



**Hungry for Education
2023 Scholarship
Winners**

September 1 – December 11, 2023



**Denny's 2023 – 2024 Hungry
for Education™ National
Winner: Kalib Hodge**



2023 – 2024 Hungry for Education™ National Winner

In Partnership With

Greater Spartanburg Divine Nine

KALIB HODGE

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Tennessee State University



"One of the key ways Denny's can bring communities together is by committing to diversity, equity, and inclusion through social nights and celebrations during cultural heritage months. Organizing themed nights that highlight different cultures, traditions, and cuisines can promote a sense of belonging and appreciation for diverse communities."

"Denny's can demonstrate how companies can play a pivotal role in fostering the growth of communities through its commitment to providing neighborhood activities and open-minded practices. For example, another idea would be to facilitate networking events where professionals from various industries can share experiences in their field and provide mentorship or internship opportunities, especially for underrepresented groups."



**Denny's 2023 HFE
Scholars – High School**



100 Black Men - Upstate



CHRISTIAN ROBERTS

Spartanburg, SC
Western Carolina University

Denny's commitment to helping and providing affordable and accessible dining options and makes it a gathering place for diverse social groups. Regardless of the financial means, people can come together to enjoy a meal, breaking down the economic barriers, that often do break apart communities because of their financial backgrounds.

JACOBIE HARRIS

Simpsonville, SC
USC Upstate

By partnering with community groups, schools, and non-profit organizations, Denny's can sponsor events such as fundraisers, youth programs, or cultural celebrations. This involvement demonstrates a commitment to the community's well-being, fostering a positive image and encouraging community members to come together in support of shared causes.

JAMYA CRAWFORD

Moore, SC
University of South Carolina

They have gone above and beyond by establishing scholarships for young adults, having a diverse work staff, and embracing openness in the workplace. All of their initiatives make Denny's more progressive, but I believe by teaching high school children more of the business side of Denny's it could enhance their company tremendously.

DE'ANDRE BRIDGE

Gaffney, SC
University of South Carolina

Denny's is widely known for their breakfast and food has always been a big part in bringing people together. A lot of neighborhoods have cook outs and even Jesus had a great feast with his disciples. Denny's could do the same with events like floats, basketball, and a charity event.

NICHOLAS MEEKINS

Simpsonville, SC
USC Upstate

Community outreach is a significant part of unifying communities. Helping each other out when in need and sharing our time and resources are two of the most substantial forms of goodwill, and Denny's proudly dedicates these things to the betterment of our communities. In partnership with organizations like Habitat for Humanity, Denny's builds homes for people within the community.



Divine 9 – Greater Spartanburg



MICAH KENNEDY

Spartanburg, SC
University of South Carolina

Like it's welcoming atmosphere and diverse menu, Denny's has become a central hub of opportunities by providing communities with resources for socioeconomic growth, a focus on unity amongst communities and by investing in education. When I was a Scout. My troop participated in a Black History bowl sponsored by Denny's. This was a major part of Black History Month in the City of Spartanburg. I am also grateful for the Denny's Hungry for Education Scholarship

NSIMIRE BAHONGWERHE

Spartanburg, SC
North Greenville University

Denny's can help bring communities together by partnering with food pantries in our city to help those families that are in need. There are numerous food pantries in our city including Bethlehem Center. The Bridge Market sponsored by the First Baptist Church, and the food pantry at Mathew's Episcopal Church.

PARKER HARRIS

Taylors, SC
Clemson University

To bring communities together Denny's should consider creating family or community packages that are easy to bring to community events. Another option would be to have a community package at their restaurant where churches or other large organizations in a community can bring in multitudes of people

ALEXIS HARRIS

Greer, SC
Spelman College

Denny's, by partnering with local governments and various community organizations, can help to make sure resources and assistance get into the hands of those that need it the most. Denny's can also help bring communities together by partnering with customers to provide financial resources. For example, by asking customers to round up their bill for homelessness and/or making an additional monetary donation when paying their bill to assist the local homeless population.

JONATHAN DUNCAN

Spartanburg, SC
Columbia University

Each store is an anchor to its human surroundings, serving as a place for friends to gather, families to dine, and soon-to-be couples to meet. Denny's is also a guest-first, employee-supporting, heritage-bound, forward-looking, and open-minded international company. By bringing these two otherwise-distinct worlds together, the corporation is uniquely able to enhance its place in the local community through superior service and fantastic food.



