

StamfordPlus

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Stepping Stones Museum for Children and First County Bank kick off \$2 million Count me in! Community Campaign

“Count us in!” said Rey Giallongo, president and chief operating officer of First County Bank, as he accepted a giant container of energy balls from Rhonda Kiest, Stepping Stones Museum for Children’s executive director, and helped launch the museum’s Count me in! Community Campaign on Wednesday, July 7.

The event marked the start of a unique partnership between First County Bank and Stepping Stones that includes a customized mini-financial workshop for children titled “My Money Matters,” sponsorship of the museum’s “Get Into It! FREE” evening on July 29th and a branch-wide Count me in! fund-raising campaign to help the museum raise the final \$2 million needed for a 22,000 square foot, state-of-the-art facility expansion opening in November.

Symbolic of the numerous ways people in the community can be counted and be involved with the museum, the brightly colored energy balls (available for \$2.00 each) will be sold in all 15 First County Bank branches throughout lower Fairfield County beginning on July 15 through November 20, 2010. The First County Bank effort is one of several major Count me in! initiatives taking place throughout Fairfield County over the coming months.

“This is an extraordinary time for Stepping Stones as we approach the completion of our new facility,” explained Kiest. “The Count me in! Community Campaign is designed to engage the entire community in helping us build exceptional learning experiences for children. We are thrilled to have First County Bank on board for what is truly the beginning of the museum’s future.”

“First County Bank is very proud to say, ‘Count us in!’” added Giallongo. “The campaign is exciting, it’s fun, it’s inspirational. It’s totally indicative of the creativity that Stepping Stones is bringing to our children every day. We can’t wait to get started.”

Stepping Stones energy balls will be sold in all First County Bank branches beginning July 15 for \$2.00 each. The balls are also for sale online at www.steppingstonesmuseum.org and at the museum’s Welcome Desk. This fall, visitors will bring back the balls to feed the Energy Lab! exhibit’s hungry Ballcano. Fill the Ballcano with enough energy balls and it erupts, sending the flying balls back into Energy Lab! to chart a new course of play and discovery.

Also on July 15, First County Bank will host “My Money Matters” a mini- exploration for children to step into real-world experiences relative to earning, spending and saving money. The drop-in event will take place at the bank’s 660 Main Avenue branch in Norwalk. Hands-on activities based on educational lesson plans will help children gain an understanding of money, share important financial concepts, and assist students in building the skills needed to play a role in their own financial future. The theme will extend to First County Bank’s sponsorship of the “Get Into It! FREE” evening at the museum on July 29th.

For additional information about all Count me in! events and initiatives, visit www.steppingstonesmuseum.org.

About First County Bank:

First County Bank, headquartered in Stamford, Conn., is an independent mutual community bank with 15 branches in Stamford, Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk and Westport offering deposit products, mortgages, trust and investment services, business banking services and online banking. First County Bank has assets in excess of \$1.3 billion. For additional information, visit www.firstcountybank.com.

About Stepping Stones:

Stepping Stones Museum for Children, a 501(c)(3) private non-profit organization, is an award-winning children's museum committed to broadening and enriching the lives of children. Now nearing its completion, Stepping Stones \$17 million expansion will include the addition of 22,000 square foot providing new exhibits and innovative programming. Additions include a multi-media gallery, an expanded infant and toddler area, art and science labs, a traveling exhibit gallery, an expanded café and Community Garden. The expanded facility will be Gold LEED Certified and include solar panels, a wind turbine, a green-planted roof and Community Garden, making the museum itself an important energy teaching tool.

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