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Photos Attached

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### **Southeastern CU Awards \$1,000 Grant to Moulton Branch Elementary**

*Valdosta, Georgia (March 10, 2015)* – Southeastern Credit Union has awarded Moulton Branch Elementary with a \$1,000 grant to support two social therapy groups aimed at addressing social skills with students diagnosed with Autism-spectrum disorders. The funds helped purchase materials to evaluate and treat the needs of these students.

Mary Van Ausdall and Glee Rice, a team of speech therapists, lead the two groups in Social Group Therapy each week. This special project originated as a result of addressing a wide variety of needed pragmatic skills with students diagnosed with Autism-spectrum disorders. "In recent years, the diagnosis of Autism and associated disorders has become more prevalent among our students," says Mrs. Rice. "These students have a unique need in that they have difficulty interacting with others due to underdeveloped social and pragmatic skills."

Lessons include conversational skills, whole-body listening, cooperate play, friendship management, self-regulation, empathy, and conflict management. Each of these skills is essential in having success in school, both academically and in interacting with teachers and peers. These positive social skills are taught and practiced during weekly meetings and carried over into the classroom. Students learn better ways to interact with others, solve conflicts, and gain confidence through making and maintaining friendships.

The \$1,000 grant was awarded through Southeastern's Community Partners in Education (CPIE) program. Each of Southeastern's five CPIE schools submitted special projects for consideration and one project from each school was chosen to receive funding.

Local businesses that are interested in getting involved with the Community Partners in Education program may contact Lowndes County Coordinator Lynne Wilson at [lynnewilson@lowndes.k12.ga.us](mailto:lynnewilson@lowndes.k12.ga.us).

Southeastern Credit Union is a not-for-profit financial institution serving South Georgia since 1953. The Credit Union is owned by its 26,000+ members and governed by a member-elected board of directors. Southeastern has branch offices located in Valdosta, Tifton, Moody AFB and Nashville.

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