

BEST OF THE BEST

New York Retailer Celebrates Centennial with 100 Acts of Giving

Team brainstorms to reach out to all segments of community.

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Three generations working together: Jeffrey Adams Russell, Kimberly Adams Russell, and David Adams. Photo credit: Elario Photography

ELIZABETH PEARSALL, A GRADUATE gemologist at Frank Adams Jewelers in Albany, NY, has made a lifelong effort to contribute her time and energy to local food pantries, no matter where she's lived. She was particularly touched by the mission of Free Food Fridge Albany when she learned about the effort to make fresh food easily accessible in food-insecure neighborhoods. "I take for granted these healthy options, and to others they are a true luxury," she says.

Free Food Fridge Albany is one of the beneficiaries this year of the 100 Acts of Giving Campaign during Frank Adams Jewelers' 100th anniversary year. The store began as a small watch repair business in 1922 with founder Frank Adams at the helm. Today, Frank's son, David Adams; his granddaughter, Kimberly Adams Russell; and his great-grandson, Jeffrey Adams Russell, operate the store and manage a team of 20.

Kimberly says that while the company's focus is always on giving, this year they decided to open up the process of choosing recipients to include a wider range of issues and organizations, particularly those their team members felt passionate about.

Billie Jo Newman, director of marketing and communication, says the staff, which is diverse in age and experience, brought a wide range of interests to the project. “Challenging them to explore new giving opportunities broadened our reach in the community,” she says. “The thought and planning of each associate and the enthusiasm for their chosen projects has made an impact far beyond just writing a donation check.”

Kimberly was drawn in particular to set up scholarships and work with students in the area, something her mom also felt passionate about. “I have always felt rewarded mentoring college students to help them grow as successful business leaders in the community. I have worked with students from my alma mater at Ithaca College and currently I am building relationships with local students by setting up scholarship funds and mentoring programs.”

They’ve also reached out to individuals. The staff has pulled together to participate in The Big Tip movement, awarding a \$500 gift certificate to an employee at a local butcher shop who routinely delivers service beyond expectation to help fund a family vacation.



Frank Adams Jewelers in Albany, NY, is headquarters for a philanthropic initiative.

The campaign will culminate in a September party and drawing for a \$20,000 Cento Collection pendant by Roberto Coin. Customers can purchase a single stone pendant featuring a 100-facet, one-third of a carat diamond set in a sunburst from the Cento Collection by Roberto Coin for \$1,922 in honor of the year of the store’s founding and be automatically entered into the grand prize drawing.

Other activities the store’s team will participate in as part of its “100 Acts of Giving” include:

- Hosting an educational program for local Boy Scouts during which the store’s gemologist will teach them about gems and minerals.
- Making a significant donation to the Special Olympics and volunteering at its summer games.
- Creating an annual scholarship at Russell Sage College to support a Capital Region student pursuing higher education.
- Supporting Albany’s South End Children’s Café with regular donations of food and volunteer time.
- Making a significant donation to the American Heart Association in support of its annual gala and holding a blood drive at the store in Stuyvesant Plaza.

Although many of these opportunities will be photographed and shared on local and social media, the primary motivation isn’t publicity. “We want to give back to the community and make everyone here feel they have connected to something important,” Kimberly says.