

Chairman Donald E. Powell
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Remarks
At Operation Hope's
Banking on Our Future Across America 2002
Closing Ceremony H.D. Woodson High School
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(Chairman Powell was introduced by Money Smart graduate Nicola Waldron. Her remarks precede his.)

Good afternoon, My name is Nicola Waldron. I am a recent graduate of the Money Smart financial education program at Project Empowerment of the D.C. Department of Employment Services.

I am proud to be here today to give testimony about what the Money Smart training program means to me, and to introduce a man who through Money Smart has made a big difference in my life - Don Powell, Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Let me say ladies and gentlemen that before taking the Money Smart training program, I used to take my check to the liquor store next door to my place of employment, and they would take out a lot of money every time just to cash my check. Since receiving the Money Smart training, I have opened a direct deposit bank account with a real bank. My whole paycheck is now mine to keep. While I was already aware of some of what I learned in the Money Smart training, I think the training really made me see the benefit of managing my money better, and gave me the incentive to take steps to open a bank account and save my money.

I share what I learned with my four children as well, especially about saving money. I'd like to thank the man responsible for making this financial education available to me and my family, Mr. Don Powell, Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, FDIC for short.

Not only did he make this training possible, but Mr. Powell and his staff at FDIC make sure that my savings at my bank are safe.

Let's give a big round of applause to Don Powell to let him know what Money Smart means to us, and show him how much we appreciate his work with financial education!

Chairman Powell's remarks:

Thank you so much, Nicola.

That's a wonderful testimony and a great endorsement of the Money Smart curriculum.

I am more and more convinced that financial education -- particularly for those families who are outside the financial mainstream -- is one of the most important things we as Americans can be engaged in today.

Helping folks achieve and sustain the American Dream is why we at the FDIC made the decision to develop Money Smart in the first place.

I see Money Smart as a tool kit to help people begin building a more secure financial future for themselves. The plain fact is, if money is not working for you, it's probably going to be working against you. But by using the tools provided by the Money Smart curriculum, students can take control of their finances and put their money to work for them.

Currently, millions of Americans do not have a banking relationship with any traditional financial institution. Millions of our citizens use so-called "fringe banks," like Nicola Waldron did. And, as Nicola knows, the costs of using their services and products are far greater than the costs of traditional bank services and products.

But Nicola and thousands of others who have used Money Smart took control of their financial future and are building a brighter future.

Earlier today John Bryant of Operation HOPE and I spent some time with a group of students who are studying Money Smart. I can tell you one thing - you guys are a lot more focused and smarter than I remember being at your age.

I'm proud to be here today to help Operation HOPE conclude this five-day nationwide marathon for financial literacy. I applaud the work of Operation HOPE; their tireless efforts to introduce economic empowerment in underserved communities; and I applaud all of you involved in this effort.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize some of our Money Smart graduates and local partners. These partners are organizations and institutions that have worked collaboratively to establish a Money Smart financial education program here in the District of Columbia not far from where we are now.

It's called the Project Empowerment Money Smart model site. A model site is a place that not only uses the Money Smart curriculum, but also links financial education to other community development services.

The Project Empowerment Money Smart model site partners came together in late summer of this year. As we heard earlier from Ms. Waldron, participants have already

established banking relationships and are starting to save money. In the last few months alone, 50 students have graduated from the program.

Now, with the tax season approaching, a Volunteer Income Tax Service will be offered at the model site to provide free tax preparation. This will help lower-income families claim earned income tax credits and child tax credits, which in turn can be deposited into their newly established bank accounts.

The FDIC is partnering all across the country with local organizations, financial institutions, and local and federal government agencies to establish model sites such as the Project Empowerment Money Smart model site here in D.C.

To all our partners, let me express my appreciation for your efforts in supporting financial education.

To all who are not yet our partners, I'd like to ask your help in getting Money Smart into the communities where it is most needed.

Tell local community organizations about the Money Smart Alliance. Tell community colleges.

Tell faith-based groups and churches. Let banks and credit unions know.

Working together, we can reach into the unbanked and underserved population in ways we never dreamed of before, to help build strong communities and to equip people to achieve and sustain the American dream.

That's a vision we at the FDIC share with you.

Thank you.

Attachment: Photo Essay

Congress created the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in 1933 to restore public confidence in the nation's banking system. The FDIC insures deposits at the nation's 9,480 banks and savings associations and it promotes the safety and soundness of these institutions by identifying, monitoring and addressing risks to which they are exposed.

FDIC press releases and other information are available on the Internet via the World Wide Web at www.fdic.gov and may also be obtained through the FDIC's Public Information Center (800-276-6003 or (703) 562-2200).

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