**TruMark Financial® Credit Union  
News Release**

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**Community garden gets help from local credit union**

***Neighborhood blooms with a renewed spirit***

FORT WASHINGTON, Pa. — During the pandemic, TruMark Financial created the Frontline Heroes initiative to give back to the community and help make a difference. When hospitals were overflowing with COVID-19 cases and healthcare professionals were working tirelessly to treat patients, the credit union sent meals to local hospitals and nursing homes.

In January 2021, the credit union developed a “Concern for Community” initiative to help non-profits which were greatly impacted by COVID-19. Each month the credit union donates specific items to assist the groups with their clients’ needs.

In April, the credit union donated gardening tools to several groups who managed community gardens. When credit union representatives learned about Mt. Airy resident Joe Johnson and the Pleasant Playground Garden project he created, they also reached out to him and offered assistance. The timing fell right in line with the credit union’s community garden theme. He was elated because he was still trying to raise funds and some of the gardeners were lacking tools.

Demonstrating the credit union philosophy, “People Helping People,” the credit union donated 10 gardening tool totes which included a pruner, snip, rake, trowel, shovel, and water spray bottle to the Pleasant Playground Garden project.  Johnson will distribute the tool totes, which have everything a gardening newcomer needs for cultivating a vegetable garden.

Johnson, a retired marine, always had a yen for gardening. When he returned to his neighborhood after serving 23 years in the military he had aspirations to create more access to healthy foods and offer educational opportunities, along with a shared green space for neighbors. He planned to use the skills he learned at a two-week permaculture course that later led to a six-month organic farming apprenticeship.

Johnson plans to distribute the gardening tool totes among the 42 gardeners. “We have several members that are brand new to gardening and don't possess any gardening tools. We are appreciative of this generous donation that will enable new gardeners to thrive in their vegetable growing endeavors,” said Johnson.

As the gardeners work together and nurture their individual plot of land, they share a sense of renewed spirit. Along with vegetables blooming at the Pleasant Playground Community Garden, new friendships have blossomed as Joe Johnson witnesses people of all ages working in the garden as it becomes part of the social fabric of the community.

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**Editor’s Note: Photo Caption**

Joe Johnson (right) oversees the Pleasant Playground Community Garden in Mt. Airy. He appreciated the garden tool sets Chestnut Hill TruMark Financial branch representatives Robert Howard and Erica Paul delivered as part of the credit union's "Concern for Community" initiative. The tools will come in handy for residents growing vegetables and herbs in the garden.

**About TruMark Financial**

TruMark Financial is one of the strongest, most progressive credit unions in the nation, offering a full range of banking, investing, and insurance services to more than 128,000 members in Southeastern Pa.

Founded in 1939, TruMark Financial is headquartered in Fort Washington, Pa., and has approximately $2.7 billion in assets through its 24 branches, Call Center, and a suite of innovative online and mobile banking services online services. To learn more about TruMark Financial, visit www.trumarkonline.org or call 1-877-TRUMARK. Connect with TruMark Financial at www.facebook.com/trumarkonline and twitter.com/trumarkonline.