

## **How Do We Grow Rural Communities?**

### **Rural Communities**

Rural America is on the cusp of a resurgence. People generally are more positive, income is increasing, more jobs are available and unemployment is decreasing. In my small community my country church's attendance is growing and young people are relocating their families back to our rural communities. Why? Because they want a slower pace of life and a better quality life. And I couldn't agree more. I love my rural life!

*Local residents want to improve their quality of life by robustly growing their communities.*

Farmers and agriculture play an important part in that community growth. Farming communities are truly the backbone of this country, there is no denying that. The work ethic and hard work of farmers *help grow rural communities.*

### **From the Ground Up**

I was privileged to be part of an inaugural local event which served two purposes. The event, "[From the Ground Up](#)" brought together agriculture and local community leaders where they created a farm-to-table event at a local hog farm. The first purpose of the event was to have farmers and community influencers engage with each other at an outdoor white table cloth meal--some whom have never been on a working farm. The second purpose was to raise funds for our local FFA school groups and funds for a brand new community center. I am happy to report this event accomplished both goals. Each FFA group was given \$2000 and \$6000 was raised for the new community center. My smile never left my face for weeks! As a result of "From the Ground Up's" inaugural year, it became evident that we all need to work together to improve our communities.

Similar to "From the Ground Up," I am also happy to share that there are agricultural companies that recognize farmers for their leadership and commitment. One of those companies is Monsanto. Monsanto recognizes farmers, their leadership and commitment to their local communities. Since 2010, through the America's Farmers Grow Communities program, the Monsanto Fund has partnered with farmers across the nation to award more than \$22 million to nonprofit organizations to make a positive impact in rural communities.

### **America's Farmers Grow Communities**

From now until November 30, 2016 eligible farmers can enroll in the 2017 America's Farmers Grow Communities program for a chance to win a \$2,500 donation to direct to a local eligible nonprofit organization. In the past, the top groups farmers chose to support included emergency

## Minnesota Farm Living

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response organizations, ag youth organizations and schools. The program will give another \$3 million to rural America in January. Monies donated purchase life saving EMS equipment, buy classroom resources or help feed the hungry. Program details and enrollment can be found at [www.growcommunities.com](http://www.growcommunities.com).

## Program Details

Here is how the program works: One eligible farmer (enrolled in program) is randomly selected in each of the 1,331 eligible counties across 41 states. Eligible counties are determined by USDA data and must have a total of either 30,000 acres of corn, soybeans, cotton or vegetables. There are a total of 1,331 eligible counties across the U.S. Most of Minnesota's agricultural counties do qualify. The winning farmers selects a local eligible nonprofit of their choice and a \$2,500 donation will be made to a nonprofit in each county. Eligible nonprofits are classified as either a 501c3 or 170c. Winners will be announced January, 2017. Full rules can be found at [www.AmericasFarmers.com](http://www.AmericasFarmers.com).

What a great opportunity for our rural communities! If you are a farmer, please apply for this program and help build our rural communities!

For more information, please check out this video, [Grow Communities](#).

You can follow Americas Farmers on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Youtube](#) and on the [Web](#).

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