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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Centris Federal Credit Union Makes Impact Through Creighton University's VITA Program Sponsorship**

**OMAHA, Neb.** – Centris Federal Credit Union has partnered with Creighton University to help improve access to essential financial services by sponsoring Creighton University's VITA program. VITA, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, is a service of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that assists community members annually in filing their taxes. The sponsorship supported accounting students in the Heider College of Business in using their skills and expertise to assist qualifying individuals in filing their taxes this spring.

In the Principles of Taxation class, Creighton accounting students study tax rules, IRS 1040 forms, and applicable tax credits and deductions. They then apply their knowledge and skills to help families in the Omaha metro area file their tax returns at no cost. Students receive training and certifications from the IRS before they work in the tax clinics.

As a result of the sponsorship, Creighton hosted seven VITA clinics this tax season. Six in-person, walk-in-only clinics were offered on the Creighton campus from February 1 through April 5, and one in Winnebago, Nebraska. According to Agne Dizona, Creighton University's director of corporate and foundation relations, they served a record 583 clients, including a significant increase in international students and student-athletes. "The impact goes beyond numbers," Dizona said. "Our students grow deeply through this work. As part of the program, they reflect on their experiences in writing."

The following is a small sampling of the powerful excerpts from Creighton students:

"I feel the service allowed the clients to have a weight lifted off their shoulders, and we as preparers were able to share our knowledge and gain hands-on experience — the service benefited both parties. My time in Winnebago gave me the opportunity to serve outside my usual environment and to connect more personally with clients. Their gratitude was deeply touching and reminded me why this work is so important."

"Many of the people who come to VITA face financial uncertainty and stress. I hope I provided a sense of relief, clarity, and hope for my clients. Even the smallest actions can make a big difference. I was struck by how hard the tax system is for those without access to financial resources. Many clients are trying their best to follow the rules, but the system is overwhelming. Being face-to-face with real struggles — ones often invisible to the public — was powerful. It reminded me that serving with compassion and understanding truly matters."

Dawn Gonzales, vice president, community relations for Centris, said that this was the first year for the sponsorship. "We are pleased and excited about the results Professor Deyna Rouse had this year. Rouse oversees the program and was a participant student tax preparer 25 years ago. This sponsorship with Creighton is helping to influence the next generation of financial service employees." Gonzales added, "Empathy is difficult to teach. It's often fostered through modeling and engaging in activities that promote emotional awareness and social connection. This experience provides a place for students to practice not only their tax knowledge but also the soft skills, which are so essential yet often overlooked."



*Centris Federal Credit Union, founded in 1934, is Nebraska's largest federally chartered community credit union. With a billion dollars in assets, Centris serves Cass, Dodge, Douglas, Lincoln, McPherson, Sarpy, Saunders, and Washington counties in Nebraska, as well as Harrison, Mills, and Pottawattamie counties in Iowa. Centris has 14 branches located in Omaha, Grand Island, and North Platte, Neb., and Council Bluffs, Iowa.*

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