

## **M&T Bank Fuels Momentum at Massachusetts Avenue Project with Renewed Support for Growing Green**

### **M&T Bank donates \$15,000 to MAP's Growing Green youth development program**

**BUFFALO, N.Y.**—Following last week's groundbreaking ceremony for the Massachusetts Avenue Project's new farmhouse, M&T Bank today announced increased support for MAP's Growing Green Program, a youth development and urban agriculture initiative that aims to improve access to healthy food and strengthen the community.

M&T Bank's \$15,000 contribution to Growing Green—which will offer programming in the now-under-construction farmhouse—will help fuel the momentum at MAP, which continues to drive progress on Buffalo's West Side.

"The farmhouse groundbreaking was an inspiring moment and the culmination of a lot of hard work," said Katie O'Connor, regional community reinvestment officer at M&T Bank. "With the exciting progress underway at the Massachusetts Avenue Project, we wanted to do even more to help grow its impact in the community. This new financial support for Growing Green will help empower more young people to pursue positive change in their neighborhood and become examples to emulate for their peers."

With this \$15,000 in funding, M&T's total support since 2011 for MAP grows to \$95,000, which includes a \$40,000 grant for the farmhouse project.

Each year, MAP's Growing Green Program employs about 50 low-income youth and trains them to become community leaders that have the skills and confidence to address community needs, improve food security and promote healthier neighborhoods. Over 50 percent of the youth Growing Green works with are new Americans.

In addition to supporting participants with workforce training and college readiness, Growing Green provides youth with the opportunity to earn a paycheck, which allows them to learn how to manage their money and, in many cases, empowers them to help their families with financial support.

"M&T Bank's longstanding support for the Massachusetts Avenue Project has helped us sustain the progress we've made in this community and in the lives of the people who call it home," said Patricia Watson, board chair at the Massachusetts Avenue Project. "In M&T Bank, we know we've got a partner we can rely on – when they got involved, they stayed involved. This contribution is just the latest chapter in our shared efforts to foster the resurgence of Buffalo's West Side and provide access to economic opportunities to its residents."

#### **About M&T Bank**

M&T is a financial holding company headquartered in Buffalo, New York. M&T's principal banking subsidiary, M&T Bank, operates banking offices in New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Connecticut, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. Trust-related services are provided by M&T's Wilmington Trust-affiliated companies and by M&T Bank.

#### **About Massachusetts Avenue Project**

Started by neighborhood residents on Buffalo's West Side in 1992 and incorporated in 2000, the Massachusetts Avenue Project aims to nurture the growth of a diverse and equitable local food system and promote local economic opportunities, access to affordable, nutritious food and social change education.

MAP's Growing Green program was founded to address the growing land vacancy, high youth unemployment and food security needs of the community. Growing Green has created hundreds of green jobs for inner-city youth, developed models for sustainable urban food production and youth leadership and built partnerships to promote regional food system development.

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