

March 2024

## *Your Financial Health*

Financial health simply measures your ability to handle financial stressors and reach your long-term goals. The areas of financial health typically considered are:

- **Savings and debt pay down:** Are you able to cover your needs, your wants and still have enough to build savings and pay down debt over time? The 50/30/20 budget is a good measure.
- **Debt-to-income ratio:** This comparison of your monthly debt payments to your monthly gross income gives you a good idea of how manageable your debt load is. It's also a common measure used by creditors in making approval decisions.
- **Credit score:** Even if you don't plan to apply for more credit, a good or excellent score can play a role in things like apartment applications, insurance costs, utility deposits and more.
- **Emergency fund:** Having enough in the bank to weather financial shocks protects you from debt spirals and the credit score damage that comes from missing bill payments.
- **Insurance:** This protects assets — such as vehicles, personal possessions and your home — and it also protects dependents in case you're unable to work.
- **Financial planning:** Staying financially healthy means saving toward retirement, working on estate planning and more.

### **How to improve your financial health**

For most people, attaining financial health is a journey — one that lasts a lifetime. Very few people are lucky enough to have instant security from generational wealth or a massive lottery jackpot. Instead, the progression tends to look like this:

### **Building foundations.**

This can describe when you're getting started in the workplace, but it might apply later, too, because life doesn't always go to plan. Strengthening foundations includes creating an emergency fund, building your credit score and balancing expenses and debt load. And it's never too early — or late — to start planning for retirement, so that your savings have time to take advantage of the magic of compound interest.

### **Stacking up wins.**

As you gain momentum, continue to grow your financial stability. This could mean things like paying down debt balances, using insurance coverage to protect your assets and knowing what your needs will be in retirement. Staying on top of managing your credit score will help push it higher, which gives you more financial choice.

### **Doing great.**

You're on top of your savings plan and have a healthy debt-to-income ratio. A longer track record of managing your credit score helps, too; credit scores tend to peak in later work decades. Having a handle on financial planning and a solid approach to insurance positions you to build and protect your assets.



## Identity Security

Anytime is a good time to tighten up your identity security, but if you haven't been as careful as you intended, consider this your annual reminder. Here are a few best practices to adopt or continue:

- Change your passwords regularly: Every few months is a great habit to get into. If you change yours today, remind yourself to change them again in six months.
- Check your credit report: You may have been the target of identity theft or fraud and not even realize it until it shows up on your credit reports.
- Tax time is prime time for identity thieves: They would love to get their hands on your 1040 form, and they would also love to claim a phony refund using your personal information. Be careful when sharing information online (see below).
- The I.R.S. doesn't use unsolicited emails to request information from taxpayers: If you get an email claiming to be from the IRS asking for your personal or financial information, report it to your email provider as spam.
- Avoid "coffee housing" your personal information: Never risk disclosing financial information over a public Wi-Fi network. (Broadband is susceptible, too.) It takes little sophistication to do this—just a little freeware.
- Look for the "https" & the padlock icon when you visit a website: Not just http, but https. When you see that added "s" at the start of the website address, you are looking at a website with active SSL encryption, and you want that. A padlock icon in the address bar confirms an active SSL connection. For solid security when you browse, you could opt for a VPN (virtual private network) service that encrypts 100% of your browsing traffic.

Being careful with your personal data means more than just shredding your documents. Share these reminders with friends and family and help protect against identity theft.



*Would you like to discuss investments or your financial goals?*

Reach out to Bill Anderson at 636-222-7585 or email [banderson@hntlgh.com](mailto:banderson@hntlgh.com)

*Content provided by a third party not affiliated with the credit union.*

### About Bill

Bill has been a financial advisor since 2012, focusing on creating a client-centric experience by providing education, organization, objectivity, proactivity, accountability, and partnership. In 2012, Bill started his financial services career at Edward Jones, providing investment services, retirement planning, protection strategies, estate planning opportunities and education savings plans for almost six years. In April of 2018, Bill moved his practice to Huntleigh Securities to provide a more customized client experience for his varied clientele and continue to grow professionally. Since then, Bill has continued to grow his services and practice, and has expanded into offering services and advice to Gateway Metro Federal Credit Union members.



## Upcoming Events & Holidays

- Mar 23rd Scholarship Packets DUE
- Apr 4th Opening Day Rally @ Kiener Plaza | 10-2pm
- Apr 27th Recycling Event @ North | 9-11:30am

### 1st Day of Spring!

March 19th is the first day of spring... hooray for longer days and more sunlight! Did you know... the first spring flowers are typically daffodils, dandelions, lilies, tulips, iris and lilacs.



## LOAN RATES

EFFECTIVE March 15th, 2024

### VEHICLE LOANS

The following are approx. payback terms.

