

## **PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR NOMINATION – Alison Hughes, Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union**

Alison Hughes represents everything the CCUA Awards of Excellence Professional of the Year honor is meant to recognize, dedication, leadership, measurable impact, and a deep personal commitment to the credit union philosophy of people helping people. Since joining Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union in 2017, Alison has advanced community engagement into one of the organization’s defining strengths. Through her relationship-building, and commitment to service, she has elevated Jeanne D’Arc’s presence in the community, expanded the reach of its charitable efforts, and strengthened the connection between the Credit Union and the people it serves.

Alison began her career at Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union as an Administrative Assistant supporting the We Share A Common Thread Foundation. It quickly became clear that her talents extended far beyond administrative support. In 2019, she was promoted to Community Engagement Officer and entrusted with carrying forward the legacy of Steve Jones, a beloved leader whose impact on the organization and the community was profound. That was no small responsibility, yet Alison embraced it with grace and determination. Today, as Vice President of Community Engagement, she not only honors that legacy, but has built on it in ways that have created lasting value for Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union and the communities it serves. She brings energy, empathy, and purpose to every interaction, along with the ability to connect the Credit Union’s mission to real community needs. She also has a passion for connecting nonprofit organizations to support one another and in the end, better serve the community.

One of Alison’s most significant accomplishments has been her leadership and growth of the annual We Share A Common Thread Foundation Fundraiser. Under her leadership, the Foundation’s signature fundraising efforts have grown dramatically, increasing from approximately \$40,000 to \$130,000. This type of growth reflects more than successful event execution; it reflects strategic thinking, trusted relationships, and the ability to inspire others to participate in a shared mission. Alison has helped turn community support into measurable impact, allowing Jeanne D’Arc to deepen its investment in giving back to organizations and initiatives that improve lives across the region.

What sets Alison apart is that her impact extends far beyond fundraising totals. She has cultivated meaningful relationships with nonprofit organizations, civic leaders, educators, and local businesses that are instrumental in shaping how Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union is known in the community. She is often the face of the organization in community settings, and she represents the credit union with authenticity and professionalism. Those relationships have strengthened Jeanne D’Arc’s reputation as a trusted community partner and have helped create opportunities that support broader organizational goals, including business development, financial education, and member engagement.

Alison also lives Jeanne D’Arc’s core value of “heart to serve” in a way that inspires others to do the same. In 2025 Alison had 350 volunteer hours and currently serves on the Boards of the following organizations; We Share A Common Thread Foundation, Bread & Roses, D’Youville Life & Wellness Community Foundation, Salvation Army Advisory Board, and Tufts Medicine/Lowell General Hospital. She does not simply participate in volunteerism, she creates a culture of volunteerism. Through the relationships she develops, she identifies programs and opportunities and encourages employees to give back as individuals and as teams. Her work in this area makes service accessible, and meaningful by connecting employees to causes they care about while reinforcing the credit union’s core values while expanding its community impact.

Alison has implemented the use of volunteer tracking tools that make it easier to measure community engagement, organize participation, and demonstrate impact. This kind of behind-the-scenes work is often overlooked, but it is essential. By bringing structure and accountability to community engagement efforts, Alison has helped Jeanne D’Arc strengthen its Community Reinvestment Act-related initiatives, streamline reporting, and making it easier for employees and nonprofit partners to collaborate around community events and service opportunities.

Equally important is the way Alison leads. She is approachable, dependable, and deeply respected by colleagues, partners, and community members alike. People trust Alison because she is genuine, responsive, and focused on what will make the greatest difference. She brings people together, builds enthusiasm around shared goals, and follows through with integrity. In every sense, she is a relationship-driven leader whose influence is felt both inside and outside the Credit Union.

The Professional of the Year award recognizes individuals whose dedication to cooperative values and exceptional service make their Credit Union stand out. Alison Hughes is the embodiment of that standard. She has expanded Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union’s community impact, strengthened its reputation, inspired employees to serve, and built partnerships that support both mission and growth. Her work reflects not only professional excellence, but also the heart, humility, and purpose that define the very best of the credit union movement.

For all of these reasons, Alison is deserving of recognition as the CCUA Awards of Excellence Professional of the Year. She has carried forward an important legacy while creating one of her own: a legacy of service, leadership, compassion, and measurable impact. Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union, and the wider community it serves, are stronger because of Alison Hughes.