

Donna Neal

PRESIDENT & CEO, MY COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION



Donna Neal, president and CEO of My Community Credit Union, emphasizes the importance of community commitment in fostering support for neighbors and local businesses. She advocates for a culture of mutual aid, believing it to be instrumental in building a robust and secure community environment. Donna contends that such collaborative efforts foster growth and encourage active participation from community members, ultimately contributing to the area's collective prosperity.

working opportunities provided by the Chamber that are very beneficial to business owners. In addition, it's a great way to learn about what all our community offers. It still amazes me, even after all my years here in Allen and my involvement in the community, how much I don't know about what all this community offers.

How do you balance your community involvement with other aspects of your life, and what strategies have helped you maintain this balance effectively?

I think if something is important to you, you will find a way to make time for it. I believe in a balanced life where I make time for my faith, family, friends and community.

Are there specific individuals or role models who have influenced your commitment to community service and inspired you to become a Woman of Inspiration?

I have had many wonderful role models in my life that have inspired me to become a Woman of Inspiration, family, church family, friends and bosses. I have been employed in the Credit Union Industry for 25 plus years. Credit Unions are not for profit member owned organizations that are committed to giving back to the communities they serve. They encourage and provide opportunities for their employees to give back to the community. Working in the Credit Union industry provided many volunteering opportunities that helped build my desire to give back.

Looking ahead, what aspirations do you have for the future of Allen and/or Fairview?

I am so excited about the future of Allen/Fairview. So many wonderful entertainment venues, businesses and neighborhoods continue to come our way. The Allen/Fairview commitment to excellence in schools, community and safety are very important to me as a member of this community. I want to do all that I can to support these ideas.

What advice would you give to other residents of our Allen and/or Fairview who aspire to make a positive impact in their community?

Get involved. There are many opportunities to get involved. Contact the Chamber and/or the City to find opportunities to get involved. Shop locally when you can. Get to know and support the businesses in our community. Helping your community is an opportunity to grow as a person.

Are there specific moments or stories of encouragement from the our community that have fueled your dedication to making a difference, and how have these moments shaped your journey?

I've lived in Allen since 1985. I was involved in Leadership Allen in 1996. I have seen the tremendous growth that has taken place in this community. Leadership Allen/Fairview is a great program that will introduce you to the community and a place where you can find opportunities to volunteer and/or contribute.

Can you share a specific initiative or project that you are particularly proud of, and how do you envision its lasting impact on the community?

My involvement with the Allen Fairview Chamber has been very impactful. I have served as an Ambassador and have served on the Board of Directors. There are many net-

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Cynthia Thompson

HEART & SOUL HEALTH AND WELLNESS/DAZZLE EVENTS BY CYNTHIA SHINE AND FLY WOMEN'S MINISTRY



Cynthia Thompson's journey toward involvement in the Allen/Fairview community and her dedication to its growth and well-being began at the age of nine when her family relocated to Allen. With nearly five decades of residency in the Allen/Fairview area, Cynthia has witnessed its growth while still retaining its small-town charm. Having spent the majority of her life in Allen, Cynthia's affection for the community has always been profound, and she has continually strived for its improvement.

Cynthia's personal connections to Allen run deep, with both her and her husband having been Allen High School sweethearts, as well as her daughter and son-in-law, and her son and daughter-in-law. This familial bond with the community motivated Cynthia to contribute actively to various local initiatives, including volunteering with the Allen PTA, supporting the Allen High Tallnettes drill team booster club, and assisting the Allen High School football team, marking some of her earliest contributions to the community's development.

What advice would you give to other residents of our Allen and/or Fairview who aspire to make a positive impact in their community?

My advice to other residents is to get involved! Get involved and learn about areas of the community. Foundation for Allen Schools, Allen Fairview Chamber, the Fire Dept., the Police Dept., Parks and Recreation, the library, the symphony, the schools or local nonprofits. I have lived in Allen for 47 years and I am still learning and helping different areas in the community. Getting involved will not help the community and the area you are volunteering for, but it will help you grow. I joined the Allen Fairview Chamber 7 years ago as small business owner and never dreamed it would have helped me become the person I am today.

Are there specific moments or stories of encouragement from the our community that have fueled your dedication to making a difference, and how have these moments shaped your journey?

There are so many specific moments and stories of encouragement from the community that have fueled my dedication to make a difference, but I will keep it to three. The first story is when I was a volunteer for the Allen Fire Department Covid vaccine clinic. I have never seen such love, compassion, and dedication as I witnessed from the Allen Fire Department. They were so encouraging to the volunteers and people driving through to receive their vaccines. This event showed me what its like when a community comes together. After volunteering with the

fire department, I was fueled to become a volunteer in multiple ways to help our community. The second story that fueled my dedication to make a difference was in March of 2023 when I earned Chamber member of the Year for the Allen Fairview Chamber. At that moment I knew that I was on the path to helping others grow by just asking what I could do to help. The last story is the growth of my Women's ministry called Shine and Fly. Over the past three years my women's ministry has taught me that when you support women and show up for them, they will grow. This ministry has fueled my growth journey. These moments have shaped my journey by showing me that I am capable! They taught me to Spread My Wings and Fly.

Can you share a specific initiative or project that you are particularly proud of, and how do you envision its lasting impact on the community?

There are so many initiatives and projects that I have am proud of but the one that I am most proud of is my Women's Ministry, Shine and Fly. My ministry started in 2017 with maybe 5-10 women in my living room. My mission is to help women share their stories and heal, learn to love themselves. Now, my ministry has approximately 250 women. The past three years I have held events for women at hotels in Allen so they could be shown love and kindness. I am very proud that I get text messages or calls asking if I can help them. Most of the time they just need a listening ear but sometimes they need help finding resources and are afraid to ask or do not know where to look. I envision this group growing so we can help other women learn to love themselves.

Are there specific individuals or role models who have influenced your commitment to community service and inspired you to become a Woman of Inspiration?

The specific individuals or role models who have influenced my commitment to community service and inspired me to become a Woman of Inspiration are Laurie Roberts with Grateful Gratitude, Jan Jungman with the Allen EDC, lots of very supportive family member and very dear supportive friends.

Looking ahead, what aspirations do you have for the future of Allen and/or Fairview?

Looking ahead, the aspirations I have for the future of Allen would be embracing the long history, revitalizing the downtown area and getting the community more involved.



Congratulations!



TO OUR LOCAL WOMEN OF INSPIRATION

Allen is a community that comes together to celebrate good people and great works like those represented by our local 2024 Women of Inspiration. When I read the names of these wonderful women, I see infinite contributions to the successful fiber of our community.

They are small business owners, civic leaders, and founders of many services people have come to rely upon in times of need and times of joy. They work in our schools, city, hospital, and chamber shaping the vital roles of these organizations. We look to these women as the doers, the go-getters, the shapers, the history-makers, success-agents, powerhouses and even more importantly as friends, wives, mothers, and neighbors. And, this year we want to pause and celebrate their many contributions not only as Women of Inspiration but as an integral part of what makes Allen stronger.

Sincerely, Mayor Baine L. Brooks

