



Press Release - Embargoed for Monday, January 23, 2012

**East Lansing Educational Foundation and Summit Community Bank
Launch the Business Partners for Education Campaign
to Raise Money for Grants to East Lansing Students and Teachers**

East Lansing – In the library of Whitehills Elementary School, business leaders joined John Abbott, President and CEO of Summit Community Bank, in some very little chairs. Excited students, who wondered why grownups were sitting at their library tables, surrounded them.

“We are here today,” explained Abbott, “to announce a new partnership between the East Lansing business community and the East Lansing Educational Foundation. Summit Community Bank is leading the charge to find 50 business partners to ally with public education in East Lansing. Will your company join us to help assure that our students have what they need to learn?”

The Business Partners for Education Campaign allows businesses to support all schools in the district with one annual gift. Donations will support grants for classrooms and the mission of East Lansing Educational Foundation (ELEF). Companies will commit to donating to the Foundation for three years.

“We know businesses care about the quality of our East Lansing schools,” said ELEF Board Member Joan Berardo. “We want to make it easy for them to put funds into classrooms, streamlining our efforts to make sure students and teachers have what they need to teach and learn.”

The Foundation has given out about \$30,000 a year for the last few years, Berardo reports. The Foundation hopes this business effort will allow them to increase those funds. “Every year we have thousands of dollars more in grant requests than we have in grant funds available,” says Berardo. “We need the support of our business community to help us meet the dreams of all our students.”

“Summit Community Banks takes the business of being a strong, local community citizen very seriously,” Abbott said. “When our schools are strong, our community is strong. This program is a win for businesses and a win for our schools. It’s a solid partnership.”

Fourteen businesses joined Summit Community Bank as Founding Partners: Gold Level - East Lansing Basketball Club; Grua, Jamo & Young; Musselman Realty. Silver Level - Brogan, Reed, VanGorder & Assoc.; Crippen Buick GMC Mazda Volvo; Dr. Charles Hagan, DDS MHS PC; Dr. Michael Peters, DDS MS PC; Thrun Law Firm. Bronze Level - Jane Bitsicas Doncaster Clothing; Brookover, Carr & Schaberg, PC; Church Wyble, PC; Coral Gables of East Lansing; Craig Spencer, DDS; Plante & Moran, PLLC

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Summit Community Bank is a full service financial institution with banking offices in East Lansing and Okemos and a Home Loan Center in Lansing. For more information, please visit mysummitbank.com.