It’s 2016! I waited until February to write this article because I wanted to let that sink in a bit. I say it every year, but I feel like the last year flew by in record time. Hopefully, you all made it through the holidays relatively unscathed.

The last two weeks of 2015 were just 2 of 52, but they loom large in regards to a majority of people’s sense of togetherness and giving. This time of year, we find ourselves reflecting on whether we took the steps and made the decisions we resolved to make to improve ourselves and the world around us. This reflection eventually lends itself to thoughts of the future and how we can build on our progress.

As you strive for excellence and inspire others, you serve as a role model for the generations of scientists who will come after you and continue raising the standards and behaviors of everyone whose lives they touch. A contribution to the Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF) can provide you with another opportunity to serve a purpose beyond yourself and make a positive impact on the future of agronomy, crop science, and soil science.

Since 1968, ASF has been a non-profit 501 c(3) organization, and during this time, it has accomplished many goals. The numerous and generous contributions from donors have been used to fund student programs, scholarships, lectureships, conferences, awards, international travel, and other programs not covered by Society membership dues. So I encourage you to think about what your contribution might be this year. As 2016 gets under way, I want to highlight the Golden Opportunity Scholars Institute with the Greenfield Scholars and various other scholarships, which all focus on the growth of talent within your sciences.

The Golden Opportunity Scholars Institute fosters the development of the very best of our current students, so they can continue on a successful career path. The Institute is available to undergraduate students (18 in 2015) who are currently enrolled in agronomic, crop, and/or soil sciences. Students apply for travel funds to the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA International Annual Meeting and are matched with Society members who act as mentors during the Annual Meeting and for a one-year period afterwards.

The Greenfield Scholars Fund is a program within the Golden Opportunity Scholars Institute that is sponsored by ASA and the International Certified Crop Adviser (ICCA) program. The specific purpose is to support outstanding undergraduates in a bachelor of science or associate of science program with plans to enter the workforce upon graduation and pursue the CCA/Certified Professional Agronomist (CPAg) profession and certification. There were five scholars invited to the 2015 Annual Meeting, and you can follow their journey at www.goldenopportunityscholars.org.

Various other scholarships are in need of help to make a difference in the future of agronomy, crops, and soils:

ASA
- Cross-Cultural Experience Program Scholarship
- Frank D. Keim Graduate Fellowship
- J. Fielding Reed Scholarship

CSSA
- Gerald O. Mott Scholarship for Meritorious Graduate Students in Crop Science
- Robert F Barnes Graduate Education Award

SSSA
- Francis and Evelyn Clark Soil Biology Scholarship
- Gary “Pete” Peterson Dryland Soil Management Scholarship
- Hubert J. Byrd Sr. Scholarship Soil and Water Conservation Scholarship

Any size gift will make a difference. Whether your gift is large or small, please consider ASF, which benefits many important initiatives, including scholarships, travel grants, lectureships, and more. If you need some guidance on getting started, please contact me today at (608) 273-8081 or ewelsh@sciencesocieties.org.

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Greenfield Scholars at the 2014 ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Annual Meeting in Long Beach, CA.