



## Help comes in a BIG way!

Allen Naples has always been an animal lover, but never thought his admiration for other species would come in such a big size!

That is, until he joined the capital campaign committee of Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse.

When asked to join the important fundraising effort, Naples, the president of M&T Bank's Central New York Region accepted immediately, and helped to dramatically transform the nationally recognized zoo into a pre-eminent, progressive zoo of the twenty-first century.

The zoo's capital expansion includes three projects, the largest of which is an Asian Elephant Preserve, a new home for up to 12 Asian elephants, which opened in the summer of 2011.

The new preserve has reunited Indy, Romani, Kirina and Siri, the much-loved 43 year-old female elephant who has been a core attraction at the zoo since she arrived in 1972, with three elephants: little Chuck, his mother Mali, and his grandmother Targa, who had been living temporarily at African Lion Safari in Ontario, Canada while their new facility was completed.

Without the improvements to the elephant habitat, the zoo would have been forced to relocate its breeding elephants.

"Not only is the Rosamond Gifford Zoo considered the best of Syracuse and gives our city character, but it protects our wildlife and educates people in a fun and interactive way," said Naples. "Modern zoos play a critical role in the education and conservation efforts that will contribute to the survival of Asian elephants and many other amazing animals."

So, with a \$1.6 million campaign goal, M&T became the first corporation to make a leadership commitment to the construction of the Asian Elephant Preserve.

"M&T Bank has been a cornerstone of supporting our community, so it was no surprise when the bank and Allen Naples came on board early with a leadership commitment to support

this important expansion of our zoo," said Janet Agostini, president of Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo.

The new Asian Elephant Preserve far exceeds the Association of Zoos and Aquariums requirements for elephant breeding, giving the Rosamond Gifford Zoo the distinction of having one of the top five Asian elephant programs in the United States and one of only a very few where visitors can actually touch an elephant!

So Siri, and the other reunited elephants of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo have a new home and continue to delight their fans, who include a banker with a soft spot for the gentle giants.

**ELEPHANTS ENJOY THEIR NEW PRESERVE AT THE ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO IN SYRACUSE.**



# Giving makes everyone a winner

When the winners of an M&T branch sales competition decided to do something unique with their “winnings,” they may or may not have known that Rochester’s The Center for Youth also had a winning formula for increasing child literacy rates. Rather than use their \$4000 to purchase personal items, or take a little vacation

*“When my mind gets stuck on a good book, sometimes, I never want the book to end.”*

SUMMER READING FUN  
PARTICIPANT

for themselves, the 10 Irondequoit branch employees decided they wanted to put it to greater use.

“As a group, every person wanted to make a donation,” said Gus Schmitt, branch manager.

One of the branch employees had done some volunteer work for The Center for Youth, and learned from them about 12 kids living in

a foster home. When asked what they most wanted, the kids asked for gloves, deodorant, a wallet, sheets and comforters – things most people would take for granted.

So the branch group built an evening around helping these kids. They went to dinner together and then went on a shopping spree. Then, at a party amidst games and pizza, the kids got everything they asked for, plus an iPod Shuffle for each of them.

“The smiles on the kids’ faces were great,” Schmitt said, “and we are still in contact with them.”

The Center for Youth also has drawn the attention and financial support of M&T Bank for the success of its Summer Reading Fun Program.

The program addresses a well-documented decline in student reading skills during summer months, especially by kids who are academically at-risk and have limited literacy opportunities outside the classroom because they live in high poverty, high-crime neighborhoods.

Summer Reading Fun mails a book every other week to each first and second grade student at their home, making it fun for them to receive mail in their own name, share with their families



ROCHESTER CITY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT BOLGEN VARGAS WITH THREE STUDENTS FROM THE CENTER FOR YOUTH.

and build their own libraries. Each child receives books selected for his or her own reading level. The students also receive books during the last week of school in the spring, and the first week of school in the fall. Since the beginning of the program, thousands of students have been impacted.

Once child comments, “Reading is lots of fun, because sometimes when my mind gets stuck on a good book, sometimes, I never want the book to end.”

The program also has proven to increase parents’ participation in their child’s reading.

Over the past four years, 74 - 78 percent of participating students maintained or increased their Developmental Reading Assessment scores during the summer months, when a decline in reading skills is not unusual.

