



## MEMBER PROFILE

*Member Spotlight:*

## Yosef Aklilu

*Edison High School Student*

Yosef Aklilu has a plan to pay for college – save money, earn a full-ride scholarship, and then graduate debt free. And he is doing his homework – literally and figuratively – to achieve that lofty goal.

The Edison High School junior is a 4.0 student, is active in many clubs and organizations, and has a mature awareness of finances for a 16-year-old. His perspective comes from a self-driven sense of responsibility and an unexpected benefit from the pandemic.

“I got to spend more time with my dad and he explained where our expenses go,” he says.

He has also culled financial words of wisdom from another relative.

**(Cont. inside—Yosef Aklilu)**



## PRODUCT/SERVICE PROFILE

## Visa Platinum Credit Card Special – 5.99% APR!

The holidays may be over but we have a special gift for you. January through March, we're offering a promotional rate on our Visa Platinum Credit Card.

- **Enjoy a 5.99% promotional APR on purchases and balance transfers through March 31, 2022.\***
- Promotional rate balance stays at 5.99% APR until April 2023
- Balance transfer fee waived through March 31, 2022

A low promotional rate and no balance transfer fee? Now that's smarter banking. Apply online today at [myEECU.org](http://myEECU.org).

*\*5.99% promotional APR will apply through the April 2023 billing cycle to all EECU Visa Platinum purchases and balance transfers from other financial institutions that post 1/1/22 to 3/31/22. Balance transfer fee waived on transfers posted from 1/1/22 to 3/31/22. After the April 2023 billing cycle, unpaid promotional rate balances will convert to the standard rate of 10.99%-12.99% APR based on creditworthiness. Visa Charges: Minimum interest - \$0.50 monthly; cash advance & balance transfer fee - greater of \$5 or 2% of transaction amount. Subject to credit approval. Promotional APR and fee waiver not available on transfers of existing EECU obligations. Additional terms and conditions apply.*



# Call for Volunteers

We are now accepting applications for our annual election to the Board of Directors and Supervisory Committee, and our Associate Volunteer program.

EECU is the largest credit union based in the central San Joaquin Valley, serving 12 counties and more than 335,000 members.

We are seeking members who have the time, interest, ability and commitment to serve and will dedicate their efforts on behalf of – and for the good of – our diverse membership. Ideal candidates will bring to the position their leadership skills, creativity, diversity in background and thought, and a passion for volunteer service. Applicants for all positions must be members of EECU for a minimum of five years.

## Board of Directors and Supervisory Committee Candidates

Our annual election to the Board of Directors and Supervisory Committee is May 2022. The deadline to submit a candidate application is February 17, 2022. The Nomination/Election Committee will review applications and interview potential candidates prior to placing names into nomination. Members who are not nominated may still seek election by submitting a petition containing the verified signatures of 100 credit union members. The petitions must be submitted by March 15, 2022.

Four seats will be up for election on the Board of Directors, and two seats will be available on the Supervisory Committee. The Board of Directors is responsible for providing direction and oversight to the credit union, exercising sound governance and leadership, and working closely with management on policy setting and strategic planning. The Supervisory Committee is responsible for ensuring rules/regulations are followed and evaluating the credit union's internal controls. The Supervisory Committee is also responsible for selecting the credit union's external audit firm and overseeing the audit of the credit union's financials.

## Associate Volunteer Candidates

The Board of Directors may appoint up to three candidates to become Associate Volunteers. Associate Volunteers provide the credit union with an ongoing resource to provide qualified future candidates for Board and Supervisory Committee elections. Associate Volunteers will complete educational training, attend meetings, participate in planning sessions, and fulfill other requirements of the position.

Appointment to the Associate Volunteer program will be voted on by the Board of Directors. Terms begin in April 2022.

## Application Information and Requirements

Prior to February 17, 2022, potential candidates for an elected or associate volunteer position must attend a scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors or the Supervisory Committee and an orientation session to review the responsibilities of the position. The meeting dates are listed below.

