

**Farmers Insurance Names 15 Teachers in the Running for Five \$100,000 Thank A Million Teachers Dream Big Teacher Challenge Grants
Today Through November 30, America Votes at ThankAMillionTeachers.com, Awarding Teachers with the Opportunity to Transform their Classrooms, Schools and Communities**

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 1, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- All teachers dream of providing their students with the absolute best that their classrooms, schools and communities can offer. And beginning today, it's in America's hands to make those dreams a reality for five of the 15 finalists in the Farmers Insurance Thank A Million Teachers Dream Big Teacher Challenge. The Dream Big Teacher Challenge is an extension of the company's Thank A Million Teachers program, which continues to show the power of a simple "thank you" to teachers past and present by offering any teacher thanked the chance to apply for a \$2,500 Farmers grant. The Dream Big Teacher Challenge was announced in May this year as teachers' chance to vie for one of five \$100,000 Dream Big Teacher Challenge grants. Through the Farmers Thank A Million Teachers program, which launched on January 1, the company made the commitment to give away \$1 million to teachers this year. Starting today through November 30, the public can vote at ThankAMillionTeachers.com for one finalist in each of five zones across the country – a total of 15 teachers. The five winners will be announced in early December.

"To date, well over 800,000 thank yous have been given to teachers on ThankAMillionTeachers.com, but Farmers wanted to give more back to our nation's educators. For the Dream Big Teacher Challenge, teachers were invited to submit comprehensive proposals describing their visionary program, implementation plans and timelines, expected outcomes and detailed budgets," said Randy Rice, national manager of the Thank A Million Teachers program. "We will be awarding five \$100,000 grants as part of the national insurer's Thank A Million Teachers initiative, which launched in late December and continues to encourage people across the nation to submit a heartfelt 'thank you' to a teacher who has made a positive impact on their lives."

Throughout September, Farmers executives traveled town to town to personally surprise each Dream Big Teacher Challenge finalists with the news that his or her proposal had been selected as a finalist by a committee of educators and Farmers representatives. Each of the 15 Dream Big Drop-ins, as they were labeled, showcased the genuine excitement and pride of students, schools, principals, legislators at every level and the entire community in their outstanding educator. Finalist submissions included exemplary proposals ranging from implementing new technology into the classroom to launching programs that promote reading and literacy — and even a proposal to create an indoor horse riding center for special needs children and adults in the community.

"Farmers Insurance is excited to once again turn to our fellow citizens in selecting the five biggest dreamers who will each receive a \$100,000 grant to bring their impressive educational visions to life," said Rice. "These 15 finalists are among the top educators in the country, and we encourage America to rally around them to help these teachers win a grant to truly transform their classrooms, schools and communities."

To encourage America to vote for their top 15 Dream Big Teacher Challenge finalists, provided below is background information on each of the finalists and corresponding proposal summaries. (Editor's Note: Video Bios of All Teachers are available at ThankAMillionTeachers.com.)

Zone 1 Finalists

Teacher	Elissa Dornan
Location	Graham, Washington
School	Rocky Ridge Elementary

Proposal Title	Let's Rock the Ridge with Digital Learning
Proposal Summary	Over 66 percent of the students at Rocky Ridge Elementary come from poverty stricken homes and many do not have access to technology like computers or tablets. If Dornan were to win the \$100,000 grant, she would like to provide the entire student population with access to technology to support the Common Core State Standard. The money would help equip each grade level with a set of iPad tablets loaded with engaging and educational software, computers for adaptive online reading and math applications designed to meet the Common Core State Standards.
Link to Teacher Video	Elissa Dornan Video

Teacher	Melissa Hunt
Location	Blackfoot, Idaho
School	Stoddard Elementary School
Proposal Title	Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow
Proposal Summary	If Hunt wins the \$100,000 grant, she'll transform Stoddard Elementary into a state-of-the-art learning environment to better prepare the students for ongoing advances in technology. The grant will enable Hunt to purchase computers and implement competitive online curriculum with resources including Discovery Education, PD 360, Schoolnet. Her use of these online programs will serve as a state-wide model of how to integrate technology into a 21 st -century classroom.
Link to Teacher Video	Melissa Hunt Video

Teacher	Lynne Erger
Location	Billings, Montana
School	Trinity Lutheran School
Proposal Title	Operation F-I-L-L it up
Proposal Summary	"The man who does not read has no advantage over the man who cannot read." – Mark Twain. With the \$100,000 grant, Erger proposes to F-I-L-L her school's new library and computer lab with furniture, iPads, laptops and literature (F-I-L-L) to promote the use of new technology and reading comprehension. The school's much-needed library/computer lab will be completed by the fall of 2015, but needs the funds from this grant to fill its new facility with materials and equipment to bring it into the 21 st century.
Link to Teacher Video	Lynne Erger Video

