



Making Sure Everyone Has a Seat at the Table



Article

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Everybody deserves to feel welcome and heard, and to have access to healthy food. For more than 70 years, Ben's Original™ has provided families around the globe with high-quality rice that's nutritious, flavorful and easy to prepare. In that time, we've listened to our communities, learned what they value most, and pledged to contribute to the changes they want to see in our business and in the world around them.

We're taking a more active role than ever in fostering necessary changes. We've never wavered in our commitment to serve the world's best rice — and now we're entering a new phase with our brand's purpose to help lay the foundation for a more equitable and inclusive reality. Read on to learn more about how we're taking action to create meals, experiences and opportunities that offer everyone a seat at the table.

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### INVESTING IN EDUCATION

The foremost initiative in our brand's renewed purpose, the Seat at the Table™ Fund scholarship was developed in partnership with National Urban League and United Negro College Fund (UNCF) to

support Black students interested in food industry careers. Over the next five years, we will invest \$2 million in this fund with the goal of reducing and helping eliminate the disproportionate debt Black students face, as well as positively affecting the pathway to employment and advancement within the food industry. Each renewable, need-based scholarship will cover education-related expenses (up to \$25,000 per scholarship, per year) toward the completion of a food science or culinary arts certificate, associate degree or bachelor's degree. Interested students and adults can learn more about eligibility and be notified of when the applications are open by visiting UNCF's Ben's Original™ Seat at the Table™ Fund Scholarship page.

## **GIVING BACK TO GREENVILLE**

Ben's Original™ is also committed to investing in and enhancing opportunities in our home community of Greenville, Mississippi, where our products have been made for more than 40 years. Without the welcome and support of our hometown, much of what we do would not be possible, and so our work toward change begins at home.

We want to do all we can to make sure everyone has the chance to sit at a healthier table, and we know that requires both access to healthy foods and education around healthy eating. To bring this mission to life, Ben's Original™ is investing \$2.5 million over the next five years to improve access to healthy foods and education for Greenville and the Delta region's underserved residents. To learn about specific actions and partnerships that will further these efforts through investment and programs, read more here on Mars.com.

## **GROWING SUSTAINABLY**

Ben's Original™ is firmly committed to sourcing our rice from farms that engage in sustainable growing and harvesting practices. In 2016, we joined the worldwide Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP), and today, 99% of our farmers are working toward SRP standards. With rice serving as both a staple food for half the world's population and a source of livelihood for one out of five people, the improvements we make in worldwide rice production will empower farmers and provide better environmental stewardship for future generations.

Through our sustainability projects and strategic partnerships, Ben's Original™ is contributing to farming techniques that produce higher crop yields using less water — allowing farmers to meet a growing global demand for rice while increasing their families' incomes.

To learn more about our sustainability initiatives, visit [bensoriginal.com/sustainability](https://www.bensoriginal.com/sustainability).

To learn more about the Sustainable Rice Platform and the organization's mission, practices and governance, visit [sustainable-rice.org](https://sustainable-rice.org).

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