



# First Niagara

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **First Niagara Announces 10 Rochester Grant Recipients of 2008 Mentoring Matters<sup>sm</sup> Program**

*Local Bank's Program Provides \$500,000 to Support  
Selected Non-Profit Organizations throughout Upstate New York*

ROCHESTER, N.Y.—Nov. 24, 2008—During an awards ceremony held today at Rochester City Hall, First Niagara announced 10 Rochester grant recipients of the bank's 2008 Mentoring Matters program—a charitable giving campaign that donates a total of \$500,000 and provides employee volunteers to organizational mentoring programs throughout upstate New York.

This year's Rochester award recipients include: Boys & Girls Club of Rochester; Compeer of Rochester; Eastman School of Music; The Center for Youth Services; Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Greater Rochester; Junior Achievement of Rochester; Hillside Children's Center; Encompass; Wilson Commencement Park; and WXXI.

"We created the Mentoring Matters program as a realistic and viable way to address the community need and to support the inspiring achievements by organizations actively involved with mentoring," said First Niagara Rochester Regional President Patrick Burke.

He added, "According to national studies, about three million children are currently enrolled in mentoring programs, yet 15 million are in need of it. It has been proven that children that are engaged in mentoring activities during their youth are more likely to be successful as they become adults."

Recent studies have pointed out the power of mentoring. Mentored youth have better school attendance, an increased chance to move on to higher education and an improved attitude about education. Mentoring helps prevent substance abuse, reduces many negative youth behaviors and promotes positive social attitudes and relationships. Mentored youth also tend to trust their parents more and communicate better with them. (*Child Trends study, "Mentoring A Promising Strategy for Youth Development"*)



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“One of the goals of the Mentoring Matters program is to align our financial, employee volunteer and communication resources behind an important community issue,” said Burke. “This program empowers our employees to serve as mentors in a highly energized, passionate and committed environment, and more importantly, makes a lasting positive impact on the youth throughout the communities we serve.”

First Niagara’s 2008 Mentoring Matters program has partnered with a total of 45 organizations throughout upstate New York, donating a total of \$500,000. In 2007, the first year of the program, the community support campaign funded 34 organizational mentoring programs and positively impacted more than 3,000 students throughout the Western, Rochester, Central and Eastern New York regions.

Including the Mentoring Matters program, First Niagara made contributions of \$2 million to charitable and non-profit organizations throughout New York State in 2007.

“At First Niagara, we consider our corporate philanthropy to be an investment in our community’s future,” Burke said. “Mentoring Matters allows us to play a direct role in supporting our community’s mentoring initiatives that touch the lives of thousands throughout upstate New York, specifically, our leaders of tomorrow.”

Visit [www.fnfg.com/mentoring](http://www.fnfg.com/mentoring) for up-to-the minute photos and other information from First Niagara’s 2008 Mentoring Matters awards ceremony.

## **ABOUT FIRST NIAGARA**

First Niagara Financial Group, Inc., through its wholly owned subsidiary First Niagara Bank, has assets of \$9.0 billion and deposits of \$5.8 billion. First Niagara Bank is a full-service, community-focused bank that provides financial services to individuals, families and businesses through 114 branches and four Regional Market Centers across upstate New York. For more information, visit [www.fnfg.com](http://www.fnfg.com).

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