



For Immediate Release

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First Niagara Celebrates National Mentoring Month

Mentoring Matters Initiative Supports Various Organizations in the Hudson Valley Region

January 23, 2013, Rockland County, NY – January is National Mentoring Month, and First Niagara is partnering with local non-profits as part of the company's corporate-wide *Mentoring Matters* program. This initiative offers financial and employee volunteer support for mentoring programs in local organizations. Through this program, First Niagara has supported the Rockland County YMCA Youth Leadership and Mentoring Program; the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County one-to-one mentoring youth services; and the Nyack Center After School Program.

“At First Niagara, we believe that mentoring is good for the vitality of the region,” said David Ring, Managing Director of Enterprise Banking. “Mentoring continues to grow as an effective way to help students of all ages develop the academic and life skills they need to succeed in the workforce. Youth mentoring programs positively impact youthsjob skills, work readiness and career exploration.” He added, “Through this program we’ve seen significant, tangible improvements in at-risk children, including better school attendance, behavior, and grades, and evidence of a brighter future.”

The YMCA program received a \$10,000 grant from the First Niagara *Mentoring Matters* program. Through its Youth in Government program, the Y gives teens the opportunity to immerse themselves in experiential civic engagement and to, quite literally, practice democracy. Teens meet in their local Youth in Government groups throughout the year to discuss and debate issues that affect citizens of their state and to propose legislation.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters one-to-one mentoring programs were given a gift of \$3,500 from First Niagara. Personal time with an adult mentor is a preventive approach to resistance and avoidance of negative peer influences, anti-social behavior, delinquency, criminal activities, substance/ alcohol abuse, school violence and street gang involvement/membership.

First Niagara also approved a \$10,000 grant to support the Nyack Center after-school programs that provide children, grades K-8, homework help and an after-school snack. Students participate in educational, creative, and recreational activities for two hours.

“We are proud to help all of these organizations empower today’s youth to become all they can be tomorrow,” said Sara Tucker, Vice President – Hudson Valley Regional Team Leader for First Niagara. “First Niagara will continue to support these programs not only during National Mentoring Month, but throughout the year to recruit more mentors in the Hudson Valley.”

Since its inception in 2007, the *Mentoring Matters* Program at First Niagara has reinforced the significance and showcased the positive impact that mentoring has had on lives of over 15,000 young adults. First Niagara has provided more than \$3.25 million to support mentoring programs throughout New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

As one of the largest banks in the region, First Niagara now has nearly 430 branches in New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts, and 26 branches in the Hudson Valley, including Blauvelt, New City, Nyack, Pearl River, Spring Valley, Stony Point, Suffern and Tappan.

About First Niagara

First Niagara, through its wholly owned subsidiary, First Niagara Bank, N.A., is a multi-state community-oriented bank with nearly 430 branches, approximately \$38 billion in assets, \$29 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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