



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program**

### **The Largest VITA Program on Long Island, Bethpage Federal Credit Union to Offer Free Tax Filing Assistance Across Nassau & Suffolk Counties at 13 Different Community Locations, Open to the Public**

**Bethpage, NY – January 16, 2020** – [Bethpage Federal Credit Union](#) will help low-to-moderate income households on Long Island prepare their tax returns at no cost by offering the IRS' free tax preparation service, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), which this year, marks its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, the Bethpage VITA program, the largest across Long Island, is open to all eligible Long Islanders, including non-Bethpage members. To file taxes electronically for a joint tax return, both spouses must be present.

Starting Tuesday, February 4, through Thursday April 9, 2020, trained and bilingual tax preparers will be available at Bethpage VITA sites available in Nassau and Suffolk Counties to meet with eligible taxpayers with 2019 incomes of \$56,000 and below. VITA services will be available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

This year, Bethpage will hold its VITA services off-site at 13 community centers across Long Island. The sites include: Freeport Public Library; Yes We Can Community Center in Westbury; Mastics, Moriches, Shirley Library; United Healthcare Community Plan in Hempstead; Wyandanch Public Library; Copiague Public Library; East Islip Public Library; Huntington Station Library; Massapequa Public Library; Roosevelt High School Community Resource Room; West Babylon Public Library; Middle Country Library; and the North Bellmore Public Library.

Residents must schedule an appointment prior to meet with a tax preparer. To schedule an appointment, see more information on paperwork needed, and view the exact dates and times of services, visit Bethpage's "Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program" page located in the Community Section at [www.lovebethpage.com/vita](http://www.lovebethpage.com/vita) or contact Community Development directly at 516/349-4288.

"Filing tax returns can be costly and of course, is always stressful," said Robert Suarez, Assistant Vice President, Bethpage Federal Credit Union. "Bethpage is proud to be able to offer Long Island's largest free tax filing program. Not only does it help community residents save money and feel confident that an experienced tax preparer is in charge, but the program also funnels refunds back into the Long Island community. We thank all of our volunteers who help make this program possible."

Over 50 trained volunteers from local communities, colleges, and universities will be working one-on-one with taxpayers. Partnering schools include Adelphi University, NYIT, Molloy College, St. Joseph's College, SUNY Old Westbury, and Nassau Community College.

Bethpage VITA volunteers will also educate eligible working families about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) while preparing tax returns. The EITC is an anti-poverty program available to four out of five eligible Long Island households. VITA volunteers will work with taxpayers to ensure that eligible families are aware of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which could bring up to \$6,557 into the hands of deserving Long Island families. Credit amounts are based on income levels, filing status and other factors. Eligible households can claim up to three years back of Earned Income Tax Credits.

In 2019, Bethpage completed 1,931 VITA tax returns and helped secure IRS total refunds of over \$2 million. Bethpage also helped secure \$201,961 in child tax credits in 2019, and \$487,824 in Earned Income Tax Credits.

Since the program's inception in 2004, over 21,825 individuals have filed their tax returns through Bethpage, resulting in \$24,841,887 million returned to the Long Island community.

Qualifying taxpayers planning to take advantage of Bethpage's VITA program must bring the following materials with them for review: photo identification, social security cards for you, your spouse, and dependents, current year's tax package if you received one, wage and earnings statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R from all employers, interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099), a copy of last year's Federal and State returns if available, bank routing and account numbers for tax refund direct deposit, total paid for daycare, and provider's tax ID.

Bethpage Federal Credit Union is a premier community financial institution committed to enriching the lives of its members, employees and the communities it serves for over 75 years. Bethpage is the largest credit union in the Northeast Region, as well as 15<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Bethpage is a federally chartered credit union open to everyone that opens a \$5 minimum share account. 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.

On Long Island, Bethpage maintains branch locations in Albertson, Baldwin, Bay Shore, Bay Shore King Kullen, Bethpage, Centereach, Central Islip, Commack King Kullen, East Meadow NuHealth Medical Center, East Northport, Elmont, Farmingdale, Freeport, Glen Cove, Hempstead, Huntington, Levittown King Kullen, LIU Post (Brookville), Long Beach, Lynbrook, Massapequa, Melville, Mineola, North Babylon, Patchogue, Port Jefferson, Riverhead, Roosevelt, Seaford, Smithtown, Valley Stream King Kullen, West Babylon, and Westbury. In New York City, Bethpage maintains a branch location at 111 W 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Bethpage also offers over 500 surcharge-free ATMs in King Kullen, CVS Pharmacy and Costco locations. For more information on Bethpage's robust portfolio of banking, borrowing, and investment services, visit [www.bethpagefcu.com](http://www.bethpagefcu.com) or call 1-800-628-7070.

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