Divine 9 – Greater Spartanburg



TE'VARIYAE WOODS

Spartanburg, SC
Charleston Southern University

Denny's is able to establish a warm environment where people from all backgrounds may gather, dine, and build relationships because of its dedication to diversity, accessibility, and community involvement. Denny's may significantly contribute to the development of a more inclusive and linked society by encouraging a sense of togetherness and belonging within communities.

KADEN JETER

Spartanburg, SC
Weighing Options on College Choices

Denny's commitment to helping and providing affordable and accessible dining options and makes it a gathering place for diverse social groups. Regardless of the financial means, people can come together to enjoy a meal, breaking down the economic barriers, that often do break apart communities because of their financial backgrounds.

TIANNA SMITH

Spartanburg, SC
Lander University

Denny's can utilize social media platforms to engage with their customers and their local community. By sharing stories highlighting local events, and encouraging user-generated content, they can create an online community that may extend beyond their physical location.

MAN PATEL

Fort Mill, SC
University of South Carolina

Denny's can introduce special menus during cultural celebrations that feature authentic dishes from the culture being celebrated. This culinary exploration not only exposes customers to new flavors and experiences but also educates them about the rich tapestry of world cuisines.



National Urban League



KENDAL RAMSEY

Peachtree Corners, GA
Kennesaw State University

To me, community is a very important factor when I consider it's impact on the betterment of our cities, states, country, and the world. Me being a part of my community has made me into the person I am today. It has taught me how to be respectful, responsible, and more importantly, how to be a positive contributor to society.

AMIIA BURNETT

Indianapolis, IN
Tennessee State University

The Indianapolis Urban League would get the word out to the families in their programs to get people to come out and meet together in the Denny's building. This would also put out a good look on the company because they are giving back to others which can lead to more customers and families wanting to return every year.

ZAVION HENDERSON

Elyria, OH
Bowling Green State University

One key aspect is Denny's role as a common ground for diverse individuals. Its affordable pricing and broad menu appeal to a wide demographic, making it an accessible meeting place for people from various walks of life. Families, students, professionals, and seniors can all find something they enjoy at Denny's, creating a cross-generational and cross-cultural space for communal gatherings.

TRINITY CORTEZ-ANSLEY

El Cajon, CA
University of California Berkeley

For instance, we could have a brunch-and-learn, where Project Ready students, faculty and volunteers come together and eat at Denny's while being able to hold our normal meetings, or after our early morning, Saturday meetings, students can while to Denny's and show their affiliation with Project Ready and eat with their families, half price for their meals

CARRYN GILBERT

Detroit, MI
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor

By supporting local businesses and contributing to the local economy, Denny's can strengthen the community's economic foundation and foster a sense of pride and ownership among residents. With community gatherings like scholarship giveaways, food drives, a job fair, and not the usual block parties Denny's can bring people together for a common cause and create a sense of unity and purpose within the community.



RAHUL REBELLO

Brookline, MA
University Massachusetts
Boston

Denny's commitment to helping and providing affordable and accessible dining options and makes it a gathering place for diverse social groups.

Regardless of the financial means, people can come together to enjoy a meal, breaking down the economic barriers, that often do break apart communities because of their financial backgrounds.



HANNAH COSTA

Oaks Bluffs, MA
Emerson College

With love and a lot of dedication, Denny's helps unify the community and makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of people. And given all this it's not surprising the giant community believes in Denny's, and I end this saying: Thank you Denny's, for existing, and for making the world a better place, especially for us who are part of this community who need companies like you.



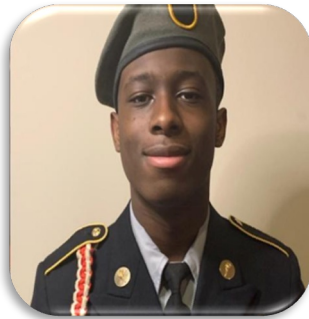
TORI WATSON

Latta, SC
Francis Marion University

Denny's can also create a welcoming and inclusive environment within their restaurants. By providing a space where people from all walks of life can gather, dine, and enjoy good food. Denny's encourages diversity and fosters a sense of belonging within the community.



