

Agronomic Science Foundation

Year-End Giving: A Great Way to Get a Break on Taxes while Making a Difference

Do you remember the legend of Stone Soup? The old folk story tells the tale of hungry strangers who persuade local townspeople to help them make soup so everyone can eat. Usually told as an illustration about how cooperation ends up helping all concerned—especially when times are hard—the story unfolds as the starving strangers come to town carrying only an empty cauldron. When they ask for contributions of food to make soup, the villagers refuse to give what little they have been able to put aside.

Undaunted, the enterprising strangers fill the pot with water and after dropping a large stone in the vessel, place it over a fire. Arousing the curiosity of the self-serving villagers, the strangers explain that they are making a special secret soup that will take a while to cook. Eventually wanting to be part of the action themselves, the grudging villagers step up one by one first parting with a few carrots, then a couple of potatoes, and then a pinch of seasonings until each villager has added just a small contribution. The result is a hearty soup that feeds not only the starving strangers, but the hungry townsfolk as well.

It's not too much of stretch to apply this philosophy to our year-end appeal for the Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF). Everyone has been through tough times again this year. You might even find yourself thinking that the economy has been such a challenge that your own personal budget is just too tight to share, but I encourage you to think about giving what you can. Please remember that no amount is too small. If everyone gives just a little, there will be enough to meet our critical need for support.

A year-end gift to a 501c (3) organization such as ASF is a great way



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to make a positive difference in the world today and possibly get a break on taxes. ASF will use your contribution to fund student programs, scholarships, lectureships, conferences, awards, international travel, and other programs not covered by Society membership dues. You can take pride in the fact that your gift—no matter what the size you are able to give—will have a significant impact on the future of agronomy, crop science, and soil science.

One of the three funds being highlighted for the 2012 annual appeal is the **Golden Opportunity Scholars Institute**. More than 100 alumni have been through the program and are considered to be the best new talent available. The Golden Opportunity Scholars Institute trains undergraduate students for a successful career path in the agronomic, crop, or soil sciences. Undergraduates apply for travel support to the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA International Annual Meetings where they are matched with Society members who mentor them during the meetings and for a one-year period afterwards.

Two other funds that give you a chance to make a difference are the **Gateway Fund** and the **Pathway Fund**. The Gateway Fund inspires young students and guides them to a career in the agronomic, crop, or soil sciences. It provides funding to those who propose using innovative methods to identify, motivate, and recruit high school, undergraduate, and graduate students to the profession.

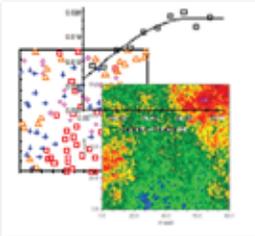
When fully funded, up to \$5,000 annually will be available per successful proposal with the option of renewal based on success.

The Pathway Fund provides travel support for inspired young, energized scientists and professionals that will allow them to share scientific expertise in struggling areas around the world. Available to active members of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA early in their careers, when fully funded, the Pathway Fund will provide up to \$15,000 for each successful proposal with the option for renewal.

Consider the volunteer or giving opportunities offered by the ASF through the Gateway Fund, the Golden Opportunities Scholars Institute, or the Pathway Fund. To find out more about options that might interest you, call me at 608-273-8095 or email me at abarton@sciencesocieties.org. To make a monetary donation online, visit www.a-s-f.org.

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