



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Investing in Knowledge: Library Celebrates Donation from United Community Bank

**Gonzales, LA** - Breaking barriers to education, another resident of Ascension Parish will be able to meet their academic goals thanks to the support of a \$1,700 donation from United Community Bank. The contribution covers the cost of one scholarship and a laptop, allowing a resident 21 or older to attend Excel Adult High School, an accredited online program offered by Ascension Parish Library (APL).

The library recently launched its Partners Advancing Literacy (PAL) program, inviting organizations and individuals to sponsor essential initiatives. From supporting programs like the Summer Reading Program to services like Excel Adult High and contributing to capital projects at the Donaldsonville and future St. Amant locations - the PAL program embodies a commitment to community advancement.

United Community Bank (UCB) immediately embraced the opportunity.

“One of United Community Bank’s core values is to help develop and strengthen our community,” said Crystal McDaniel, marketing specialist for UCB. “We are excited to partner with Ascension Parish Library’s PAL program to invest in our local community and transform a resident's life. We look forward to the future of the program and hope to remain a part of its efforts to help individuals obtain their goals.



Earning a high school diploma opens the door to various opportunities, such as post-secondary education, career advancement, or military service.



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Carlos Contreras oversees adult literacy for the library. He's met potential Excel Adult High students, ages mid-20s to 50s, who say not having this credential is holding them back from pathways to new success.

"Some of them are in tears talking about what this program would mean to them," Contreras said. "I've spoken with single moms who want their high school diploma to show their children the importance of education. There's a man who wants to be a barber and open a barber shop, but he needs a diploma to enroll in barber school. There's a trucker who wants to start his own company - he was told he needs a high school diploma first."

Participants must live in Ascension Parish and have an Ascension Parish Library card (free at all library locations). Courses are 100 percent online, allowing students flexible scheduling and personalized support, including unlimited one-on-one tutoring sessions and support from success coaches. Students have 24 months to complete the program.

Businesses interested in sponsoring a student can email [communications@myapl.org](mailto:communications@myapl.org). To learn more about Excel Adult High School and other APL sponsorship opportunities, visit [myAPL.org/pal](http://myAPL.org/pal).

## About APL

Ascension Parish Library (APL) is an award-winning library system committed to providing opportunities for lifelong learning to all ages. APL delivers needed resources through traditional library services, digital materials, and innovative programs. Ascension Parish Library encourages residents to read, learn, and create by visiting their local library. To learn more, visit <https://www.myAPL.org/>.

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