



First Niagara Teammates to Raise Breast Cancer Awareness Among The “Irreplaceable” Women in Their Lives

- Bank employee's nonprofit “Project Irreplaceable” raises awareness of the importance of self-examination and mammography for early detection of breast cancer, which has touched the lives and loved ones of 86% of First Niagara’s workforce -

BUFFALO, N.Y., October 30, 2013 – As part of October Breast Cancer Awareness Month, First Niagara Financial Group, Inc. (NASDAQ:FNFG) designated October 30th as Project Irreplaceable Day for its 5,800 teammates, after learning of the important efforts of one of its employees to raise awareness about breast cancer.

Richard A. Mellick, a financial advisor in Pittsburgh, launched [Project Irreplaceable](#) with his three children to honor his wife, a breast cancer survivor. The website is designed to help people encourage the irreplaceable women in their lives to be conscientious about [self-examinations](#), in addition to scheduling regular mammograms.

“Early detection is so critically important when it comes to breast cancer,” said Mellick. “My children were inspired by the support our family received from doctors, friends and family throughout my wife’s treatment; they wanted to ‘pay it forward’ by increasing breast cancer awareness. They decided that if they could create a project that might motivate someone else’s mother to take the time to do a potentially life-saving self-exam, they’ll have succeeded.”

At the core of Project Irreplaceable is a letter writing campaign encouraging individuals to write letters to the invaluable women in their lives, about why they are irreplaceable. So far, over 25 schools from different states participated in the letter writing campaign. This year the Mellick children say their goal is to reach 100 schools. And on October 30th, First Niagara’s 5,800 employees will be asked to take time during the day to write a letter to an irreplaceable woman in their lives.

More than 86% of First Niagara teammates report personally knowing someone who currently has or is a survivor of breast cancer, according to an employee survey conducted as part of the bank’s Breast Cancer Awareness month activities.

“With so many people directly touched by breast cancer, we feel it’s important for us to help Richard call attention to Project Irreplaceable,” said Gary M. Crosby, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer. “We’re very proud of Richard and his family for doing so much to

educate women about what they can do to be proactive about their health, while ensuring that they know how much they're loved and appreciated.”

In addition to the letter writing campaign, First Niagara is showing its support during Breast Cancer Month in a variety of ways, including:

- Helping to fund the Erie County Medical Center Lifeline Foundation's [Mammography Bus](#), which provides mammograms to underserved and under-tested women throughout Western New York
- Participating in and providing funding for regional Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks to benefit the American Cancer Society
- Turning select branches “pink” during breast cancer awareness month to help raise money

“First Niagara is proud to provide both financial support and take the lead to promote this innovative program that encourages women to take control of their health, empowering our community to Do Great Things is what we do,” said the Executive Director of the First Niagara Foundation Elizabeth Gurney. “Early detection is the key, and we are doing everything we can to promote breast cancer awareness.”

To learn more about the awareness campaign, and to view a copy of the sample letter form, please visit www.projectirreplaceable.com. Schools interested in participating in the project should visit www.projectirreplaceable.com/dear-principal.

About First Niagara

First Niagara, through its wholly owned subsidiary, First Niagara Bank, N.A., is a multi-state community-oriented bank with approximately 420 branches, approximately \$37 billion in assets, \$27 billion in deposits, and approximately 5,800 employees providing financial services to individuals, families and businesses across New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts. For more information, visit www.firstniagara.com.

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