

How DE Changed My Life

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I went to DE freshly new to the financial world. I was essentially starting from scratch with very little idea of the industry I was entering or what I had to learn. I went through DE Training in 2015 as a Member Service Supervisor, and I am now serving as the Training & Education Director at North Star Community Credit Union in Grafton, North Dakota.



I would have never known my passion for the credit union purpose had I not attended CUDE. I came to DE knowing nothing about CU history or what we stood for. DE has a special way of making you step outside of your comfort zone, tossing you into the credit union knowledge pool, building you up, and then aligning you in such a way that you simply can't imagine NOT being in the credit union movement.

Because of DE, I view members completely differently. When they walk in our credit union, I strive to be that person that makes them feel welcomed and comfortable enough to ask the tough questions. My job is to harvest their trust and create that loyalty by being a relatable person. This approach came directly from my DE Training and has opened up an entirely new world in the way that I treat everyone.

I was fortunate enough to mentor an amazing DE Group in 2016 and continue my involvement with this incredible program. I was pushed out of my comfort zone once again when I was asked to speak at DE graduation later that year. This experience lit a fire in me that I didn't know I had. Speaking at the graduation and going back as a mentor opened up a whole new world of public speaking for me.

Since then, I have been traveling and speaking about DE, the principles and philosophies, and my passion for the credit union movement. These experiences have allowed me to travel, meet new people, and grow an incredible network on supportive, passionate credit union professionals. DE has influenced a strength and pride in my abilities that is priceless.

DE has also inspired me to help my community through various projects such as CU-Connect where I connect our members to local businesses and services. It has also inspired a yearly backpack exchange, and the Seeds-2-Save program.



Seeds-2-Save is an entrepreneurship program for youth sponsored by North Star Community Credit Union of Grafton that teaches children ages 8 to 12 how to properly plant, grow, pick, and sell produce at a the local farmer's market. All proceeds from the produce are split evenly amongst the participating children's savings accounts. This program leads children through how to start, maintain, and earn a profit from their very own business while teaching the young leaders how to nurture their money to a bountiful growth.

Overall, DE taught me about the power of positive changes. I've learned to take a situation that may not be ideal and turn it into a lesson, an educational opportunity, and a way to connect with another human being. Positive change starts from the inside of a credit union and works its way out. This is why people are so loyal to their credit unions, because we truly do change people's lives!