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## DFCU's Albus brings financial literacy to school

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Ruth Anne Albus has a mission: To bring financial literacy to young children.

Spurred on by statistics like the average college student has at least two credit cards with balances of \$3,000-\$7,000, Albus of Dearborn Financial Credit Union has been working in the Garden City Public Schools for several years, teaching children how to manage money.

"I teach children to save, spend and give," Albus said during a recent presentation before the Garden City school board. "I enjoy coming into the schools and laying the foundation for financial literacy."

Albus's instruction starts in kindergarten where youngsters watch a video about a piggy bank and then get a pink or blue bank. In first grade the topic is pennies and the students actually design their own coins.

"We've had coins with SpongeBob on the front and Patrick on the back, some have put their teacher on the front and the principal on the back," she said.

By second grade, the students are learning about goods and services and in third grade they begin working on saving, spending and sharing their money, using color-coded cards and make their own banks.

"Green is for spending, red is for saving and yellow is for sharing," Albus said.

Fourth-graders do a play that sounds a lot like Gilligan's Island and fifth-graders have an M&M budget activity.

And for sixth-graders, Albus uses the Biz Kids show on PBS to teach them about entrepreneurship.

"They watch an episode and have work sheets they do," she said. "It has a lot of business sense in it."

According to Curriculum Director Susan Collins, the district has had a partnership with DFCU for almost three years. In addition to the literacy program, DFCU has provided financial literacy books for Garden City High School and the Cambridge Center and participated in a summer boot camp for 150 kids.

DFCU also paid for fifth-graders from Farmington and Henry Ruff Elementaries to attend Exchange City in March. Albus worked with the students to prepare them for the experience the real-life simulated economy for a day.

"Ruth Anne works wonderfully with the children," Collins said.

School board President Patrick McNally added his thank you for her work, saying: "A lot of adults could learn from it."

Albus has done her financial literacy programs at two elementaries and is ready to start on a third one this school year.

"It's something that needs to be done to change the statistics," she said.

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