M&T Bank, Rochester Education Foundation Announce 12th Annual Jazz Fest Musical Instrument Drive

Longtime Jazz Fest sponsor, M&T Bank, donates prominent booth space to enhance REF's efforts to gather musical instruments for Rochester students

ROCHESTER, N.Y.; June 17, 2019—M&T Bank and the Rochester Education Foundation (REF) are teaming up to collect musical instruments for local students at the CGI Rochester International Jazz Festival, which runs June 21-29, 2019.

M&T, presenting sponsor of the festival, will donate its high-visibility booth space on Jazz Street to REF in order to bring awareness to the annual musical instrument drive. All instruments collected benefit Rochester City School District students.

"For 12 years, the Jazz Fest musical instrument drive has inspired people to give at a moment when the Rochester community comes together, united by our shared love of music and art," said Dan Burns, M&T Bank regional president for Rochester. "Thousands of city schools students have gained access to musical instruments thanks to the hard work of the Rochester Education Foundation and the generosity of our community. We're grateful to be a part of this inspiring initiative to help local kids pursue their musical dreams."

Throughout Jazz Fest, nearly 20 M&T volunteers will staff the booth to gather instruments and share information about REF's drive. The booth is located inside the merchandise tent on Gibbs Street, which becomes Jazz Street during the festival.

"With its love of music, Rochester has always felt like a city of musicians," said Patricia Braus, director of policy and strategy at REF. "However, those instruments that so many of our neighbors play eventually go silent and get stowed away in an attic or garage. This drive is a chance to give your beloved instrument new life and inspire a young person to take their talents to the next level. M&T Bank's ongoing support for our work makes this Jazz Fest drive possible, and we appreciate the years of partnership we've enjoyed together."

With numerous educational priorities competing with the arts for funding, the supply of musical instruments gathered through this initiative has made a significant impact in what is available to city school students. These used instruments become important tools to help students start their exploration or advance their musical education.

REF accepts instruments for students of all ages and skill levels—everything from recorders for early learners to string, brass, woodwind and percussion instruments. Music supplies, such as music stands, amps, sound equipment, guitar strings and drum sticks, are also welcome and appreciated.

For those interested in helping but unable to attend Jazz Fest, more information about REF's instrument collection is available at this link. Donating an instrument is a tax-deductible contribution.

For 14 years, M&T Bank has served as the presenting sponsor of the Rochester International Jazz Festival. This year, M&T's sponsorship takes on a new shape with the festival's addition of a semi-permanent, tented venue at Parcel 5 that will be called Squeezers Stage at M&T Pavilion. The space fits about 650-700 people, and with three shows at the M&T Pavilion each night, about 1000-1400 are expected to pass through the venue daily. At 4:30 p.m., the M&T Pavilion will host a free show, which will be followed by two Club Pass shows at 7 p.m. and 8:45 p.m.

About Rochester Education Foundation
The Rochester Education Foundation is an independent organization whose mission is to provide programs and resources to improve learning and success for all Rochester city public school students through partnerships with educators, business and the community. For more information, visit http://www.rochestereducation.org.

About M&T
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