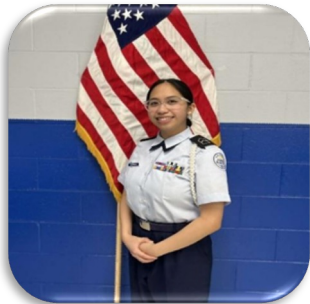
NVBDC



TRENTON TOLBERT
North Carolina
University of South Carolina
Aiken



AMANDA SALAZAR
Texas
University of Texas San Antonio



CAMILLE GUERRERO
New Jersey
Rutgers University Camden



NIKOLAS JACKSON
Illinois
University of Idaho



ELISA FIGUEROA
South Carolina
Coastal Caroline University



USPAACC



Tian Chiu
California



Katie Xin
California



Karki Khina
Ohio



**Denny's 2023 HFE
Scholars – College**



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., South Atlantic Region



DE'ASIA DANIELS
Thomasville, GA
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Whether it's supporting local schools, participating in neighborhood clean-up initiatives, or contributing to social causes, Denny's aims to be a responsible corporate citizen that listens to and addresses the specific needs of the communities it serves. Denny's sees itself not just as a restaurant but as a dynamic force for positive change, bringing communities together in meaningful and lasting ways.



NIA DOUGLASS
Miami, FL
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Shared meals at Denny's can facilitate conversations and interactions between those who would not typically have the opportunity to connect, fostering understanding and empathy among community members. Multicultural events, such as themed nights or menu offerings highlighting different cuisines, can help showcase and appreciate the diverse backgrounds present within the community, thereby promoting a sense of unity.



Divine 9 – Greater Spartanburg



TAKIRA JOHNSON

Melbourne, FL
Eastern Florida State College

Denny's locations are often strategically situated to be easily accessible to a broad range of demographics within a community. This geographical convenience can serve as a gathering point for individuals from different backgrounds, fostering a sense of shared space and connection.

NATALIE MANGEN

Bowie, MD
Savannah College of Art and Design

With the increase of knowledge of social responsibility, workers, neighbors and others would act more in the interest of others and help the homeless, hungry and destitute more readily. One day all these programs might end the need to promote help to others and it would be just a thing everyone does in their community.

JENESIS DOTSON

Norwalk, IA
Adrian College

Furthermore, Denny's can actively facilitate community-building activities. Hosting events such as fundraisers, charity drives, or even open mic nights can draw in residents and create opportunities for collaboration and support within the community. By partnering with local organizations and sponsoring community initiatives, Denny's can serve as a hub for positive change, inspiring individuals to come together for a common cause.

MAMADOU NDIAYE

Silverthorne, CO
Grand Canyon University

Partnering with local schools, businesses, or community organizations to provide special offers can encourage residents to visit Denny's, creating a sense of unity and shared experiences. This not only boosts foot traffic but also positions Denny's as a brand that understands and supports the economic dynamics of the local community.

AYOOLA KALEJAIYE

Newark, NJ
New Jersey Institute of Technology

Food has a remarkable ability to unite people, transcending cultural and social barriers. Denny's diverse menu offers an extensive range of breakfast, lunch, and dinner options, catering to different tastes and dietary preferences. This inclusivity ensures that Denny's becomes a hub of culinary diversity, where people from different backgrounds can gather around a table and enjoy a meal together.



Divine 9 – Greater Spartanburg



MIA MOORE

Los Angeles, CA
University of Southern California

Through the creation of employment opportunities, sourcing from regional suppliers, and contributions in taxes, Denny's can support those who are striving to further their education. Providing financial assistance to low-income community members or minority students, such as myself, will create thriving, educated communities free from student loan debts.



DIMITRY ERMAKOV

Berea, OH
Hillsdale College

By supporting charitable organizations and shining a light on pressing social issues, Denny's can inspire its patrons and the broader community to become actively engaged and contribute to the betterment of society. This engagement not only bolsters the ties within the community but also cultivates a reputation for Denny's as a socially responsible establishment.



KALIB HODGE

Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Tennessee State University

Denny's also has the potential to actively engage with and support the communities it serves. This could involve organizing events like community breakfasts, where locals can gather to discuss local issues or celebrate milestones. Additionally, Denny's could partner with local schools or organizations to host fundraisers and provide meals for those in need.

