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First Niagara Awards a Total of $200,000 to 10 Western New York Non-Profits Dedicated to Mentoring Efforts

Local Students Trade the Classroom for the Boardroom to Kick Off "Day of Mentoring" Celebration

BUFFALO, N.Y.—First Niagara has announced the 10 Western New York non-profit organizations selected to receive a total of $200,000 in grants as part of the bank's sixth annual Mentoring Matters program. Mentoring Matters is First Niagara's charitable giving program that provides critical financial and volunteer support for mentoring efforts conducted throughout the Northeast. The 2012 Western New York Mentoring Matters grant recipients are:

- Be-A-Friend Program, Inc. (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Erie County)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara County, Inc.
- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northtowns of WNY
- Boys & Girls Clubs Of Buffalo Inc.
- Buffalo Prep Inc.
- Compeer West Inc.
- Community Foundation For Greater Buffalo - Success Looks Like Me
- Hillside Work Scholarship Connection, Inc.
- Seneca Street Community Development Corporation
- Junior Achievement Of Western New York

As part of the announcement, students from Buffalo's Enterprise Charter School traveled to First Niagara's Corporate Headquarters to kick off the bank's "Day of Mentoring" celebration. At the market center, the students learned from First Niagara bankers about financial literacy, marketing in banking, and how to make a great first impression.

"Mentoring has a tremendous impact on the lives of young adults," says Buford Sears, First Niagara Bank Western New York Market Executive. "Studies clearly show that mentoring provides significant and tangible changes in students including better grades, improved school attendance, better behavior, and evidence of a brighter future. Every child deserves to have a positive adult role model in his or her life."

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Over the past six years, First Niagara has provided more than $950,000 in financial support for mentoring programs in Western New York and nearly $4.2 million for mentoring initiatives throughout its Upstate New York, Pennsylvania, and New England footprint.

About First Niagara

First Niagara, through its wholly owned subsidiary, First Niagara Bank, N.A., is a multi-state community-oriented bank with approximately 430 branches, $36 billion in assets, $28 billion in deposits, and approximately 6,000 employees providing financial services to individuals, families and businesses across Upstate New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts. For more information, visit www.firstniagara.com.

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