

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alterna Savings and Central 1 announce the 2021 Gary Gillam Award Recipients

Toronto, ON and Vancouver, BC, April 23, 2021 – Alterna Savings and Central 1 Credit Union (Central 1) are pleased to announce the two recipients of the 2021 Gary Gillam Award: Sarasvati (Sara) Maharajh from the Canadian Credit Union Association and Angela Dzinis from Alterna Savings.

The Gary Gillam Award for corporate social responsibility is presented annually to individuals who promote credit unions as socially responsible alternatives to banks and other financial institutions.

The award recognizes and honours individuals within the British Columbia and Ontario credit union system who have reinforced co-operative values and made significant achievements in social responsibility.

Sarasvati (Sara) Maharajh – Business Relationship Manager at the CCUA (Canadian Credit Union Association) and Vice Chair of CULA (the Credit Union Leaders Association)

Sara has been recognized for her deep commitment to inclusion and diversity. For many years, she has worked to ensure that co-operative and credit union systems are leading the way to understand and eliminate systemic racism by reflecting on and analyzing their processes.

Sara also leverages her professional expertise to reduce barriers and financially empower communities that have been marginalized. She volunteers her time to assist the work of two leading national organizations: The Jamaican Canadian Association and The Lions Circle African Men's Association. These groups are part of a network that aims to mobilize the economic power of the black community through the development of a Pan-African Credit Union for Canadians.

Her personal stewardship of the co-operative values extends to all areas of her life, including in her role as newly elected President of her housing co-op in November 2020. Upon her election, she immediately established COVID-relief efforts to support the members. Sara is also developing a financial literacy program with specific credit union content for members of her housing co-op, and in partnership with subject matter experts from the credit union system.

“It is so incredibly flattering to receive this award,” said Sara. “Gary truly made an impact, and much of his work enabled co-ops to create space for young and diverse groups to contribute fresh perspectives. His legacy is a call for all leaders in the system to reconsider what will take us into the future, and how care for community must endure, but evolve to address the critical issues our society faces.”

Angela Dzinis – Director, Ottawa Centre at Alterna Savings and Credit Union Limited

Angela is recognized for her extensive financial inclusion and education work in partnership with her team. She has led her teams from the Alterna Savings Centretown, Place de Ville, and

Westboro branches in activities that have helped improve how financial institutions are seen and understood by those who serve underbanked and underserved communities in the National Capital Region.

In her volunteer work with Financial Literacy Action Network Ottawa (FLANO), she also supports their mandate to move vulnerable Canadians from financial crisis to financial autonomy.

As a result of the relationships, she and her team have built with community organizations, they have offered hundreds of financial literacy seminars and workshops. Angela also successfully acquired Alterna Savings' grant funding for research on payday and other predatory loan lenders – research that was used to influence public policy and challenge the structures that enable predatory lenders to target vulnerable communities negatively.

“I truly enjoy helping others,” said Angela. “It brings me the greatest joy. I have been in banking for over 20 years. Most of my community work focuses on the financial empowerment piece as a real point of leverage for enduring impact on an individual and community level. That’s why I do what I do.”

On behalf of the recipients, Alterna Savings and Central 1 will make a \$2,500 donation to a charity, organization, or project of their choice. Sara has selected the donation be shared between Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto Diversity Scholarship Awards and the Jamaican Canadian Association. Angela has selected The Good Companions as the recipient of the donation.

About Gary Gillam

The Gary Gillam Award was established to honour the memory and work of Gary H. Gillam. Gary was the Director, Legal, Governmental Affairs and Administration, at Credit Union Central of Ontario (now Central 1) from 1982 to 1988.

In 1988, Gary became CEO of Unicoll Credit Union (now Alterna Savings), where he worked until illness forced his resignation in 1993.

Gary Gillam was one of the leading advocates for social responsibility in the credit union system, long before it became popular within organizations. He vigorously promoted the concept of social investment, calling on credit unions and their centrals to use social as well as financial criteria for their investment portfolios. He supported the development of community loan funds to assist socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. At CUCO and his own credit union, he initiated social audits to measure the social performance of the organization, as a complementary process to the financial audit.

About Alterna Savings

Alterna Savings and Credit Union Limited (Alterna) has been the good in banking for 112 years and, based on assets under management, is the 9th largest credit union in Canada. Alterna is made up of Alterna Savings and Credit Union Limited and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Alterna Bank. Together, we have \$10 billion in assets under management.

As the first full-service, member-owned co-operative financial institution outside Quebec, Alterna Savings shares its expertise with more than 186,000 members through a network of 36 branches

across Ontario, that includes partner Peterborough Community Savings; as well as call centre and digital channels. Members and customers also benefit from an industry-leading online brokerage, investment management services, and have access to over 43,000 surcharge-free ATMs in North America with THE EXCHANGE Network in Canada and the Allpoint Network in the US.

About Central 1

Central 1 is a preferred partner for financial, digital banking and payment products and services – fuelling the success of businesses across Canada. We leverage our scale, strength and expertise to power progress for more than 250 credit unions and other financial institutions, enhancing the financial well-being of more than 5 million customers from coast to coast. For more information, visit www.central1.com.

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