



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contacts:
Audrey Cohen
Jackie Savage
Epoch 5 Public Relations
631/427-1713
acohen@epoch5.com
jsavage@epoch5.com

Free Tax Filing Assistance for Eligible Long Islanders

**Long Island's Largest Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program
Available at Bethpage Federal Credit Union**

***Taxpayers to also Receive Important Details on
How to Claim up to \$7,500 Earned Income Tax Credit***

Bethpage, NY – January 25, 2013 – For the tenth year, [Bethpage Federal Credit Union](#), New York State's largest credit union, will help low- to moderate-income households on Long Island prepare their tax returns for free, by offering Long Island's largest Volunteer [Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\)](#) program at 12 of its Long Island branch locations.

Beginning January 30, 2013 through April 13, 2013, 150 IRS certified volunteers, including bilingual tax assistants, will be available to meet with eligible taxpayers with 2012 incomes of \$49,000 and below to file tax returns. Bethpage's VITA Program is open to all eligible Long Islanders, including non-Bethpage members. VITA services will be available on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons in 12 Bethpage branches including: Elmont, Freeport, Hempstead, Massapequa, Roosevelt, Westbury, Bay Shore, Central Islip, Farmingdale, Patchogue, West Babylon and Riverhead. For specific times and branch addresses, go to www.bethpagefcu.com or call 1-800-628-7070.

"Bethpage is pleased to partner again with the IRS to offer Long Island's largest tax filing assistance program. This is an important free service that those eligible should take advantage of. For the past 10 years, we have been making free tax filing assistance available across both Nassau and Suffolk Counties and are working hard to help Long Island's working class receive the deserving refunds and credits they deserve," said Linda Armynt, Senior Vice President, Bethpage.

As part of its VITA program, Bethpage announced its partnership with the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island to help educate eligible taxpayers about the EITC, which each year goes unclaimed for thousands, and could bring an additional up to \$7,500 into the hands of deserving Long Island families.

Bethpage Launches 2013 VITA Program

Page 2

VITA volunteers will work with taxpayers to ensure that eligible families know how to claim their Earned Income Tax Credit, which could be claimed up to three years back. Currently, according to the IRS, 20% of Long Islanders are eligible to receive the EITC because of unemployment and declining wages.

"The Earned Income Tax Credit, a vital anti-poverty program for working families, not only helps strengthen families but also boosts the local economies where it is spent. One in five eligible households fails to take advantage of the EITC, which can add thousands of dollars to their incomes. Too many Long Island families were struggling to make ends meet even before their lives were upended by super storm Sandy. Now that the focus is on recovery, it's important that Long Islanders not forget that the EITC is available to help them and other working families," said Gwen O'Shea, President and CEO, Health and Welfare Council of Long Island. "We are so grateful to Bethpage Federal Credit Union, who for the past ten years has made it possible for Long Islanders to file their tax for free and access the credit they are due."

Bethpage coordinates the largest VITA program on Long Island. In 2012, Bethpage completed 1,517 VITA tax returns and helped secure IRS total refunds of nearly \$1.5 million. Rob Suarez, Bethpage's AVP of Community Development, added, "This year we're hoping to grow participation by 15 percent and have our hard-working volunteers complete 2,000 tax returns, helping even more Long Island families get their best possible tax refund."

"Earned income tax credits are critical to the financial stability of many households," said New York State Commissioner of Taxation and Finance, Thomas H. Mattox. "The majority of state credits go to families with children, and when combined with the federal credit, the benefits can be substantial. For instance, for a family with three children, the state benefit alone can be as much as \$1,700. That's why I heartily commend the Bethpage Federal Credit Union, the Family Service League and the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island, and for their dedication to this outreach and education effort."

Under the guidelines of the VITA program, Bethpage coordinates the services of its volunteers, who are trained by the Internet Revenue Service (IRS), to electronically prepare all specific forms including, among others, 1040EZ, 1040A, and 1040. Bethpage is also an e-file site where taxpayers can file their income tax returns electronically. E-filers will receive refunds twice as quickly as those using paper returns in as little as 10 business days when they choose Direct Deposit. Taxpayers who do not have a direct deposit account and wish to receive payment in this format can open a Bethpage account when filing their tax returns.

Enacted by Congress in 1975, the EITC is a Federal income tax credit for workers who don't earn a high income and meet certain eligibility requirements. Taxpayers who qualify and claim the credit could pay less Federal tax, pay no tax or possibly get a tax refund. Long Island's Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition, which was developed by the Health & Welfare Council of Long Island, was initiated to create awareness for VITA and EITC.

Bethpage Launches 2013 VITA Program

Page 3

Qualifying taxpayers planning to take advantage of Bethpage's VITA program need to bring the following materials with them for review: 2012 tax package of wage and earnings statements (Form W-2), all interest and dividend statements (Form 1099-INT), all other income and expense information, a copy of last year's Federal and State returns if available, bank routing and account numbers for Direct Deposit, total paid for day care and provider's tax ID, social security cards for you, your spouse and dependents and as well as photo identification. To file taxes electronically on a married filing joint tax return, both spouses must be present. For more information on VITA and paperwork needed, please visit Bethpage's "Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program" page located under the Heart of Bethpage section at www.bethpagefcu.com or call 1-800-628-7070.

Bethpage will also work with the Family Service League to make mobile VITA assistance available to the public at various convenient locations throughout Suffolk and Nassau Counties, including the Copiague Public Library, Huntington Village Library, Touro Law School, The Long Island GLBT Community Centers, and Pronto of Long Island. For a complete listing of addresses, contact numbers and times, go to www.bethpagefcu.com/community/events/vita.

"Family Service League is proud to be partnering with Bethpage Federal Credit Union and the VITA program as we assist families with filing their tax returns. In particular, helping families who were impacted by Super Storm Sandy - is so important and we are thankful to the Robin Hood Foundation for their support of this initiative with Family Service League," said Karen Boorshtein, President and CEO, Family Service League.

For those interested in offering their services as a volunteer tax preparer, Bethpage provides certified volunteers training to help prepare basic tax returns throughout Suffolk and Nassau Counties. This year's volunteers include, but are not limited to, accounting and finance students from local colleges and universities such as Long Island University C. W. Post, Adelphi University, and Molloy College. Those interested in volunteering can email Bethpage at community@bethpagefcu.com.

Bethpage Federal Credit Union is a not-for-profit financial cooperative, existing solely to serve its members and has experienced rapid growth in recent years to become a strong alternative to banks. Bethpage was approved for the largest federal community charter in the U.S. in 2003 and now is New York State's largest credit union and Long Island's primary community financial institution with over 212,000 members, 26 branches and 60 shared service center locations throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties. As a financial cooperative, Bethpage offers the best-in-market rates, low fees and world-class service, and a full menu of personal and commercial financial services.

Bethpage maintains branch locations in Bay Shore, Bay Shore King Kullen, Bethpage, Central Islip, Commack King Kullen, Elmont, Farmingdale, Freeport, Glen Cove, Hempstead, Huntington, Levittown King Kullen, Lynbrook, Massapequa, Melville, Mineola, North Babylon, Patchogue, Port Jefferson, Riverhead, Seaford, Smithtown, Roosevelt, West Babylon and Westbury with over 425 surcharge-free ATMs in King Kullen, 7-Eleven, CVS Pharmacy and Costco locations throughout Long Island. For more information, call 1-800-628-7070 or visit www.bethpagefcu.com.