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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INSPIRATION AND DEDICATION: GTE FINANCIAL AWARDS \$81,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO 27 ASPIRING STUDENTS AND \$1,039,000 SINCE 2012

TAMPA, FL, August 2024: In an enduring commitment to the development of future students, GTE Financial is proud to announce the awarding of \$81,000 in scholarships this year, benefitting 27 distinguished students at the 13th annual Student Scholarship Luncheon. Since the inception of the program, GTE Financial has awarded \$1,039,000 in scholarship funds. These awards aim to alleviate financial burdens and foster educational growth in areas including Pre-Med, Nursing, Business, Engineering, and several other crucial fields.

The recipients chosen for their academic excellence, leadership, and community service represent the bright future of our community. Their extensive involvement, reflected in an impressive accumulation of 6,619 volunteer hours, spans across reputable organizations such as the USF BRIDGE Clinic, UF Health Shands Hospital Pediatric Unit, Habitat for Humanity, and many others dedicated to making a tangible difference in people's lives.

Among the awardees, Alondra Velez Gerena stands out not only for her academic pursuit in Pre-med at University of South Florida but also for her remarkable personal journey. "My journey started as a clinical assistant at Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine, where I witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by those with limited access to healthcare," said Velez Gerena. "This experience encouraged me to serve those in need and address disparities in healthcare access. This commitment deepened as I took on the role of a Spanish interpreter for the USF BRIDGE Clinic. Many patients spoke Spanish and faced language barriers that complicated their access to healthcare. By facilitating communication between patients and providers, I ensured that they received accurate information and felt truly understood."

"GTE Financial remains dedicated to supporting the aspirations of students like Alondra and her peers, recognizing that investment in education is a cornerstone for building a community resilient in the face of challenges," comments Brian Best, President and CEO at GTE Financial.

The award ceremony to honor the students was held on August 13, 2024, at TPepin's Hospitality Centre.

For further information about the scholarship program or the upcoming award luncheon, please visit: gtefinancial.org/personal/for-students/student-scholarships.

About GTE Financial

GTE Financial is a not-for-profit financial cooperative located throughout West Central Florida with \$2.9 billion in assets and 24 Community Financial Centers. Chartered in 1935, GTE Financial is the official credit union of the Tampa Bay Lightning and is locally owned and operated in the Tampa Bay area, serving more than 230,000 individuals and businesses. For more information on GTE Financial, visit gtefinancial.org.

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