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**Bob Evans Farms Launches “Heroes to CEOs” Initiative for Veterans**

*Heroes to CEOs initiative developed in partnership with The Mission Continues is the largest grant program of its kind – awarding three \$25,000 grants and a mentoring session with entrepreneur and TV personality Daymond John*

**NEW ALBANY, OHIO (June 27, 2017)** — In a continued effort to support America’s active duty military, veterans and their families, Bob Evans Farms, via its “Our Farm Salutes” program, today launched the Heroes to CEOs initiative, a new grant program developed in partnership with The Mission Continues that will award three \$25,000 business grants to deserving veterans who submit a video sharing their business idea and a plan demonstrating a solid business concept; not-for-profits are also eligible for the grant. The initiative is the largest veterans-only grant program currently available for all Veterans. The winners will also receive a business coaching session with acclaimed businessman and investor Daymond John, the Founder and CEO of FUBU and investor on ABC’s reality series Shark Tank.

“Veteran entrepreneurs have a unique challenge. Many returning veterans have innovative and interesting ideas but need help getting started. These problems are only exacerbated by the lack of funding options for Veteran entrepreneurs,” said Mike Townsley, CEO and president of Bob Evans Farms. “Bob Evans Foods is proud to continue our support for veterans through our “Heroes to CEOs” initiative. In partnership with The Mission Continues, this grant program will support and encourage entrepreneurial veterans as they transition back into civilian life and look to continue serving their local communities.”

The grants, given in partnership with The Mission Continues, will help veteran business owners continue to find purpose and to serve their communities, as an extension of their military service. The Mission Continues empowers veterans who are adjusting to life at home to find purpose through community impact by deploying veterans on new missions in their communities, so that their actions will inspire future generations to serve. The Heroes to CEOs grant program is another way to help veterans fulfill their dreams and transition back to civilian life.

“The Mission Continues and Bob Evans share a commitment to empowering military veterans towards continued personal and professional success. We are so proud to work alongside them on this innovative and unique program,” says Spencer Kympton, U.S. Army veteran and president of The Mission Continues, “We have countless examples of how veterans are contributing their skills, experience and passion towards improving their neighborhoods across the country. Support from Bob Evans for our Service Platoons program will further fuel veterans to make a sustainable impact on local communities while inspiring future generations to serve.”

Veteran entrepreneurs are asked to submit a business plan, multimedia assets and a personal essay about their passion for their business in order to have their idea considered.

“I was fortunate to be named a Presidential Ambassador for Global Entrepreneurship, and got to meet visionaries and entrepreneurs throughout the globe. One of the greatest honors that allows me is to work with people directly and help cultivate their ideas,” said Daymond John. “The Mission Continues has done an incredible job in helping veterans, who are heroes and holders of some of

the most innovative ideas out there. It is truly an honor to be able to work with veterans and come together with The Mission Continues to help flush out the ideas, business plans and entrepreneurial future for the recipients of this grant.”

Winners will be selected by a five-person judging panel, including:

- CEO of Bob Evans Farms, Mike Townsley
- Laura L’Esperance, Senior Vice President of Brand and Communications for The Mission Continues and Georgetown Business School graduate
- Emily Nunez, CEO and Co-Founder of Sword & Plough, officer in the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Corps (RET.)
- Betsy Nunez, Chief Operating Office and Co-Founder of Sword & Plough
- Tony Arendt, Executive Director at The Mission Continues, 15+ years active and reservist duty in the U.S. Navy and Kellogg business school graduate

Veterans must submit their idea and business plan to the Our Farm Salutes website, [www.ourfarmsalutes.com](http://www.ourfarmsalutes.com), no later than August 8, 11:59:59 PM EST, to be considered for the contest. Winners will be announced on September 12, 2017. To learn more about eligibility, prizes and how to apply, visit [www.ourfarmsalutes.com](http://www.ourfarmsalutes.com).

As part of the “Our Farm Salutes” program, Bob Evans Farms will also be working with The Mission Continues as a lead sponsor for both the Los Angeles 4th platoon and in activating a brand new service platoon in The Mission Continues family, Columbus 1st Platoon, which launches officially during the first quarter of 2018.

“Our partnership with The Mission Continues is another way for Bob Evans Farms to give back to those who have sacrificed so much for us,” continued Mr. Townsley. “Columbus is our hometown and we are excited to be involved in the amazing transformations that The Mission Continues platoons provide the community.”

For more information on the contest and rules, visit [www.ourfarmsalutes.com](http://www.ourfarmsalutes.com).

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#### **About “Our Farm Salutes” & Bob Evans Foods, Inc.**

Created by Bob Evans Farms, Inc., in 2016, “Our Farm Salutes” is committed to supporting America’s active duty service members, Veterans, and their families through volunteerism, strategic partnerships, grant opportunities, awareness and donations. Bob Evans Foods, Inc. is a leading producer and distributor of refrigerated potato, pasta and vegetable-based side dishes, pork sausage, and a variety of refrigerated and frozen convenience food items under the Bob Evans, Owens and Pineland Farms brand names. For more information about Bob Evans Farms, Inc. and “Our Farm Salutes”, visit [www.bobevansgrocery.com](http://www.bobevansgrocery.com) and [www.ourfarmsalutes.com](http://www.ourfarmsalutes.com).

#### **About The Mission Continues**

The Mission Continues is a national nonprofit organization that empowers Veterans who are adjusting to life at home to find purpose through community impact. Our operations in cities across the country deploy Veteran volunteers alongside non-profit partners and community leaders to solve some of the most challenging issues facing our communities: improving community education resources, eliminating food deserts, mentoring at-risk youth and more. Through this unique model, Veterans build new skills and networks that help them successfully reintegrate to life after the military while making long-term, sustainable transformations in communities and inspiring future generations to serve. To learn more, visit: [www.missioncontinues.org](http://www.missioncontinues.org) or follow on Twitter @missioncontinues.

