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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Unitus Community Credit Union Launches International Community Award, Honors First Recipient**

*Jaime Chavez Suarez of Colombia Named First Honoree of International Community Heart Award*

**Portland, Ore., July 25, 2023** – Every quarter, Unitus awards one outstanding employee with the Community Heart Award, which honors employees for their community commitment and dedication. This individual is recognized not just for their extraordinary service, but for the time and energy they have given to a great cause or causes in our community.

On July 25, Unitus introduced a new award to their series: the International Community Heart Award. This award was introduced by Unitus' delegation at the World Credit Union Conference (WCUC) and honored Dr. Jaime Chavez Suarez from Columbia. Dr. Chavez Suarez is the former president of the largest credit union Bucaramanga, Columbia, Financiera Comultrasan. It was in the organization's mailroom that he first began his journey into this field, where he went on to serve his credit union for 55 years. His insight and leadership as a member of the Columbia Credit Union Association and the World Council of Credit Unions Board of Directors has been instrumental in their growth and connection to credit unions around the world.

In addition to Dr. Chavez Suarez's incredible tenure, he has committed countless hours to his community, leading the way on multiple projects and initiatives. These include establishing a foundation for the arts, music, and sports; the Colegio Gimnasio Superior; a Día del Niño (Day of the Child) event; and reforestation programs that offset carbon emissions and have created jobs in a region of Colombia recovering from thirty years of conflict. His contributions to business development and job creation have made an invaluable impact for years to come.

"It's an honor to recognize Jaime for his leadership and dedication to Columbia and its people, and to making the world better as a whole," said Steve Stapp, President and CEO of Unitus Community Credit Union. "May we all strive to follow in his footsteps and contribute to our own communities in similarly meaningful and philanthropic ways."

The World Council of Credit Unions works to advance financial inclusion through the credit union and cooperative model by engaging in international advocacy, development, education and networking that empowers underserved populations, and promotes more equitable and resilient communities.

You can read about the World Council of Credit Unions and the ways in which they work to bridge credit union gaps and transform member communities worldwide at [woccu.org](http://woccu.org).

### **About Unitus Community Credit Union**

At Unitus, we're dedicated to improving lives in the communities we serve. As a member-owned local credit union, we invest in people by doing the right thing. Through partnerships with nonprofit organizations, we provide support for community groups through volunteerism and financial donations. Our 105,000 members count on us to serve them and their communities; our 300+ employees share that passion for service. Learn about the local impact Unitus makes by visiting [unitusccu.com](http://unitusccu.com)