Members interested in running for an elected or associate volunteer position must meet specific criteria for eligibility, including being an EECU member for at least five years and demonstrating a high degree of personal financial responsibility. For more information, please call (559) 437-7924, or write to:

The Nomination/Election Committee  
c/o Educational Employees Credit Union  
P.O. Box 5242  
Fresno, CA 93755

**Board of Directors Meeting Date:** January 25, 2022

**Supervisory Committee Meeting Date:** February 10, 2022

**Candidate Orientation Dates:** January 27, 2022, and February 2, 2022 (if needed)

**Candidate Interview Dates:** February 8, 9, and 10 (if needed), 2022

# Bulletin Board

## Martin Luther King Jr. Day

*Monday, January 17*

Normal business hours will resume on Tuesday, January 18.

## Presidents Day

*Monday, February 21*

Normal business hours will resume on Tuesday, February 22.



## Holiday Hours

In observance of the following holidays, we will be closed:

# The 2021 Year in Review

EECU has been a trusted provider of financial services since 1934. We are as dedicated today as we were then to helping our members save, borrow, and invest wisely. We take great pride in providing our members with products and services that will help them achieve financial well-being at every stage of life.

We continue to operate as a safe and sound credit union for our growing membership. We serve more than 335,000 members with over \$4.6 billion in assets. The efforts of our management team, volunteer officials, and staff contribute greatly to our success.

We are committed to providing our members with excellent service, products, and technology to meet their diverse financial needs. Last November we completed a major core system upgrade. The upgrade is part of our member-centric technology strategy and allows us to better serve our members and increase efficiencies throughout the credit union.

Adding or enhancing services and locations continues to be on our “to do” list. Last year we upgraded our online application to make it even faster and easier to apply for a loan. With many of our loans you can even sign documents online – no need to visit a branch. We also made it more convenient to open an account. Savings, Checking and Holiday Wise Club accounts can now be opened completely online. Construction is underway on our new branch at Shaw and Armstrong in Clovis, which is scheduled to open this spring. The branch will have an outside walk-up window and a modern interior design. Whether you're banking with us in person or online, we aim to deliver an exceptional experience.

Mobile banking usage continues to grow and last year we added new features to our mobile app to give you additional tools to manage your finances. Money Management, our personal financial management solution, has been available in our full online banking site for many years and was added to our mobile app last year. With Money Management, you can track your spending, create budgets, set goals, and more. Our mobile deposit feature now offers you the flexibility of making deposits into your Savings account or your Checking account. When you're on-the-go, we're right there with you. Now that's smarter banking.

We actively seek ways to give back to the communities that we serve. Last year we celebrated 30 years of sponsoring the Fresno County Educator of the Year awards ceremony, which honors outstanding teachers, administrators, and school employees. We also sponsor Excellence in Education events in Kings, Madera, Merced, and Tulare counties. Our Student Grant Program awards \$100,000 in grants each year, and to date we have awarded more than \$1.5 million to student members pursuing higher education. Last March, we joined together with ABC30, Disney and First Book to provide 5,000 books to students at King Elementary in Fresno. We are also proud to provide financial support to numerous organizations throughout the valley, including the Marjaree Mason Center, African American Historical & Cultural Museum, Valley Caregiver Resource Center, and The Salvation Army.

Barbara Thomas, a 26-year member of our board of directors, was honored last year with the J. Alvin George Outstanding Volunteer Award from the California and Nevada Credit Union Leagues. Barbara is a role model in her service to and support of the credit union and the community, and we are so grateful for her years of service to EECU.

EECU was again selected as the best credit union in The Fresno Bee's People's Choice Awards. We strive to offer financial products and services that enhance our members' lives and empower them to achieve financial success, and we are honored to receive this award.

As we begin the new year, I want to thank you – our members – for placing your trust in us. Your continued loyalty is the reason for our success.