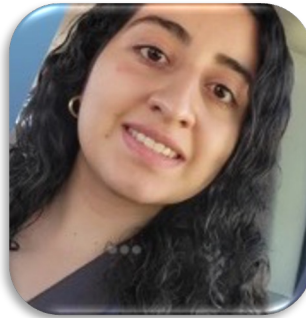


TAJIANNA PLUMP

Tuscaloosa, AL
Miles College

One of Denny's most significant contributions to community unity is its affordable menu. In an age when dining out can be a luxury, Denny's offers a wide range of affordable options, making it accessible to people from various economic backgrounds. Families, students, and seniors can all enjoy a satisfying meal without breaking the bank.

Denny's HACU



JOSE GONZALEZ

Long Beach, CA
Western Carolina University

Meals without Borders Borders should not get in the way of bringing communities together. Denny's can play a role in making it easier for Latinx people to connect with their families back home. I would like to introduce the Denny's "Meals without Borders" kiosk. Placed near the entrance of the store, right next to the traditional cashier stand. This kiosk will bring convenience to the breakfast consumer in the United States.

VIRNIA APARICIO CAMACHO

Miami, FL
Florida International University

By embracing these innovative ideas, Denny's could evolve from a cherished diner to a bustling community engagement and cultural exchange hub. The timeless enchantment of shared meals, laughter, and stories is becoming increasingly elusive in a world dominated by digital interaction.

ESMERALDA SANCHEZ

San Antonio, TX
University of the Incarnate Word

A solution to help bring communities together is for Denny's to make events in which outside of their restaurants they make fundraisers to support a certain school, hospital, or homeless people in each of their communities. The events to bring communities together will be planned ahead of time and should be announced along with a Denny's commercial on TV in order to make sure that the people in the communities are aware of the event.

DEVON WOODFINE

Los Angeles, CA
California State Polytechnic University

Funding small local urban gardens that are operated by the community can not only provide food to hungry kids but teach them how to eat healthy, grow their own food, the importance of being active in your community, and allow them to connect more with the community. With urban gardens producing food that is local, people can donate some produce to people in need and the rest can be sold at a local farmer's market.

RON RODNEY

Corona, CA
San Jose University

Denny's can always use a different system for on example McDonald offer scholarship but many of their base clients or community members do not even qualify because they have such strict requirements. This is one area Denny's can continue to out do the competition and foster a need level of leadership from the youth.



Meharry Medical College



TIA WATTS
Nashville, TN
Meharry Medical College

Women shelters, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, and adoption centers are always looking for sponsors for different resources. Denny's can fundraise for these different bastions through by using percentage of revenue that different restaurants accrue. Giving money to these different safe havens allows for them be able to supply different hygiene products, clothing, cell phones, and etc to ensure the safety of those in the community who may need assistance in securing safe housing.



TREDARIUS LASSITER
Nashville, TN
Meharry Medical College

Inclusivity is a core value of Denny's, and it can be a powerful tool for community building and public health promotion. Denny's staff and management should undergo diversity training to ensure that the restaurant remains a welcoming space for people from all backgrounds. This commitment to diversity aligns with public health principles as it fosters a sense of belonging and reduces disparities that can negatively impact public health outcomes.



HUSAI HURTADO

Houston, TX
University of Houston

Denny stands as a leader who inspired many of the communities in the Houston area to inspire and motivate others, creating a sense of purpose and direction that helps everyone work towards a common goal. This involves recognizing and valuing the unique perspectives of others, which can help to create a more diverse and inclusive environment

TIANNA DAWKINS

Ozark, AL
Wallace Community College

This commitment extends beyond the dining table experience through various outreach activities such as collaborations with schools, charities, and community organizations enabling Denny's to actively engage with the neighborhoods they serve. By aligning its brand with local projects, this allows Denny's to position themselves as a community partner invested in the wellbeing of its residents and not just a restaurant for a quick and pleasant trip for the family.

BRENDON BAILEY

Glen Burnie, MD
Walden University

Denny's could also be an excellent catalyst for fundraising. Who doesn't want a pancake slam? Why not utilize those sweet stacks as a way to make a different kind of stack—money to benefit the LGBTQ+ community? Denny's can be a powerhouse of fundraising and donating to causes that support and uplift LGBTQ+ people, showing their strength and dedication to the community; not just through words, but by action as well.

