FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Center Parc Credit Union and SUGA partner with Butler, Windsor Forest, Heard, Gould, Brock Elementary and Hodge elementary schools to create a recipe cookbook documenting their first vegetable garden**

(SAVANNAH, GA) Oct. 21, Center Parc Credit Union and the Savannah Urban Garden Alliance (SUGA) have partnered with six Savannah elementary schools to create a recipe cookbook documenting the students’ first vegetable garden.

The project kicked off on Wednesday, Oct. 20 at noon at Butler Elementary School, 1909 Cynthia St., with an announcement from the participating schools, SUGA, and Center Parc discussing the process of putting the cookbook together.

Approximately 500 students from Butler, Windsor Forest, Heard, Gould, Brock Elementary and Hodge elementary schools will participate in a recipe writing content and 15 students will be selected to have their recipes published along with their artwork.

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 self-sustaining knowledge base that effectively eliminates food deserts.

In launching this recipe book, Center Parc and SUGA aim to offer healthy habits to Chatham County youth as well as provide participating elementary students with an opportunity to create a record of their vegetable gardening experience through their very own recipe book.

“Many scientific studies have shown that school gardens can combat childhood obesity by increasing fruit and vegetable intake,” said Donna Williams, Community Development Liaison with Center Parc Credit Union. “About 18% of Georgia’s 10-to-17-year-olds are estimated to be obese, and we want to get ahead of that trend by gardening with children in younger grades.”

About 16% of Chatham County’s children are food insecure, according to the Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods or uncertain ability to acquire these foods in socially acceptable ways. It says children who are food insecure are more likely to be hospitalized and may be at higher risk for developing chronic diseases such as obesity as a result of a lower quality diet, anemia and asthma. In addition, food-insecure children may also be at higher risk for behavioral and social issues including fighting, hyperactivity, anxiety and bullying.

“School gardens also help with food insecurity by teaching children to grow their own food,” Williams said. “Before the pandemic, Feeding America estimated that one in five children in Chatham County did not have a reliable source of nutritious food, and we expect that has only gotten worse during the pandemic.”

“SUGA is excited to be part of this recipe contest,” said Jennifer Drey, School Garden Liaison for Savannah Urban Garden Alliance. “We believe this will help students connect the idea of gardening with good, nutritious food that they can cook at home. We are grateful that our partner, Center Parc Credit Union, has helped us provide students with this opportunity.”

The recipe book will be available at the participating schools before the holiday break.

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](http://www.savurbangardens.org)

CONTACT
Donna Williams
Community Development Liaison
Center Parc Credit Union
dwilliams@centerparc.org
www.centerparc.org

MEDIA CONTAC
Marjorie Young, President
Carriage Trade Public Relations® Inc.
912.844.9990
www.carriagetradepr.com
marjorie@carriagetradepr.com