from young people just starting out on their own, single parent families struggling to make ends meet, persons living on a limited disability income, to those approaching or in their retirement years. Money matters can seem mystifying and at times, can be difficult to navigate. This program was designed to give participants a clear understanding of how to manage their personal finances."

Across the country, credit unions are known for their commitment to community education and specifically, for programs that focus on increasing financial literacy. "Education, training and information is one of the seven internationally recognized cooperative principles upon which credit unions and other cooperatives are founded," said Sunshine Coast Credit Union CEO Shelley McDade. "Not only does financial literacy play a key role in the financial well-being of individuals, it also contributes to the health of our community overall. For these reasons, we were very pleased to be able to fund the program based on Community Resource Centre's proposal." While pleased to be able to provide funding, McDade is most proud of the way it has been received by Credit Union employees. "When they heard about *Money Skills* and the potential it had to make a positive impact locally, they wanted to do more than support the program financially; they wanted to become personally involved. We recently had sixteen employees volunteer to complete a professional facilitator training workshop to become skilled in delivering the *Money Skills* curriculum."

The facilitator training workshop was delivered through a partnership with Greater Vancouver Family Services. Representatives from the Sunshine Coast Literacy Council also attended the training, equipping even more people with the skills to deliver the program on the Coast. Commented Wiseman: "This has been an amazing example of what collaboration and partnership can do. It really does come down to people helping people; and no one does that better than the Sunshine Coast."

Complimentary Money Skills sessions will be held in Gibsons, Sechelt and Pender Harbour beginning the week of February 20th and will run from 6:30pm-8:30pm once per week for four weeks. Topics covered will include budgeting & saving, credit, debt, consumerism, and an overview of investments. For more information or to register, visit www.sunshineccu.com or call 886-4382.



Photo Caption:

Participants from Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre, Sunshine Coast Literacy Council and Sunshine Coast Credit Union kicked off the *Money Skills* Financial Literacy Program by attending the facilitator training workshop held at Capilano University on January 23rd and 24th.

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For more information please contact:

Jodi Fichtner, Marketing Manager
Sunshine Coast Credit Union
604-886-4463 jfichtner@sunshineccu.net



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About Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre: The Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre is open to all Sunshine Coast residents who may be seeking information about local resources, general support as well as specific services. Through programs, services, referrals and information sharing, people on the Sunshine Coast feel supported in ways they need it most when they need it most. The Centre is committed to inform, refer, educate and empower members of our community one person at a time. www.communityresourcecentre.info

About Sunshine Coast Community Services Society: With over 80 professional staff and hundreds of volunteers, Sunshine Coast Community Services Society is the leading non-profit umbrella organization on the Coast offering residents from Earls Cove to Port Mellon a wide range of programs and services. Founded in 1974, we have longstanding experience in helping identify community issues and needs, and in providing professional, innovative and effective solutions, often with very limited funds. Our programs help everyone from new parents, youth and families in crisis, children with special needs, women and children who have experienced abuse, to community members who want to make a difference.

About Sunshine Coast Credit Union: Sunshine Coast Credit Union is a full-service financial institution committed to improving the financial well-being of our members and Sunshine Coast community. Neighbours helping neighbours is how we began and today that value remains strong in both the services and products we offer and through direct involvement in our community. Sunshine Coast Credit Union -- building our Coast community for over 70 years. www.sunshineccu.com