**Walter A. Franzell**

Chair, EECU Board of Directors

## Yosef Aklilu (Cont. from Cover)

“My uncle taught me to have saving as a habit instead of spending as a habit and to have a threshold of money saved and don’t go below it.”

Easy enough, right? Well, not quite and Yosef knows that. But he also knows the importance of developing good money habits early in life. He realizes that at his tender age he is no financial expert but he does have a thirst to learn and a desire that he and other teenagers receive sound money advice.

“My hope is that students receive the right information to make good financial decisions.”

Doing his small part to help make that happen, Yosef is lending his teen insight to EECU. He is working with the credit union’s community relations officers who develop and provide free financial literacy classes to students and adults around the valley.

EECU staff members present Wise Up classes and lead students through real-life financial scenarios. The students choose a profession, work within that occupation’s salary, set up a household budget and manage their expenses.

Yosef believes the knowledge gained can help young people avoid poor money choices.

***“Those bad decisions have consequences years later. The impacts of the workshops are unimaginable.”***

Noemi Valenzuela, an EECU community relations officer, says the financial literacy classes offer students practical know-how.

“Financial literacy, including Wise Up, is such an essential topic for students and

their families,” she says. “It helps provide an awareness on how to manage personal finances.”

Yosef’s take on the curriculum is welcomed.

“He has been vital in providing a student perspective to our program. His ease of thinking outside of the traditional format has definitely helped bring new elements to our program,” Noemi says.

Yosef is well aware that graduating with a college diploma debt free isn’t the norm. His bigger-picture takeaway from his teen money lessons is doing what he can to gain financial resources for college.

He has a full academic plate, including five Advanced Placement classes (he would like to attend Stanford University) and he is enriching himself with a wide range of activities to hone his study, collaborative and leadership skills.

Yosef serves as an AP ambassador tutoring students; as an intern with My Brother’s Keeper, an alliance that supports boys and men of color; and as a member of the President’s Youth Council for The California Endowment, providing a teen voice to the organization that helps youth and adults thrive.

He is Edison High’s junior class treasurer, a Chess Club member and a Valley STEM tutor, teaching science, technology, engineering and math lessons to King Elementary School students.

The African American Student Leadership Academy is another program that has given Yosef valuable experience.

Academy administrators identify and mentor college-bound 8th grade students to prepare them for the University of

California system. The goal is to improve opportunities for African American students in the Fresno Unified School District and to offer skills for college success.

Lisa Nichols is vice principal on special assignment with Fresno Unified’s Student Engagement Department and oversees the academy. She immediately saw enormous potential in Yosef.

“I first met Yosef when he was attending Computech Middle School,” Lisa says. “It was apparent right away that he was a leader in the making. To see his growth over the last four years has been an honor to watch.”

Lisa believes Yosef’s input will enhance EECU’s financial education programs. She sees the long-term value of Wise Up classes, citing research that shows such programs help students develop sound financial practices.

“The hope is to create a foundation for our students to build good money habits early so that they avoid the mistakes that could lead to money struggles as an adult.”

Yosef’s parents immigrated to the U.S. from Ethiopia, enduring poverty and malnutrition in their homeland. They have built a good life for him and his two sisters who are 15 and 6.

Yosef credits his father, Alemseged Asrat, with conveying a strong work ethic. He earned a nursing degree while in the U.S. and is a nurse practitioner at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Fresno.

“He passed on his perseverance to me.”

A photograph of two women standing side-by-side. The woman on the left, Elizabeth Dooley, is wearing a bright orange blazer over a white top. The woman on the right, Barbara Thomas, is wearing a colorful, patterned shawl over a dark top and is holding a small, dark award or plaque. They are standing in front of a blue backdrop with white circular patterns.

## EECU Board Member Barbara Thomas Honored

EECU board member Barbara Thomas has been selected as the recipient of the J. Alvin George Outstanding Volunteer Award from the California and Nevada Credit Union Leagues. Barbara has served on our board of directors since 1995 and is a role model in her service to and support of the credit union and the community.

