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Freedom First Welcomes Araceli Arellano as Financial Empowerment Center Counselor

November 18, 2020 (Roanoke, VA)— Araceli Arellano joined Freedom First in April as one of the new counselors at the Roanoke Financial Empowerment Center. Araceli has over four years of experience in the banking industry and working as a legal assistant at an immigration law firm. She is now able to apply her experience into being a counselor, educating clients on financial issues and creating long lasting relationships, especially within the Spanish speaking community.

As a financial counselor, Araceli works with clients to help them reach their financial goals, like increasing bad credit scores or creating a budget to save for their first home. **“During these difficult times, I can provide clients that are struggling to make ends meet due to job loss or reduced wages as a result of COVID-19 with helpful community resources such as access to CARES funding or assistance for rental or mortgage relief, as well as helping them create budgets and spending plans.”** The primary focus of the FEC is to empower clients so they can continue to grow on their own while the counselors help them on their journey.

What Araceli enjoys most about her job is the relationships that are created along the way. **“It’s a great feeling when you’ve helped someone reach an important milestone in their life when they’ve felt like it couldn’t be reached. Making them aware of their ability to get out of difficult situations like dealing with creditors or starting and keeping a savings plan, and empower them to make good financial decisions in their lives is a rewarding feeling.”** The FEC counselors work diligently with clients to listen to their financial burdens and goals and helping them to create a tailor-made financial plan made specifically for them.

Araceli and her partner have four children, and they enjoy spending time at the pool, doing arts and crafts, and making movies. Araceli also runs her own side business of woodworking and enjoys making business logos out of wood.

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ABOUT FREEDOM FIRST CREDIT UNION: Freedom First Credit Union is the largest member owned, Community Development Financial Institution in Southwest Virginia. Founded in 1956, Freedom First has grown to over 50,000 members, assets of over \$650 million, and 10 branch locations in the Roanoke and New River Valleys. Freedom First



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members benefit from competitive rates, secure and convenient technology, and the knowledge that their money is being reinvested in their community. For more information, please visit www.freedomfirst.com.