Zone 2 Finalists

Teacher	Michael Jones
Location	King City, California
School	Santa Lucia Elementary School
Proposal Title	Fostering a Community of Digital Learners – the Art of Digital Creation
Proposal Summary	Technology is ever so present in our daily lives and if Jones wins the \$100,000 grant, he'll create and foster a sustainable after-school digital art enrichment program. The program will provide 13 weeks of digital art instruction at three

	different elementary schools in King City. The materials and technology also will be used by teachers to provide a more diverse learning environment for students by integrating technology into the daily curriculum.
Link to Teacher Video	Michael Jones Video

Teacher	Brenda Moynihan
Location	Henderson, Nevada
School	C.T. Sewell Elementary
Proposal Title	C.T. Sewell Student and Family Technology Center
Proposal Summary	C.T. Sewell Student and Family Technology Center serves an at-risk, low-income population and has very little resources. If Moynihan wins the \$100,000 grant, she'll incorporate technology into the classrooms and learning center so the school's students — who rarely have access to computers or tablets at home — can more readily meet today's academic expectations. Moynihan also proposes to use the grant money to create and provide career guidance programs for parents to help promote healthy home environments for the students
Link to Teacher Video	Brenda Moynihan Video

Teacher	Mark Adams
Location	Glendale, Arizona
School	Ironwood High School
Proposal Title	The Engineering Buzz – all about STEM! Project
Proposal Summary	Renewable and reusable energy is extremely important. The objective of The Engineering Buzz – all about STEM! Project is to complete the construction of a Solar Powered Training House (SPTH) with an attached green house and to purchase the technology needed to support the integrated lessons that will be conducted using these structures. All the lessons developed will align with the Next Generation Science, Common Core and Arizona Engineering Science standards. Adams also proposes to establish partnerships with the district, the community and industry to maintain the structures and equipment
Link to Teacher Video	Mark Adams Video

Zone 3 Finalists

Teacher	Maggie Kendall
Location	Chicago, Illinois
School	Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences
Proposal Title	Raise the Barn Roof
Proposal Summary	Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences is home to Chicago's only working farm and is the only viable location for an equestrian program for general education students and special needs children and special adults. The school's population comprises 13 percent special needs students and 50 percent of the families are below the poverty level. Currently, students can only ride outside and, with Chicago winter's being what they are, this severely limits the time the students have with the specially-trained horses. If Kendall were to win the \$100,000 grant, she'd help fund

	an indoor arena, which would not only extend the program year round but also offer more opportunities to special needs children and adults throughout the area.
Link to Teacher Video	Maggie Kendall Video

Teacher	Amanda Erspamer-Berry
Location	Marquette, Michigan
School	Marquette Alternative High School (MAHS)
Proposal Title	Health and Fitness for Life
Proposal Summary	The best way to care for your total health is to nurture a healthy mind and body. If Erspamer-Berry wins \$100,00, she wants to help her students do just that. Her plan at the Alternative High School incorporates opportunities for students to build healthier lifestyles. She would build an innovative fitness center within the school's walls, purchase items such as mountain bikes, new shoes and healthy vending machines. To encourage healthy minds, the grant would provide for a daily art class, and the national program Challenge Day to be brought to MAHS. Moreover, part of the grant will go toward community collaboration with the Marquette Food Co-op, providing nutrition classes and the Red Cross CPR/First Aid training. The grant's priority is to give students and the surrounding community a space to promote healthy lifestyle habits.
Link to Teacher Video	Amanda Erspamer-Berry Video

Teacher	LuAnn Lindskov
Location	Timber Lake, South Dakota
School	Timber Lake High School
Proposal Title	Weavers of Hope
Proposal Summary	This proposal creates a state-wide training initiative that Lindskov helped develop. Fundamentally, this project is about "relationships" and "increased academic proficiency in secondary math, science and English." The ultimate "product" of this project is to better prepare students from rural, economically disadvantaged communities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subject matter so they transition to post-secondary education and careers more successfully as future productive 21 st -century citizens.
Link to Teacher Video	LuAnn Lindskov Video

