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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **VyStar Credit Union Celebrates International Credit Union Day 2024: "One World Through Cooperative Finance"**

**Jacksonville, FL** - VyStar Credit Union proudly joins the global movement of credit unions to celebrate the 76th anniversary of International Credit Union (ICU) Day on Thursday, October 17, 2024. This year's theme, "One World Through Cooperative Finance," emphasizes the ability of credit unions to unite communities around the globe through democratic, member-owned financial institutions that put people before profit.

In line with this theme, VyStar is proud to support Three Grains of Rice Mission, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering individuals on the First Coast, overseas and those going through the legal immigration process in the United States to build better futures. The credit union provided a \$570,000 building donation to the nonprofit to serve as a headquarters and community food bank. VyStar employees recently completed volunteer hours to organize, sort, and pack food. The nonprofit provides resources for individuals and families struggling with food and housing instability along with local and international disaster relief and humanitarian aid. Its mission aligns with the cooperative values of the credit union movement, focusing on providing resources, guidance, and opportunities for underserved populations to create financial stability and independence.

"Credit unions offer more flexibility in helping individuals' transition which is remarkable," said Ed Perez, President/CEO of Three Grains of Rice Mission. "In the Hispanic community, you have a number of individuals in the VyStar branches who are bilingual, and when we send someone there, someone makes sure there's a translator whether at the credit union or over the phone. The more they learn, the quicker they learn, the more they'll be able to become a much more effective and impactful individual in this in this country. What you're really doing is teaching, training, guiding and creating a level of trust in the financial industry so that people can move forward confidently."

VyStar recently participated in the Worldwide Foundation of Credit Union's (WFCU) Global Bridges program, a global movement of credit unions and financial cooperatives. The platform connects networks across the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) and WFCU to advance solutions to shared global challenges. VyStar was the only Florida-based credit union that participated in the study tour. Highlights included visits to cooperatives in Quito, Cuenca, Mitad del Mundo and Latacunga.

"Through global initiatives like the Global Bridges Program and our partnership with Three Grains of Rice Mission, VyStar is committed to making a positive impact locally and internationally," said VyStar EVP/Chief Operations Officer Chad Meadows. "We are proud to be part of a movement that enhances financial education, fosters inclusivity, and empowers people to build stronger and more stable financial futures."



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As VyStar celebrates ICU Day, the credit union is also reaching a significant milestone: 1 million members. This achievement represents the collective power of cooperative finance and the trust that VyStar's members have placed in the credit union's mission to put people first. This milestone underscores VyStar's commitment to "Growth for Good," ensuring that as we grow, the greater our ability to positively impact more communities, providing essential financial services and support where it's needed most.

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***About VyStar Credit Union***

*VyStar Credit Union is the second-largest credit union headquartered in Florida, with over 80 branches and is reaching 1,000,000 members with assets of over \$14 billion. VyStar is the top mortgage lender in Northeast Florida and a major employer in the region with over 2,200 employees across the communities it serves. VyStar membership is open to everyone who lives or works in the 49 contiguous counties of Central to North Florida, 29 Georgia counties, and past and present military members and their families all over the world. For more information, visit [vystarcu.org](https://vystarcu.org), and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X \(Twitter\)](#), and [LinkedIn](#).*