AS LOW AS

Up to 36 months	5.95% APR*
37 to 48 months	6.25% APR*
49 to 63 months	6.95% APR*

### OTHER LOANS

AS LOW AS

Mortgage	<a href="#">Click for current rates</a>
Share Secured	2.01% APR*
Stock Secured	9.25% APR*
Personal Loans	7.99% APR*
Personal Line of Credit	12.90% APR*

\*APR=Annual Percentage Rate. Rates are subject to change, and terms and conditions apply. Our website contains the most current rates. Contact GMFCU for complete details. NMLS #410276

## LOST CREDIT/DEBIT CARDS

If your GMFCU credit or debit card is lost, stolen or if you suspect unauthorized use, please call:

**CREDIT CARD** - (800) 558-3424 | 24/7  
**DEBIT CARD** - (314) 621-4575 or  
(800) 621-4828 during business hours or  
(800) 472-3272 | 24/7

## Meet The Community: Champion Christopher Steiger

Written by Jeri Peterson

Meet Christopher Steiger, Member Service Representative (MSR). He joined Gateway Metro last year and is this February's Champion. Beth Longhofer, who is on our Automated Service team, is letting everyone in on the news that Christopher does his best every day to demonstrate the Gateway Metro core value, "We will provide an excellent experience for our members." She goes on to say, "On a daily basis, I have witnessed Christopher exhibit this core value. From listening to our members express their concerns, to doing his best to research information for them; he makes a difference within the Gateway Metro family. He rejoices with members in happy moments and shares valuable knowledge to help them understand their financial potential."

Christopher truly walks the walk when it comes to demonstrating the mission of Gateway Metro Federal Credit Union: Helping People Realize their Financial Potential. Beth explains, "When you have personal aspirations and are using our services Christopher encourages members to see more of their options. I know he has encouraged me, along with a couple of other co-workers, to open a Save to Win® certificate to establish a goal or two. Christopher is such a great support. He assists where needed. If he isn't being of service to someone, he is reading up on the resources we have or assisting with the organization of the branch. He brings great chemistry to Saint Peters branch."

That's the way to do it Christopher. Keep up the good work!



Christopher S. - Member Service Representative

## Last Chance to Apply for Our \$1,000 Scholarship!

Gateway Metro high school seniors don't miss your chance to receive a \$1,000 scholarship! Submit your scholarship packet by March 23rd, 2024 to qualify!

Basics:

- Applicant must be a GMFCU member as of 12/31/2023 and graduating in Spring 2024
- Applicant must complete the scholarship application which includes 2 letters of recommendation and an essay.

[You can download our scholarship packet here](#)



## Save Big With Save to Win

**Congratulations to our  
January winners!**



This is a safe and fun way to save money at your own pace with the perk of being entered into a FREE drawing to earn more money! Every \$25 you save each month qualifies you for one entry.

You could win \$25 - \$1,000 as a monthly winner or even up to \$5,000 if you are a Quarterly winner, wow!

Learn more about Save to Win online at [goGMFCU.org](http://goGMFCU.org)

\*Limited to 100 entries per month.

# Testimonials: What You Have to Say

Written by Jeri Peterson & Gateway Metro Members

The Gateway Metro Federal Credit Union team is committed to serving our members and our community. We choose to stand out from other financial institutions by being member-focused, relationship-focused and fiscally responsible advocates. We build authentic relationships, adhere to rigorous professional training and are mindful that this is your credit union to take care of every day. To share some of the memorable testimonials and meaningful acknowledgments we receive from members of the Gateway Metro family is an honor.

## My 50+ Years Relationship with Gateway Metro

I remember my Southwestern Bell co-worker sharing with me her plans to contribute to her Holiday Club account at her credit union. It sounded like a good idea so I asked her where she does that. She said the credit union was that little room down the main floor hallway at 10th and Pine. I went to the room and asked Ms. Vera, a sweet, grandmotherly woman, questions about the Holiday Club account. She was kind and patient. I opened my own Holiday Club account. A while later I was not happy with the other financial institution I was with, so I came back to the credit union and opened my checking account. My credit was not the best, back then, but to my surprise, I qualified for my first car loan. I was so excited. Ms. Vera helped by setting up my loan payments to be automatically withdrawn from my account every payday. I did not want to miss a payment. When I came in to sign my loan papers, I noticed the loan amount was a little more than what I had applied for. I asked Ms. Vera about it. She noticed that with all of my planning and budgeting I forgot to include the taxes I would have to pay for the vehicle. She added that amount to the loan so I would not have any problems. That still touches my heart nearly 50 years later. For years, I made sure to attend all of the free quarterly financial literacy workshops the credit union offered. One of my old bosses used to serve on the credit union's board of directors. He also kept me informed. My one disappointment is that the pandemic has some of the branches closed on Saturdays. I do understand and I just hope that very helpful service comes back soon.

I have watched the credit union grow and open several locations near the members' communities. Now I read the Under the Arch Newsletter for all kinds of helpful tips, new products and services and events like the free shred and e-Recycle events. Gateway Metro is for everyone no matter what stage you are in with your finances or in your life.

When I hear about the experiences some of my friends are having with fraud, and receiving little to no assistance from their financial institution, I am grateful Gateway Metro does not abandon their members, especially the seniors. Personally witnessing over 50 years of consistent growth for the better is hard to find. I appreciate Gateway Metro Federal Credit Union. The fact that the credit union adheres to federal regulations and compliance standards lets me know this is a solid and federally insured financial institution. Each step they take to improve means a lot.