M&T Bank has provided corporate financial support to the Center for Youth for years, and the extra help provided by our Irondequoit branch made a difference in the lives of 12 local students.



# Buddies learn together

At an early age, kids discovering the arts and sciences also discover each other, as part of a collaborative program of the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI), Discovery Trail and the Ithaca City School District.

Kids Discover the Trail! provides curriculum-based field trips to the eight education organizations of the Discovery Trail. Activities in the classrooms and at the sites promote understanding of the connections among art, history, literature, science and the natural world.

Each school year, pre-K through 5th grade classes visit one of the participating organizations, with the children taking home books, site information and free admission passes to encourage ongoing learning and family visits.

Through the process, kids also learn about each other. Each class is paired up with another class in the school district on the trips, linking kids to new buddies and encouraging continuing interactions. The pairing is not random. Classes are paired with other elementary schools whose students will eventually merge at the junior high level, which makes the connections quite relevant.

Teachers report the interactions with partner classrooms often begin before the trips, with kids communicating by letter, e-mail or video, and continue on the bus ride to and from the sites. Some interactions grow into friendships as 52 percent of 6th grade students report



AN ITHACA STUDENT "DISCOVERS THE TRAIL."

they'd become friends with at least one of their buddies through the program over the years.

According to Jennifer Engel, vice president of IPEI, the "Buddy Up" component gives the Kids Discovering the Trail! program its value. "KDT is vitally important because it ensures all Ithaca students have the same access to the experiences provided by the Discovery

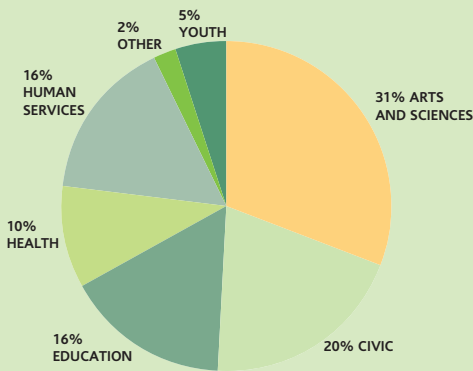
Trail. It promotes understanding and respect among elementary students from different neighborhoods by providing opportunities for positive social interaction."

All of which is why, according to M&T Bank Southern NY Regional President Peter Newman, M&T Bank supports the KDT program. "The values of this program: culture, education and understanding the diversity of our community, are aligned with the values we hold as a community bank. This program is unique in that you can measure its success by more than the 2800 students it serves each year – you can measure it in friendships."

*"It promotes understanding and respect among elementary students from different neighborhoods by providing opportunities for positive social interaction."*

JENNIFER ENGEL

## Western and Central New York Regions Grant Recipients Distribution:



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**community**line

WESTERN AND CENTRAL NEW YORK  
REGIONS – 2011



## An alternative for veterans

Sometimes the battle-scarred need a little extra help. In 2008, a city court judge in Buffalo launched an idea to help veterans that caught on across the country.

Rather than see military veterans who had selflessly served their country enter the penal system due to severe emotional and traumatic problems that led to criminal behavior, Judge Robert T. Russell, Jr. launched the Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court that seeks to support and rehabilitate veterans, rather than incarcerate them.

Seeing the large number of veterans returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, many experiencing problems re-entering civilian life after their nightmarish experiences, Judge Russell looked for a different, therapeutic approach. The Veterans Treatment Court links veterans to support and treatment resources including substance abuse and mental health services, academic and vocational skills improvement, housing assistance and job placement services. While these services are provided by a collaboration of governmental agencies, one thing was missing that was causing some participants to drop out: the cost of transportation. For the past two years, M&T Bank has supported the program with funding in an effort to help out with this very specific need.

The investment is worthwhile. While the cost to taxpayers is about \$32,000 per year to hold a prisoner at the county jail, treatment through the Veterans Court costs around \$7,000.

Ninety percent of participants have completed the Buffalo program, without a single case of recidivism, and it has served as model for the establishment of more than 95 other courts in the country that believe veterans are owed a second chance to become productive in society.

Through Judge Russell's innovative approach, with support from M&T Bank and many others, veterans are getting that little extra help they need.

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