MICHEAL DUONG

Oxford, MI
University of Michigan

In the same regard, communities come together in the same way. A simple shared meal melts conflict, and everyone can enjoy the food and company. Food also heals. After my high school experienced a tragic shooting, our community was devastated. To help with the grieving, people from all over the world donated food and drinks to local businesses so we had a place to meet.



JOHN GERACI

West Roxbury, MA
Merrimack College

In addition, the Hungry for Education Scholarship program helps to fulfill this mission, since thousands of dollars are generously provided to students across the country to pursue their educational goals and have a college experience without putting as much of a financial burden on themselves – which by extension, can include paying for a meal plan to eat at dining halls on campus, but could also mean simply being nourished intellectually.

SRIDATTA BAPATTA

Franklin, MA
University of Massachusetts

There can be many poor or homeless kids who cannot afford quality meals planned to go to schools with half filled stomach. Unless we fill our tummy, we will not be able to concentrate on anything in the world and hunger comes first. Also, malnutrition will be another problem for homeless kids. Denny's should plan to serve nutritious and balanced meals to those children locally.

BRIAN EDWARDS

Dartmouth, MA
University Massachusetts
Dartmouth

In essence, Denny's exemplifies how a simple dining experience can transcend its conventional purpose and serve as a conduit for promoting unity and fostering community spirit. By embracing diversity, promoting inclusivity, and actively engaging in philanthropic endeavors, Denny's has successfully positioned itself as a unifying force within the communities it serves.



Tom Joyner Foundation



INAYA GRAY

Boilingbrook, IL
Dillard University

Doing so will not only boost the local economy but also create a connection between the restaurants and their local communities. In a similar vein, Denny's can partner with community businesses for cross-promotions and to co-sponsor events. Such collaboration will strengthen the sense of community and encourage residents to explore a variety of local offerings.

ESHIOBOMHE SIGMUS

AIMOFUMHE
Nashville, TN
Fisk University

But wait, why can't Denny's spice things up a bit? Think about hosting events that showcase different cultures, cuisines, and traditions. How about giving local artists a stage through open mic nights or talent shows? And hey, why not partner with schools for workshops right there in the restaurant? It's not just about serving meals; it's about creating a living, breathing community hub.

KAYLA GRANT

Bethlehem, PA
Howard University

Starting by creating engaging challenges for people across the world to participate in. They can then post to these challenges and get others involved in all the social fun. Another way communities can be brought together is by stepping into them. Having Denny's ambassadors go into these communities and ask people what Denny's means to them—then taking these heartfelt messages and documenting them on social media.

MYKENZI DAVIS-COWART

St. Petersburg, FL
North Carolina Central University

Over the years, as the Denny's franchise grew it became increasingly more and more successful and well known worldwide. It has been a place where families and friends from all walks of life and a variety of diverse backgrounds can come together. Whether it is to celebrate, indulge, or just enjoy each other's company Denny's has always been the number one place where all can feel welcomed.

BRYSON DAVIS

Gary, IN
Tennessee State University

Denny's can help bring communities together by dedicating to their five areas of social responsibility Family & Community, Our Food, Diversity, Our People, and the Environment. The organization values variety and promotes tolerance for all individuals, viewpoints, and ideas. Denny's can have an outsource for people dealing with mental health concerns and how they affect everyone's wellbeing.



USC UPSTATE



CORTEZ DAWKINS

Gaffney, SC
University of South Carolina
Upstate

Denny's does not have to be alone in this either because there are a multitude of organizations that would love to help fund and or help host the event. Denny's could also pitch the idea and be a sponsor to the organization who hosts the event. The effects that these events would have on the community would be nothing but positive.

DIAMOND WALKER

Spartanburg, SC
University of South Carolina
Upstate

I believe friends taking me to dinner, family members offering to make my favorite meals, and strangers making sure I could afford groceries while I could not work helped me survive a devastating time. This type of empathy and care is mirrored throughout many communities.

