

M&T Employees Build Bikes for Children Served by Journey's End

Some of Buffalo's newest residents, young refugees from a variety of countries, receive welcoming gift from M&T Bank ahead of the holidays

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BUFFALO, N.Y. -- At the offices of Journey's End Refugee Services, M&T Bank today presented a surprise gift, new bicycles, to children whose families have settled in Buffalo after long journeys from their home countries.

Refugees from a variety of countries, including Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iraq, Sudan and Nepal, the children received bicycles that employees within M&T's Legal Division built at a recent teambuilding event.

"So many children list new bicycles in their holiday gift wishes, and we were thrilled to bring smiles to the faces of the children who received the bikes that our team built," said Laura P. O'Hara, senior vice president and general counsel for M&T Bank. "The bicycles are not only meant to be a welcoming holiday gift, but we also hope they serve as another step toward a normal, happy life here in a city and country that are new for the children and their families."

M&T donated the bicycles to Journey's End, which selected deserving children for the bikes. The nonprofit organization has provided resettlement services to the families as part of its important mission to welcome and assist refugees living in Western New York.

"Journey's End Refugee Services really appreciates this generous donation from M&T and its employees. It is another example of how welcoming Buffalo is towards our newest neighbors," said Karen Andolina Scott, executive director of Journey's End Refugee Services. "Many of us have fond memories of riding bikes with our friends through our childhood neighborhoods. Giving some of our young clients the opportunities to make similar memories embodies the holiday spirit and once again proves that Buffalo really is the City of Good Neighbors."

Over the decades, as M&T has grown, the company has always encouraged its employees to get involved in their communities, and many of its various departments often incorporate charitable activities or community service projects into their annual enrichment, education and teambuilding events.

"This opportunity to work as a team to build bicycles for children who are resettled refugees was a powerful experience — it helped us reflect on the immense challenges they've endured and overcome while also enabling us to help in a small but important way," O'Hara added. "It allowed us to grow as a team and give back to our neighbors in need."

M&T Bank partnered with Bert's Bikes and Fitness on the Build-a-Bike initiative for Journey's End and encourages other companies in Western New York to consider similar activities for their future teambuilding events.

About M&T Bank

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