



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Future Employees Mentored at Coarc

**Mellenville, NY:** Columbia County youth who experience disabilities will be trained for future employment through a \$5,000 First Niagara Mentoring Matters Program grant awarded to Coarc by the First Niagara Bank Foundation in November.

“Coarc’s Camp Mahican is a free summer day camp in Copake for children ages six to sixteen who experience disabilities,” stated Tanya Rivera, Camp Mahican manager. “We will use half of the grant to purchase program supplies such as life jackets and sports equipment to train former campers who are old enough to become counselors-in-training.”

“The other half of the First Niagara Mentoring Matters Program grant benefits Coarc’s Columbia Work Link School to Work vocational training program for Columbia County high school students who experience disabilities,” stated Bill Peele, Columbia Work Link manager. “We’ll purchase program supplies such as trade tools to prepare these young people for employment after they finish school.”

First Niagara’s philanthropic mission is to support and empower nonprofit organizations with financial backing, employee volunteers and board representation. It supports hundreds of charitable organizations, with special consideration to those that support children and youth. Mentoring Matters is First Niagara’s charitable giving program that provides monetary and employee volunteer support for organized mentoring initiatives. In 2011, First Niagara’s Mentoring Matters program grants topped \$2.5 million in Upstate New York, benefitting 15,000 youth in more than 175 organized mentoring programs. In total, First Niagara provided more than \$3.25 million to support mentoring efforts conducted throughout its Upstate New York, Pennsylvania, and New England service areas. More information about First Niagara is available at [www.fnfg.com](http://www.fnfg.com).

Coarc is a Columbia County, NY, nonprofit organization serving 500 individuals. Its mission is to expand abilities, one person at a time, so individuals experiencing disabilities can achieve their individual goals. Coarc provides vocational and employment services, residential and supportive community services, day activity programs, service coordination, legal and family support services, children’s services, community habilitation, respite services, recreation opportunities, traumatic brain injury services and contract manufacturing. Coarc is supported through state and federal funding, and by members, donors and foundations. It is a chapter of NYSARC, Inc. More information is available at [www.coarc.org](http://www.coarc.org) or 518-672-4451.

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(L to R): Douglas Thorn, Regional President /Director of Select First Niagara Risk Management, Inc. and Bill Gerlach, Vice President Relationship Manager of First Niagara Business Banking, presented a First Niagara Mentoring Matters Program grant to Coarc, received by Coarc Executive Director Ken Stall and Coarc Board member Karen Blass, who is also Vice President of First Niagara Bank.