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Deal Puts CU's Name On Bins For Recycling

By Lauralee Ortiz, *Correspondent*

DETROIT, Mich.—A unique contest sponsored by Michigan First Credit Union here has landed the faces of five members along with their positive CU messages on several recycle bins at Wayne State University in Detroit.

"When we were approached to advertise on the recycle bins across campus at Wayne State, it was so unusual that it inspired us to think outside the box," said Sandra Tomlin, Marketing Director, Michigan First. "We announced the contest and had nearly 120 members enter, which helped us capture positive testimonials for our future advertising."

To enter, members had to submit a statement about why they like doing business with Michigan First, Tomlin said. The five winners each received \$100 and had their pictures taken for use in this and other CU-related campaigns, including its MoneyWorks branding effort.

Tomlin said the members' larger-than-life mugs along with the CU logo and their winning quotes will be plastered on the bins—placed strategically across the campus to collect cans, bottles and newspapers—through October.

The one-year contract with Outdoor Media Partners allows Michigan First advertising space on five of at least 20 bins at Wayne State. Tomlin said the in-house campaign cost \$16,500 or \$275 per month for each bin.

"The company gave us a break on the price because we purchased five bins and they were happy we wanted more than one," she said. "The cost for one bin was originally \$425."

As part of the deal, she said, Outdoor Media Partners printed 10 of the bin posters at no cost to the CU.



Michael D. Poulos, CEO, center, awarded \$100 checks to each of the winners of the "Why Michigan First is the only place I do my banking"

"On the smaller panel, we listed all of the ATMs we have on campus as well as the two on-campus branch locations," Tomlin said. "The larger panel has their face, their name and why they bank at Michigan First."

The campaign started with a month long contest that was promoted on campus. Tomlin said the space on the recycle bins showed the outline of a person holding a \$100 bill and the message: "This could be you" along with entry information.

"Our commitment of quality service and convenience to our members was mirrored in the great comments from members who entered our contest," said Michael Poulos, CEO of Michigan First. "This novel advertising on recycle bins gives us a chance to spread the word on campus about the products and services our credit union has to offer to staff, faculty, students and alumni."

Winner Harriett Russell, for example, said her father encouraged her to join MFCU.

"My father would take me with him when he visited the credit union," wrote Russell, a social worker at Boynton Elementary/Middle School in Detroit. "He taught me that saving

money is the essence of life because it's the avenue to achieving your goals."

Cheryl Griffin, who works at Detroit Public Schools, stated, "Banking at Michigan First has the three C's: Complete handling all of my banking needs; Consistent with prompt and thorough service, and Courteous staff at all times."

Others called it a one-stop shop that was convenient, friendly and accessible, she said. The credit union has asked each winner to keep track of the comments they get from people who recognize them from the recycle bins.

The entrants that did not win may be contacted for future advertising campaigns.

"We got a bunch of great testimonials," Tomlin said. "We're planning to ask if we can use them for other promotions."

One of Michigan First's goals is to become more visible to its Wayne State University audience, which makes up a huge portion of its membership and prospective membership. Michigan First serves Detroit Public Schools, Wayne State University, University of Detroit and hundreds of other schools and educational groups in Michigan. It has more than \$385 million in assets and over 70,000 members.