



Smithfield Foods Donates \$200,000 to Support An Achievable Dream Youth Education Program

Company's donation to empower future leaders and provide holiday food assistance

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., Dec. 17, 2024 — Smithfield Foods donated \$200,000 to An Achievable Dream (AAD), a nonprofit educational program, to support key aspects of AAD's unique social, academic and mindset education framework and address local food insecurity for underserved families and children this holiday season.

"Investing in our youth is an investment in the future of our communities," said Jay Bennett, chief human resources officer for Smithfield Foods. "We are committed to supporting educational programs like An Achievable Dream that truly make a difference in the lives of next generation's leaders."

Smithfield employees visited AAD Academy in Newport News, Virginia, on Dec. 10 and participated in the morning program by greeting students, presenting the donation check and reading to students in classrooms.

"Smithfield is so much more than a sponsor; they are true partners in our mission," said Dr. Lee Vreeland, president and chief executive officer of An Achievable Dream. "Whether it's joining a classroom to read with students, hosting a field trip, mentoring in our 'What It Takes' workforce readiness programs or providing critical funding to support food security and wrap-around services, their connection to our organization runs deep. Everyone at Smithfield believes wholeheartedly in what we do and goes above and beyond to support our Dreamers."

Smithfield's continued support ensures that AAD can sustain its critical programs and expand its operations, including:

- **What It Takes Career Readiness Program:** Smithfield employees will mentor students and teach soft skills needed in professional environments. This program directly impacts over 500 middle school and high school students in Newport News, Virginia, each year, helping develop confidence and vital skills for success beyond the classroom.
- **Wrap Around Support and Food Insecurity:** Smithfield's support will bolster AAD's efforts to provide holiday food assistance and additional support for students and families facing food insecurity during the school holiday break when resources are limited.
- **CANstructure Competition Food Drive:** Smithfield employees will mentor AAD students participating in the annual CANstructure Competition hosted by the Youth Volunteer Corps of Hampton Roads, which supports local food banks. Smithfield has also committed to matching the total weight of canned goods donated by all participating Hampton Roads schools with a protein donation to local food banks.
- **Nutrition and Healthy Living:** AAD is partnering with Smithfield to expand and enhance AAD's "Healthy Living Curriculum." This vital program integrates health and wellness education into

social rotation classes, empowering students with the knowledge and tools needed for long-term well-being.

Over the past two decades, Smithfield has provided \$3.7 million in support to AAD, which has helped build a brighter future for students, families and our communities. Smithfield employee Lashondra Walker recently [shared](#) her story as an AAD graduate.

Smithfield is committed to improving educational opportunities, advancing the vitality of local communities and fighting hunger and food insecurity. For more information about Smithfield's programs, please visit smithfieldfoods.com/helping-communities.

###

About Smithfield Foods:

Smithfield Foods is an American food company with a leading position in packaged meats and fresh pork products. With a diverse brand portfolio and strong relationships with U.S. farmers and customers, we responsibly meet demand for quality protein around the world.

About An Achievable Dream:

An Achievable Dream is a nonprofit organization with a unique structure and goal: we partner with public school districts to jointly operate schools in primarily under-served communities, providing additional resources to level the playing field for students. Our program integrates an array of research-based strategies into a unique program that yields significant results in academic achievement, positive behavior, and the development of critical life skills. AAD serves over 1,700 students in Newport News and Virginia Beach. For more information, visit www.aadream.org.



Photo 1 caption: Regina Davis, human resources generalist, Smithfield Foods; Steve Evans, vice president, community development, Smithfield Foods; Stephanie Edwards, associate humans resources generalist, Smithfield Foods; Jay Bennett, chief human resources officer, Smithfield Foods; Melissa Ferrell, talent development training specialist, Smithfield Foods; and AJ McRae, diversity, culture and engagement specialist, Smithfield Foods, present a check for \$200,000 to An Achievable Dream.



Photo 2 caption: An Achievable Dream's students listen attentively to Melissa Ferrell, talent development training specialist, Smithfield Foods, reading a book.

Contacts:

Amasa Smith
Chief Strategy Officer
An Achievable Dream
(757) 599-9472
aandes@aadream.org

Ray Atkinson
Senior Director, External Communications
Smithfield Foods, Inc.
(757) 576-1383
ratkinson@smithfield.com