NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Winning Students Featured in Local Cookbook from Center Parc, SUGA**

(SAVANNAH, Ga.) Dec. 22 – Fifteen elementary students who are budding gardeners and cooks were selected to be published in a new cookbook that is being produced by Center Parc Credit Union and the Savannah Urban Garden Alliance (SUGA), in partnership with four Savannah elementary schools. The cookbook documents the students’ vegetable garden experience at the participating schools.

Community gardens, including those at schools, are among the community projects Center Parc backs as part of its commitment to public service.

The cookbook project launched this October, as Center Parc and SUGA aimed to help Chatham County youth develop healthy habits as well as provide participating elementary students with an opportunity to create a record of their vegetable gardening experience. While there are no current plans to offer the book for sale, it will be used as a resource with various schools that host community gardens. Consideration is also being given to posting it as an e-book.

The schools that participated were Brock, Butler, Hodge and Windsor Forest elementary schools – four of the seven schools with which SUGA has community gardens.

The 15 winners, announced just before winter break in a ZOOM conference with teachers, parents and school administrators, are: Brooke Speaks, Jaden Paul, Savannah Abayabay, Teresa Adams-Delcore and Justin Nguyen, all from Windsor Forest Elementary School; Jakayla DeLoach, Jakilya Brady and Ja’Meir Blount, all from Brock Elementary School; Timothy Woods, Macee Riley and Jersey Perales-Beston, all from Hodge Elementary School; and Madison Robinson, Chasity Hines, A’Naysia Beasley and Taleah Brown, all of Butler Elementary School.

A few of the selected recipes include “Easy Roasted Pumpkin Seeds,” “Cucumber Bake Chips,” “Sweet and Savory Carrots,” “Spring Rolls,” “Lemon Grass Veggie Soup,” “Avocado Egg Salad,” and “Green Eggs and Ham.”

SUGA partners with schools, farmers, philanthropists, local businesses, and volunteers to increase access to and knowledge of urban gardening practices in order to provide local citizens with access to fresh produce, healthy food, and a knowledge base that helps eliminate “food deserts” – those neighborhoods where residents have no readily available source for fresh foods.

The credit union and SUGA designed this project and the rest of the community gardens movement to encourage healthy habits among Chatham County youth, combat childhood obesity and battle food insecurity among children and others.

“We hope that this cookbook encourages students to develop and maintain an interest in healthy eating,” said Donna Williams, community development liaison with Center Parc. “The students commented how happy they were to work on their recipes with their parents, making this cookbook a family affair. They can read healthy recipes submitted by their fellow students, and we think the cookbook project will increase their enthusiasm for meals based on fresh produce and other healthy foods.”

“Learning to garden empowers children and their families to do something about food insecurity,” said Jennifer Drey, school garden liaison for SUGA. “It’s a practical step that also reinforces a message about healthy eating.”

ABOUT CENTER PARC CREDIT UNION
Center Parc Credit Union is a division of APCU, the oldest credit union in the state of Georgia. In September 2020 two new Center Parc Credit Union locations opened in the Savannah area: at the Pooler Walmart, 160 Pooler Parkway, and the Savannah Walmart, 6000 Ogeechee Road. The company is also planning to open a free-standing flagship branch in Savannah in 2022. An ongoing community gardens program was launched in August 2020. The member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative is dedicated to helping hardworking people save money and prosper. Each member’s funds are insured for up to $250,000 by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA). For more information, call 800-849-8431, email info@centerparc.org or visit online at www.centerparc.org

ABOUT SAVANNAH URBAN GARDEN ALLIANCE
Savannah Urban Garden Alliance was founded to facilitate the growth and propagation of urban gardens in the Savannah area, and to increase access to and knowledge of urban gardening practices. Their vision is to provide access to local healthy food one garden at a time through their focus on school garden programs, community gardens, and bridging gaps in the community. SUGA aims to link up people who need help with the people who can give help or the resources that exist. Learn more here: www.savurbangardens.org

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