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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **First Niagara Bank Foundation supports food assistance program**

**Ravena, N.Y.** – Stocking the shelves at Helping Harvest, a food assistance program for the needy located in Faith Plaza, just became a little easier thanks to the generosity of First Niagara Bank Foundation. Employees from the community bank’s Ravena branch hand delivered a \$1,000 check yesterday to the board of directors and staff of Hope Full Life Center, Inc., a not-for-profit that is Helping Harvest’s parent organization.

“Keeping a steady supply of food – especially healthy produce, meats and dairy products – available for our shoppers is a struggle,” said Rebecca Flach, executive director of Hope Full Life Center, whose organization devotes time each week seeking donated and low-cost salvage food from grocery stores and other sources. “First Niagara Bank Foundation’s grant gives us the ability to buy food to ensure people in Ravena and surrounding communities don’t go hungry.”

Flach applied for the competitive grant from the bank foundation, and Hope Full Life Center is the first charity in the Ravena area to secure such large funding.

“First Niagara is proud to support organizations like Hope Full Life Center that fight poverty and its symptoms, including hunger, so our community can flourish,” said Keith Geraldson, assistant manager for the Ravena branch that has also supported other local causes in 2014 including the RC Sportman’s Club Fishing Derby and The Seana Hazelton Memorial Scholarship. Last year the branch contributed to Coeymans Police Athletic League, Ravena Sports Association, the Coeymans Fire Company ham dinner and the VFW Post 9594 Easter egg hunt.

Hunger is still a pressing issue in the United States where one in five children don’t have enough to eat, according to Feeding America ([feedingamerica.org](http://feedingamerica.org)). Hope Full Life Center’s Helping Harvest works to end hunger locally and functions like a grocery store where community members with demonstrated need can shop for pennies on the dollar.

(MORE)

“Without the support of businesses like First Niagara Bank Foundation, our grocery industry connections and other generous people, there would be many more hungry people in our community,” said Flach as she thanked the foundation for its commitment to Ravena and the southern Capital District region.

**About Hope Full Life Center, Inc.**

A not-for-profit corporation, Hope Full Life Center helps the needy in our community and around the world through Helping Harvest, a food assistance program; Gracefully Chic Boutique, a gently used clothing shop; Peace of Home, which sells affordable furniture and home décor; and Cross Culture Market, an international ministry that sells largely fair trade products to help poor, abused and forgotten people around the world ([crossculturemarket.org](http://crossculturemarket.org)). All of Hope Full Life Center’s programs are located in Faith Plaza.

Hope Full Life Center is affiliated with Abounding Love Christian Fellowship, a non-denominational church, also in Faith Plaza.

**About First Niagara:**

First Niagara Financial Group, through its wholly owned subsidiary, First Niagara Bank, N.A., is a multi-state community-oriented bank with approximately 420 branches, \$37 billion in assets, \$27 billion in deposits, and approximately 5,800 employees providing financial services to individuals, families and businesses across New York, New England, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

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