

Joining a Movement

by Ted Beck, president/CEO, National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE)

This past summer I was offered a rare opportunity—to succeed a man who is considered a visionary in the field of financial literacy and to lead an organization that is solely dedicated to helping Americans from all walks of life achieve financial well-being through an array of initiatives, including the highly regarded NEFE® High School Financial Planning Program® (HSFPP).

I am speaking, of course, of Dr. Bill Anthes, who retired from his position as president/CEO in October. I feel honored to be carrying on Bill's outstanding work and joining the burgeoning financial literacy movement.

By way of a brief introduction, I most recently served as associate dean of executive education and corporate relations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Business, and as president of the

HSFPP and NEFE's partnership with the Credit Union National Association and America's credit unions, as well as the Cooperative Extension System.

That partnership has produced amazing results. During the 2004-2005 school year, a record number of students signed up for the HSFPP. More than 7,500 high schools, in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, ordered nearly 650,000 free student guides. This was the highest level of demand for the program since NEFE first introduced it in 1984. The total number of students who have taken the course surpassed four million in 2005.

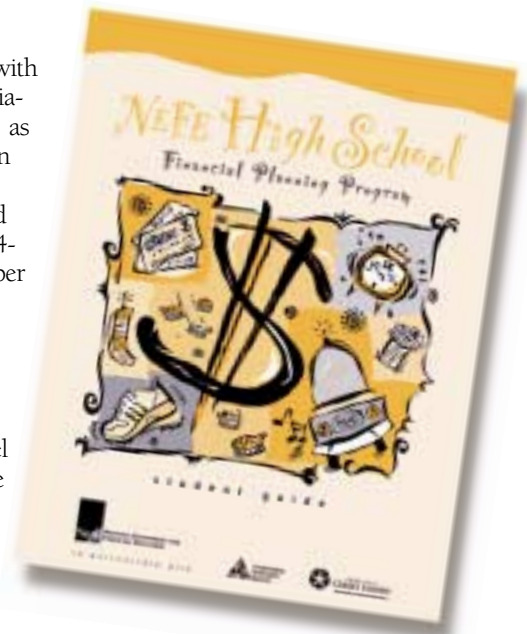
Much of the phenomenal success of the HSFPP is due to the efforts of CUNA and the credit union community, which have provided financial support for the printing of materials and hundreds of volunteers who have gone into their local schools to promote the program, train teachers, and team teach in classrooms.

Adding to the momentum, at least 11 states have legislated that personal finance education be either a requirement for high-school graduation or a course that must be offered.¹ These states include Georgia,

Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, New York, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. In addition, similar legislation has been proposed in several other states.

Some states aren't waiting for legislation to move forward with financial literacy education. In Massachusetts, for example, the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation has entered into a public-private partnership with NEFE to provide the HSFPP

¹National Council on Economic Education (NCEE): Survey of the States, March 2005



curriculum to schools throughout the state. During the 2004-2005 school year, NEFE provided Massachusetts with nearly 10,000 student guides and more than 300 instructor's manuals for the first phase of the voluntary statewide initiative, known as "Hi-Fi."

On yet another front, NEFE recently launched a national advertising and public education campaign, "Not If We Can Help It," which you may see and hear in the months ahead. The message for adults and teens alike: It's never too early, or too late, to get smart about your money.

With this momentum working in our favor, now is the perfect time for all of us to recommit to making a difference in the lives of America's youth. To learn how you can volunteer in the HSFPP, I urge you to go to CUNA's Web site at www.cuna.org/initiatives/youth/hsfpp.html.

I also value your ideas on how we can make the HSFPP even more effective. Send me your thoughts at tedbeck@nefe.org, or contact John Parfrey, director of the HSFPP, at jp@nefe.org. We look forward to hearing from you. ■



I look forward to continuing and deepening my relationship with the credit union community.

— Ted Beck

Center for Advanced Studies in Business Inc. There I had the privilege of helping CUNA establish a training program for credit union executives, and I look forward to continuing and deepening my relationship with the credit union community.

My career spans more than 20 years in business, education, and financial services. During this time I have come to view financial education as having the ability to affect not only individuals but also society as a whole. That is why I pledge to you my wholehearted support for the