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## LAFCU awards \$10K to essay contest winners for debt repayment

*Credit union offers Michigan residents various opportunities to build financial stability*

LANSING, Mich. — LAFCU continues transforming lives by offering Michigan residents opportunities to reflect on current financial behaviors and create tangible ways to build financial stability.

The Michigan-based credit union awarded \$10K to the four winners of its 2023 Pathway to Financial Transformation Essay Contest during a check presentation at its headquarters in Lansing—perhaps the best part was two of this year’s essay winners, Cyrene Irelan of Jackson, and Elizabeth Ronning of Lansing, were recent graduates of the 2022-2023 LAFCU Pathway to Financial Transformation cohort, a free, comprehensive personal finance



LAFCU team members pose with three of the four winners of the credit union’s 2023 Pathway to Financial Transformation Essay Contest. Cyrene Irelan, Caliyah Roberson and Elizabeth Ronning were each awarded \$2,500 for their one-page essays that reflected on their current financial situation and think critically about how they would create a better financial life.



Cyrene Irelan, Caliyah Roberson and Elizabeth Ronning were all smiles after receiving \$2,500 checks for their winning LAFCU Pathway to Financial Transformation essays.

course that spans eight months.

Irelan and Ronning submitted their essays after successfully completing the award-winning Pathway to Financial Transformation course, which is structured similarly to a college course and covers topics critical for financial stability.

Enrollment for the 2023-2024 Pathway to Financial Transformation cohort is open to the public. To enroll, [visit www.lafcu.com/pathway](http://www.lafcu.com/pathway) by Sept. 8.

Irelan and Ronning, along with the two other 2023 Pathway to Financial Transformation Essay Contest winners, Caliyah Roberson of Grand Rapids and Alexys Jordal of DeWitt, were each awarded \$2,500 after LAFCU selected their one-page, 500-word essays from nearly 100 submissions statewide. Their winning entries discussed their current financial situation and how they would use the money to pay down debt and work toward financial stability.

“My essay discussed my background and how I didn’t take the necessary time to focus on my finances when I was younger, but how that has since changed because I have a family now, and have recognized the importance of making good financial choices,” said Caliyah Roberson.

LAFCU’s annual Pathway to Financial Transformation Essay Contest allows members and nonmembers to reflect on their current financial situation and think critically about how they would create a better financial life.

The funds awarded to the contest winners intend to aid in debt repayment, from credit cards to medical debt to monthly payments, to help improve their financial well-being.

“LAFCU loves to provide various opportunities for the community and all Michigan residents that allow for self-reflection, identifying certain financial behaviors, determining where they want to end up financially, and then figuring out a pathway to get there,” said Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU chief marketing officer and chief diversity officer.

The 2024 Pathway to Financial Transformation Essay Contest will open next spring. Submission rules and guidelines are available online: [www.lafcu.com/ptft](http://www.lafcu.com/ptft).

### **About LAFCU**

Chartered in 1936, LAFCU is a not-for-profit financial cooperative open for membership to anyone who lives, works, worships or attends school in Michigan and to businesses and other entities located in Michigan. The credit union serves more than 74,000 members and holds over \$1 billion in assets. It was named a Best Credit Union to Work For in 2020. LAFCU offers a comprehensive range of financial products and services as well as an expanding complement of financial technology solutions.



2023 LAFCU Pathway to Financial Transformation Essay Contest winner, Caliyah Roberson, poses with her family, (L-R), Tequia Adams (mom), Jireh Roberson (son), Rachel Freeman (grandma), Josh Roberson (husband) after she received a \$2,500 check for her winning essay that referenced the importance of making sound financial decisions for her family.

Members enjoy benefits such as low fees, low-interest rates on loans, high yields on savings, discounts, knowledgeable employees and nationwide access to fee-free ATMs. A recipient of the national Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Community Service Award for credit unions, LAFCU enriches the communities it serves by supporting many organizations and causes. To learn more about LAFCU, call 800.748.0228 or visit [www.lafcu.com](http://www.lafcu.com).

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