Zone 4 Finalists

Teacher	Cheryl Boatner
Location	Henryetta, Oklahoma
School	Henryetta Elementary School
Proposal Title	Brain Camp
Proposal Summary	If Boatner wins the \$100,000 grant, she'll build the Action Based Learning Lab, or "Brain Camp," to integrate physical education with real-life learning opportunities that remediate and enrich students' overall academic performance. At Brain Camp, traditional learning will incorporate sensory components of balance, coordination, spatial awareness, directionality and visual literacy through technology hubs and

	physical fitness stations. Boatner's proposal builds on the concept that when students perform movements while learning, they make the brain more alert and energized to learn.
Link to Teacher Video	Cheryl Boatner Video

Teacher(s)	Justin Minkel & Amber Stout
Location	Springdale, Arkansas
School	Jones Elementary School
Proposal Title	The Home Library Effect: Transforming the Worlds of 1,000 At-Risk Readers
Proposal Summary	As a result of a grass-roots literacy initiative called the "1,000 Books Project," young students were given books to create home libraries to promote and improve their reading and comprehension skills. Through this program, which was recognized by President Barack Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan, Minkel and Stout saw their students become better readers, thinkers and more productive young citizens. If these teachers win the \$100,000 grant, they'll create a state-wide literacy initiative, taking the project to scale to provide 25,000 books for 1,000 children.
Link to Teacher Video	Justin Minkel & Amber Stout Video

Teacher	Rohny Escareno
Location	Edcouch, Texas
School	Edcouch-Elsa High School
Proposal Title	Enhance: Establishing New Horizons, Advancing New Communities of Educators in Deep South Texas
Proposal Summary	There are unique challenges and hardships that arise in this border town school with a 99.7 percent Hispanic population, economically disadvantaged rate of 99 percent and 27 percent migrant worker population. If Escareno wins the \$100,000 grant, he'll establish a much-needed mentoring program and community-wide outreach events to better assist and address the needs of this distinctive community. The program will be developed by teachers to empower them to best address the specific physical, psychological, social and academic needs of their students. The program will also include a community-wide mentoring component to help each student with his or her college and career goals and improve the community's educational attainment rate.
Link to Teacher Video	Rohny Escareno Video

Zone 5 Finalists

Teacher	Kelly Meeder
Location	Baltimore, Maryland
School	Lakeland Elementary/Middle School
Proposal Title	Farmers Technology Lab
	Lakeland Elementary/Middle School is a low-income (95 percent poverty) school with outdated computers that take more time to turn on than the time a classroom

Proposal Summary	teacher has to make learning productive. If Meeder's proposal is selected as a Dream Big Challenge winner, she'll use the \$100,000 to build a Farmers Technology Lab to ensure every student has access to up-to-date technology in his/her classroom. There will be opportunities for technology training for teachers and parents to ensure future success for the students and families throughout the community.
Link to Teacher Video	Kelly Meeder Video

Teacher	Virginia Fulton
Location	Lanham, Maryland
School	Howard B. Owens Science Center
Proposal Title	Maryland Summer Center for Space Engineering and Robotics
Proposal Summary	There are gifted and talented students in low-income schools across the United States. The Maryland Summer Center for Space Engineering and Robotics is located in Prince George's County, where approximately 65 percent of students (7 th -9 th graders) are eligible for free or reduced meals. The Center enables students to interact with NASA engineers and addresses the need for future high-performing and skilled workers. Participants brainstorm, collaborate and implement robot challenges, integrating technology and experiential learning. If Fulton wins the \$100,000 grant, she'll extend the summer program to include three follow-up sessions during the school year with increasingly rigorous robotic competitions. Her extended program will also provide returning students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of robotics, engineering and computer programming.
Link to Teacher Video	Virginia Fulton Video

Teacher	Cindy Ferek
Location	Bridgewater, Virginia
School	Turner Ashby High School
Proposal Title	Two Wheels Squared Driving Course Challenge
Proposal Summary	Vehicular crashes are the leading cause of death among teenage drivers in the United States to better prepare teenagers for on-the-road dangers, Ferek would use the \$100,000 grant to create and implement the Two Wheels Squared course. The course will help students train for future driving challenges by offering a multi-faceted bicycling course to challenge teenagers physically, emotionally and cognitively. Overall, the course will help teens develop critical on-the-road problem-solving skills they will inevitably use when they earn their driver's licenses.
Link to Teacher Video	Cindy Ferek Video

In addition to the Dream Big Teacher Challenge, Farmers Insurance, through the Thank A Million Teachers program, is also awarding \$2,500 grants to teachers through a related award program. Teachers who seek to improve the classroom impact on their students may submit proposals for these \$2,500 grants through October 31. Details and submission requirements are available at ThankAMillionTeachers.com.

About Farmers Insurance

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