Congratulations, Barbara.

**Barbara Thomas (right) and EECU President/CEO Elizabeth Dooley.**

## Credit Repair and Debt Relief Scams

Regardless of how the debt happened, when faced with mounting bills and difficult budget decisions, scammers who promise to repair credit or eliminate debt for a fee is simply a promise that cannot be kept. Victims are enticed with guarantees, such as a credit score increase or debt forgiveness, all for a charge upfront for their “services.” If the fee is paid, the scammer takes the money, plus any personal information, and disappears or simply fails to deliver all that was promised.

### How the Scam Works:

When faced with deciding between paying debt or buying necessities, a person might see online ads and social media pop-ups or receive unsolicited phone calls guaranteeing a better credit score, a chance to alleviate debt, or promising a better financial situation. The temptation to pay the upfront fee to relieve stress might be a mistake.

The companies that are calling or advertising online frequently promise – and charge for – impossible services. This includes removing past credit mistakes, such as late payments or a bankruptcy, from your credit report. They offer to provide a new “credit identity” or negotiate with lenders or a credit card company to completely eliminate the debt. BBB recommends before providing any financial or personal information to check out the company first.

### How to Spot This Scam:

**Advance fees are a concern.** Not all businesses promising to help you repair bad credit are scams, but if you are asked to pay in advance, that’s a big red flag. In both the U.S. and Canada, credit repair and debt relief companies can only collect their fee after they perform the services promised.

**Do not believe guarantees.** Nobody can guarantee to make debt go away or improve your credit score. In fact, they can’t promise you anything before they have even reviewed your personal financial situation.

**Beware of the big promise.** Other red flags are big promises, such as removing negative information from your credit report, or urging you to get a new identity or apply for an Employer Identification Number to use instead of your Social Security number (that’s a crime, by the way). No contract or one that is vague is another warning sign.

EECU’s member services specialist, Esmeralda Perez, offers free assistance to help our members improve or repair their financial and credit profiles. To schedule an appointment with Esmeralda, please ask a branch representative or call our Member Service Center at 1-800-538-3328.

*Source: Better Business Bureau*

### River Park East ATM Removed

Our River Park East ATM located by Starbucks in the River Park Shopping Center in Fresno has been removed. Visit our nearby ATM in the Dollar Tree parking lot (formerly Pier One Imports) at Blackstone & Alluvial Avenues. Use the Locator in our mobile app to find EECU and CO-OP ATMs near you.



## Save with a Holiday Wise Club Account

Need an easy and convenient way to get an early start for your 2022 holiday shopping? Consider opening a Holiday Wise Club account. Reap the benefits of our Holiday Wise Club with monthly deposits into your account throughout the year. A \$5 deposit is all it takes to open the club account. The club year runs from November 1 to October 31.

Members may open a Holiday Wise Club account any time during the year. Club savings are automatically transferred on the first business day in November to your savings or checking account. The dividend rate will generally be slightly higher than regular shares. And your account automatically renews each year. Make deposits in person, or via ATM, phone, online, or automatic transfer.

Open an account online at [myEECU.org](https://myEECU.org).



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1-800-538-3328

**Website**  
[myEECU.org](https://myEECU.org)

## We Can Find the Mortgage Loan That's Right for You

Buying a home is a big financial decision but it doesn't have to be overwhelming. If you're in the market for a home or looking to refinance your home, our real estate loan specialists can guide you through the process.

We offer competitive rates for resident occupied and non-owner-occupied homes, vacation homes, and loans for first-time buyers. We have a variety of loans and terms to fit your needs.

Whether you're looking to make your first home purchase, refinance your home, or buy your dream home, our expert real estate loan specialists will lead you every step of the way.

Visit [myEECU.org](https://myEECU.org) for more information about our mortgage loan products. While you're there, be sure to check out our Money 101 page and browse through our library of articles, videos, and other resources on home ownership.

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