



Hawthorne Gardening Company Announces The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund within The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation

February 22, 2021

Fund designates \$2.5 million to support non-profit social justice organizations working toward criminal justice reforms and economic inclusion as more states regulate cannabis

Port Washington N.Y. Feb 22, 2020—To spark social change and help address the racial injustice and systemic inequality related to the enforcement of existing cannabis laws in the United States, The Hawthorne Gardening Company today announced the creation of The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund within The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation.

Through an investment of \$2.5 million, the Social Justice Fund will support organizations that are committed to addressing long-standing social injustices. Its initial focus is to address the problems caused by the disproportionate number of cannabis-related arrests and incarcerations involving persons of color. Later grants will focus on job creation, entrepreneurship and increased investment opportunities in minority communities.

“We know people of color are disproportionately prosecuted for minor cannabis offenses, even though their use is on par with use by white people,” said Chris Hagedorn, Executive Vice President and Division President, The Hawthorne Gardening Company. “This fact calls for the debate around cannabis reform to include a more urgent discussion about how the war on drugs has unfairly impacted people of color. It calls for us to use our voice and our resources to help individuals and communities that have felt the painful effects of prohibition.”

As the leading manufacturer, marketer and distributor of indoor and hydroponic gardening supplies in North America, Hawthorne is at the forefront of cannabis policy discussions, and with the creation of its Social Justice Fund, commits long-term to using both its influence and resources to support social reform and equity within the cannabis industry.

Hawthorne will focus its commitment through ongoing support and advocacy in the areas of:

- **Legal Reform** - Eliminating the legal gray areas and longstanding disparities between who is arrested, prosecuted and jailed for cannabis offenses; ending unfair enforcement practices and supporting clemency and expungement programs for certain low-level cannabis possession offenses.
- **Economic Inclusion** - Advocating for policies and programs that provide access to financial services for those working in state-authorized cannabis-related businesses; supporting tax revenues from the cannabis industry being reinvested into the communities most impacted by the war on drugs; and working with programs that provide business and technical support services for entrepreneurs of color.

“The establishment of The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund comes at a time when equal access to industry opportunity is paramount,” said Amber Littlejohn, Executive Director of the Minority Cannabis Business Association, a leading non-profit that serves the specific needs of minority entrepreneurs, workers, and consumers. “More work is needed to ensure the industry, in states where authorized, can help balance the detrimental effects of the war on drugs by creating an equal playing field for all people to benefit from the changing legal landscape”.

The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund is part of The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation and works to drive positive social and environmental change and cultivate good in our communities. The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund joins current commitments from The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation for environmental protection, community enhancement and youth empowerment through education.

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About Hawthorne Gardening Company

Hawthorne Gardening Company is a house of brands that provides an array of tools for a multitude of gardening needs to help people live happier, healthier lives through gardening. The company is dedicated to creating high-quality products founded in social and environmental responsibility and creates engaging consumer experiences that empower more people to garden no matter where or how they choose to grow. www.hawthorne-gardening.com

About The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation

The mission of The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation is to inspire, connect and cultivate a community of purpose. The Foundation is deeply rooted in helping create healthier communities, empower the next generation and preserve our planet. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that funds non-profit entities that support its core initiatives in the form of grants, endowments and multi-year capital gifts. For more information, visit www.scottsmiraclegrofoundation.org.

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