



The Hawthorne Gardening Company announces support for leading social justice organizations through The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund within The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation

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\$2.5 million fund is dedicated to non-profit organizations working toward social justice reform within state regulated cannabis industries

PORT WASHINGTON, N.Y., June 10, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The Hawthorne Gardening Company (Hawthorne) today announced the first grantees of The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund within The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation. These organizations are leading the charge with criminal and social justice reform for the cannabis industry. They include Last Prisoner Project, Marijuana Policy Project Foundation, Minorities for Medical Marijuana and United Returning Citizens. In addition, Hawthorne is funding the NuLeaf Project, an organization that provides direct support for minority cannabis entrepreneurs, through a corporate donation.

As North America's leader in indoor and hydroponic growing supplies, Hawthorne has committed to use its influence and resources to help drive criminal justice reform related to cannabis prohibition and contribute to shaping a more equitable post prohibition cannabis industry.

"Our commitment to being a good company is what drove us to create The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund within The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation. As we announced earlier this year, the fund was established with an initial investment of \$2.5 million to support non-profit organizations with cannabis social justice missions," said Chris Hagedorn, Executive Vice President and Division President of Hawthorne. "This fund deepens Hawthorne's commitment to spark change as policy reform advances across the country and states address the legacy of racial inequity tied to cannabis prohibition. It is our promise to support programming that helps communities and individuals who have been negatively affected by the long standing and systemic inequality related to cannabis prohibition in the United States."

The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund grantees were selected because of the powerful work they're doing to address the negative impacts caused by the disproportionate number of cannabis-related arrests and incarcerations involving persons of color, to support minority entrepreneurs and to increase investments in minority communities.

"We are proud to be a partner of The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund. As legalization continues to gain traction across the country, we believe it is crucial to advocate for policies that promote inclusion, equity, and justice both in legislation and in the cannabis industry. Hawthorne's commitment to advancing reforms needed to create a more just and equitable industry is commendable, and we look forward to the work that will be accomplished through this partnership," said Steven Hawkins, Executive Director of Marijuana Policy Project Foundation.

The work of the Fund's grantees includes:

- **Last Prisoner Project** is dedicated to cannabis criminal justice reform, working to release people with low-level cannabis convictions from prison in states where it is now legal and provide pathways to employment.
- **Marijuana Policy Project Foundation** is a racial justice and social equity project seeking to elevate cannabis reform as a civil rights issue at the national level and increase diverse representation within the legal cannabis industry.
- **Minorities for Medical Marijuana** provides advocacy, outreach, research, and training as it relates to the business, social reform, public policy, and health/wellness in the cannabis industry. Its Project Clean Slate program offers expungement clinics and wraparound services nationwide for those affected by past marijuana possession charges, while Project Safe Access NV assists members of the Latino community in accessing medical marijuana.
- **NuLeaf Project** is working to build intergenerational wealth via the legal cannabis industry for the communities disproportionately harmed by cannabis criminalization—including Black and Brown communities. Hawthorne is a corporate sponsor for the Nu School Accelerator Program, which offers financial support and technical expertise on cannabis startup financing and operating an ancillary business.
- **United Returning Citizens** provides job search and training, life and financial literacy skills and transitional and stable housing primarily for citizens reentering society from correctional facilities. This partnership focuses on workforce development, helping people with cannabis convictions in a high-unemployment area (Youngstown, Ohio) find employment and start businesses in hemp and indoor cultivation.

The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund is part of The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation that 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.

Learn more about The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund and its commitments at hawthorne-gardening.com

About The Hawthorne Gardening Company

The 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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