

October 13th: A Good Day to “RISE”

Thursday, October 13th marked a celebration of farming, friendship and philanthropy at the Detroit Market Garden in downtown Detroit. Against the backdrop of the GM Renaissance Center, Ford Field and Comerica park 80 Mahindra NATC employees spent the morning harvesting bell peppers and kohlrabi, laying rows of compost, and preparing hoop houses for the coming winter. This volunteer opportunity, coordinated by both Mahindra NATC and The Greening of Detroit, served as precursor for the awarding of \$75,000 in Mahindra Urban Agriculture grants to six urban farming organizations working in Detroit to revitalize the city and



provide its residents with healthy food alternatives.

The award ceremony was held in a crisp autumn light on a stage built by Mahindra employees during last year’s volunteer event at the same Detroit Market Garden. In a display of city unity and support the ceremony featured prominent political officials—Terry Campbell, Regional Manager, Office of U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow; Lisa Howze, Chief Government Affairs Officer to Detroit Mayor Mike

Duggan; Kathryn Underwood, Detroit City Planning Commission—sharing the stage with the most influential figures in Detroit’s urban agriculture movement, along with both Mahindra NATC’s President and COO, and VP of Marketing: Rick Haas and Rich Ansell.

Presiding over the ceremony, Ansell reminded the over 120 attendees that the gathering and the grants themselves represented a true reflection of Mahindra’s “RISE” philosophy. A corporate initiative informing all of Mahindra’s 17.8B global operations, “RISE” is Mahindra’s call to action urging their employees and institutions to “challenge conventional thinking and innovatively use company resources to drive positive change in communities across the world.” Born in the spirit of this philosophy, Mahindra’s Urban Agriculture Grant Program was founded in 2015. In just the one year since, Mahindra NATC has awarded over \$175,000 in funds and equipment to 10 distinct urban farming organizations in Detroit, six of whom were in attendance to receive checks on October 13th.

Though the recently awarded 2016 funds have not yet been spent, Mahindra NATC’s 2015 Urban Agriculture grants were used to grow 550,000 lbs of food for city residents, build 200 garden beds, and provide 85,000 seeds and seedlings to 1,375 individual Detroit gardens. Among other things, the six organizations receiving 2016 Mahindra NATC grants—Earthworks Urban Farm, The Greening of Detroit, Keep Growing Detroit, The Full Circle Foundation, Neighbors Building Brightmoor, Northend Christian CDC—intend to use the funds to establish a garden resource hub for all of Southwest Detroit, build an experimental water catchment and storage prototype to facilitate the irrigation of crops throughout Detroit, create agriculture-based job

opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities, and plant home gardens for underprivileged city residents.

Upon stepping to the stage to accept their grants, the leaders of all six urban farming organizations radiated smiles and expressed their heartfelt thanks to Mahindra. Local news outlets filmed and took



pictures as political officials, Mahindra employees, and urban farmers laughed and shared stories. Then all of the ceremony's attendees sat beneath the Detroit Market Garden's signature oak tree, shared a meal, and prepared for the good, and ample, work to come.