



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NATIONAL AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM, NATIONAL GRANGE
SELECT 2015 AG ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR**

LOUISVILLE, KY – The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO) and The National Grange selected Minnesota volunteer educator Juanita Reed-Boniface as its Ag Advocate for 2015.

Boniface, a retired extension agent, and her husband, Dick, joined Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom as a volunteer in 1995. They have worked since then with a legion of volunteers who made classroom visits in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, and expanded their outreach to include programs with Minnesota Farm Bureau, Minnesota and American Cattlewomen, Minnesota State Fair, University of Minnesota 4-H, Minnesota Agri-Women and National Agri-Women and Project Food, Land & People.

“The Grange was created in 1867 to educate and connect the American farmer and his family. In today’s world it is even more important to educate Americans about the necessity and importance of agriculture in their lives,” said, Ed Luttrell, president of the National Grange. “The Grange is proud to sponsor the Ag Advocate Award to recognize volunteers who serve others through education, which is the heart and soul of our organization.”

“Volunteer educators like Juanita are an important part of Agriculture in the Classroom outreach in Minnesota and nationally,” said Lisa Gaskalla, president of the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO). “We applaud her hard work, and celebrate the great strides she has made in agricultural literacy.”

Boniface wrote in her application that “I guess I’ve always advocated for agriculture and learning all my life.”

She grew up on a farm in the sand hills of Nebraska and served as a long-time educator for the Minnesota Extension Service. In addition to her presentations in the classroom and at agriculture industry events, she is an active promoter of the Minnesota Historical Society’s Oliver Kelley Historic Farm Interpretive Site north of Minneapolis, the site where the Grange began.

She is a student-mentor-teacher and is a tireless advocate and cheerleader for agricultural literacy. Known as a ‘master teacher,’ Boniface takes pride in serving as a mentor to many educators who seek to strengthen agricultural literacy in both formal and informal educational settings.

Boniface will be honored for her strides in improving agricultural literacy in her home state at the National Agriculture in the Classroom National Conference ‘Unbridled Possibilities’ scheduled for June 17-20 at The Galt House Hotel in Louisville, KY. The Grange has supported the Ag Advocate award at the NAITCO national conference since 2010.

The National Grange is a non-profit, non-partisan, fraternal organization that advocates for rural America and agriculture. With a strong history in grassroots activism, family values and community service, the Grange is part of more than 2,100 hometowns across the country.

NAITCO is a non-profit, grassroots organization of Agriculture in the Classroom programs in 48 states and six territories across the country. Its mission is to educate kindergarten through 12th grade teachers about the importance of agriculture with lesson plans, awards programs and a national conference that uses agricultural concepts to teach core subjects of reading, writing, math, science, social studies and more.

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