HUNTER RETTELLE

Duncan, SC
University of South Carolina
Upstate

I think we should host an event giving kids backpacks, pencils, crayons, colored pencils, glue, and all the supplies that kids 1st - 6th grade would need. Holding this event at the top of the Denny's tower would not only encourage a lot more families to go but also make the kid's experience so much better and distract them from the hard times they're going through.

JOSH HOLT

Spartanburg, SC
University of South Carolina
Upstate

By partnering with local farmers and suppliers, Denny's can contribute to the areas economic development, creating job opportunities and supporting economic growth. Additionally, Denny's can collaborate with USC Upstate and other institutions in the upstate to create internship opportunities for students studying hospitality management, culinary arts, and business.

KHAMAYA BROWN

Elloree, SC
University of South Carolina
Upstate

During this event, employees from the school such as the principal and teachers could volunteer to serve families for about 3-4 hours. This event would bring many families into the restaurant and would also allow school personnel to meet and serve families in a difference capacity. Denny's could also give the school fifty percent of sales during those hours.



USHLI



SOPHIA BACALLO

Miami, FL
Florida State University

My mother, who raised me on her own and also takes care of my 89-year-old grandmother, always made sure that at least once a month, we would sit down as a family to enjoy a Grand Slam breakfast and my favorite chocolate chip pancakes. It was one of my favorite things to do growing up and it was our way of taking some time as a family to spend time together, enjoy good food, and reconnect and recharge for the week.

HANNAH FREEMAN

Farmington, NM
Biola University

Through the tragedies and deaths that have plagued my hometown, the community has never been less selfless or caring. It remains a supportive, loving, and benevolent family of people who prioritize a strong community through tangible support. I am beyond grateful to be a part of it.

ABRAHAM HERNADEZ

West Chicago, IL
Aurora University

Denny's has the potential to transform from just a restaurant into a catalyst for community engagement and cultural exchange. Through thoughtful and culturally sensitive initiatives, it can play a crucial role in preserving and promoting the Mexican community's traditions, engaging our youth, and fostering an inclusive environment.

NATALIE HUERFANO

Piedmont, SC
Clemson University

Parades consist of rallies of people with traditional garments, embroidered skirts, hand-woven hats, and baskets of flowers created with the historical resources of our home countries. Cultural dances all have stories connecting to our main communal values of love and history. Our favorite artists create widespread music that touches every part of the world making our main foundation for bonding and family.

LILIANA MARTINEZ

Laredo, TX
The University of Texas at Austin

In my community, which is essentially an extended family, the essence of belonging is deeply rooted. As a member of the Hispanic community, family gatherings are frequent, adorned with abundant food for all. A cherished saying among us is, "It's better to have leftovers than to have hungry people." This adage encapsulates the core value of inclusivity in our community.



USHLI



BROOKLYN VASQUEZ

Breinigsville, PA
Pennsylvania State University

With this in mind, I created an organization, Time for What, to ensure that people receive free education and tutoring at zero cost. In addition, this organization would target historically marginalized groups to receive our free resources. With this organization, I was able to give back to the community by helping over 500 students from my local community to an international perspective.

MERALY RUBIO

Countryside La Grange, IL
DuPage, St. Ambrose

Denny's commitment to helping and providing affordable and accessible dining options and makes it a gathering place for diverse social groups. Regardless of the financial means, people can come together to enjoy a meal, breaking down the economic barriers, that often do break apart communities because of their financial backgrounds.

ELISA ZAPATA

El Cenizo
Rice University

Throughout November and December, the residents of El Cenizo would make a "Jamaica," or a small gettogether where we could all exchange food and goods, listen to music, and coexist. This tradition has always been the most memorable because it has portrayed that although we may be an underdeveloped town, the effort to unite the community by embracing our Hispanic heritage is prevalent.



Denny's 2023 HFE Business Grant Recipients



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., South Atlantic Region: Business Grant Recipients



CATHERINE OJEDA FIGUEROA
Kissimmee, FL

The Denny's HFE Business grant will positively impact my business by providing the financial support needed to continue to build community and create opportunities for the youth in Florida.



NAKAYL BROWN
Columbia, SC

Funds from the Denny's HFE Business Grant would be used to help move Champ STRONG Kennels to another location with more land. This would allow the business to continue to grow, in addition to allowing me to create more employment opportunities, and further economic growth in the community