I appreciate this opportunity to tell everyone I am a proud life-long member of Gateway Metro.

D Wilson, member since 1972

*We will continue to take a few moments to feature **What You Have to Say** to let you know how much your words and deeds of kindness add to the growth of the Gateway Metro culture and community.*

*If you would like to be considered to share your Gateway Metro Experience, please contact us at [marketing@gmfcu.org](mailto:marketing@gmfcu.org).*

## Big Auto Loan Savings!

Get a **2.29% discount off your qualified rate** when you apply and close an auto loan with us by March 31st, 2024. You can even refinance with us from another lender to receive your 2.29% discount!

Apply online at [goGMFCU.org](https://goGMFCU.org) today.



\* Must be eligible for membership with GMFCU. Must qualify for loan based on credit worthiness. Actual APR will be determined at the time of loan approval based on your credit, loan amount and term. Not all applicants will qualify for the lowest rate. Internal GMFCU loan refinancing does not qualify for this special offer. Promotional discount of 2.29% is only valid if loan is closed by the end of March 31, 2024.

# Being of Service: GMFCU and Saint Louis Crisis Nursery

Written by Jeri Peterson

To be of service to our membership is the main reason Gateway Metro Federal Credit Union (GMFCU) was founded nearly 89 years ago. In more recent years, we have added being of service to the overall St. Louis community to our mission.

The Butterfly Project Committee is the staff-volunteer arm of the credit union. Each year a local community non-profit organization, voted for by the staff, is the recipient of a year's worth of fundraising and donations from the GMFCU membership and staff. The 2023 beneficiary of our efforts has been the Saint Louis Crisis Nursery.

Recently committee members delivered vital and valued toys and day-to-day items donated by our generous members and staff for the holiday season. Longtime Butterfly Project Committee Member, Alex Smith and I stayed to tour one of their facilities. We gained an insight into how this amazing organization provides refuge for some of our area's children.

The facility is kid-friendly, adventurous, peaceful and nurturing. From the imaginative murals to the love and care tenderly shared by the volunteers to the young ones of various ages and circumstances, Saint Louis Crisis Nursery lives up to its reputation as one of the region's best charities.

The Saint Louis Crisis Nursery provides a short-term, safe haven for 5,000 children a year. The children are newborn to age 12. Their families may face an emergency caused by illness, homelessness, domestic violence or overwhelming parental stress. All services provided are FREE and VOLUNTARY.

Please help spread the word about the Crisis Nursery. You never know who may need to hear that there are kind, caring, non-judgmental people standing by who want to help.

Gateway Metro appreciated the honor to assist this special group of caregivers and the families they serve. We would like to thank the membership, staff and community who helped us raise \$12,200.00 in monetary support as well as countless supplies for the Nurseries in 2023.

If you would like to learn more about The Butterfly Project or Saint Louis Crisis Nursery please visit our websites.



**GIVING BACK TO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY**





## Opening Day Rally, Here We Come!

Spring is right around the corner and that means it is almost time for St. Louis's unofficial holiday, Opening Day! Gateway Metro is excited to take part in the Opening Day festivities for 2024. You can come by and visit us during the Opening Day Rally in Kiener Plaza!

We will be there to share some free goodies, take entries into a STL baseball themed giveaway, and provide you with ideas on how Gateway Metro's vast products and services can help you! We hope to see you there!

**Opening Day Rally** | Thursday, April 4th | 10am - 2pm  
Located in Kiener Plaza, Downtown St. Louis

## Special 8.99% Rate on Line of Credit!

Last chance to snag this Line of Credit offer! Want to consolidate smaller bills into one payment to make it easier to keep track of due dates? Whether on a new or existing Line of Credit, get a special rate of 8.99%\* through September 30, 2024 when you make at least a \$500 advance before March 31st, 2024!

### Double Up on Saving!

Deposit your advance into your GMFCU Priority I Checking account and use your GMFCU Visa Debit Card to make your purchases and you can soon be on your way to earning 4.25% APY with Rewards 365! One of the best parts is there are no transfer fees. See more details below.

Utilize your Line of Credit or apply to open a new Line of Credit today!

[Click here to apply now.](#)



\*Must be eligible for membership with GMFCU. Must qualify for loan based on credit worthiness. Rates and offers current as of January 1, 2024 and are subject to change. Rate will revert to your previous rate of 12.9% or 13.9% beginning October 1st, 2024.

\*\*Minimum advance of \$500 per one transaction is required to qualify for special rate offer. Online advances from existing LC loans qualify for the promo rate and will be adjusted the business day after the advance of \$500 minimum has been completed. Advance must be made before March 31, 2024 to qualify.

*Follow us on social media to stay in the Gateway Metro loop!*

Informative articles, branch closures, upcoming events, contests and more!



[goGMFCU.org](http://goGMFCU.org) | 314-621-4575 | 800-621-4828  
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