

MicroGrants

Partnering With People of Potential



MicroGrants.net

December 2015

Black Prosperity Matters

Don Samuels, COO MicroGrants

“**Black Lives Matter**” is the dominant new cry for fair treatment in policing. Reports consistently show great inequities in police brutality, academic outcomes, home ownership, imprisonment, employment and income for African Americans. In this repeated litany of gaps, it is heartening to consider that MicroGrants has been hard at work -- for a decade -- providing financial help to the very communities that need it most.



Joe Selvaggio and I have always lived among the people most affected by inequities. Today, our work at MicroGrants demonstrates that we have recognized and addressed these gaps with surgical precision and transformative outcomes. That is why 65% of our grantees are black. We know that the sustainable solution is not a hand out but a hand up, through transformational investments in the poor. Grants are never awarded for living expenses but always for work-related costs to people who are ready for change.

At MicroGrants, Black Prosperity Matters!

Ten years and 350,000 grants later, our grantees have grown their businesses and hired additional people of color. One year after their grants, 95% are still in their jobs, and 85% of the recipients of transportation grants are still using their cars to get to work.

The average person might experience frustration when they hear of our persistent gaps and the protests they inspire. But MicroGrants donors know that they are investing in the most precise, efficient and effective solution. We give out 84% of our budget in cash grants.

That is why I am asking you to help us meet our 2015 goal. Our Give to the Max campaign was enormously successful. Thanks to all who donated \$75,000 matching dollars and those who pledged, we met our goal, raising \$152,000. But we are still \$100,000 short on our plans to help 550 people-of-potential fulfill their career dreams in 2015. In this season of giving, please give where it matters most: in the sectors of our economy where participation is sorely lacking. MicroGrants Matters.

Enclosed is an envelope for your convenience. If you prefer to donate through our website, you can use our secure Pay Pal. Feel free to call, I am available anytime,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Samuels'.

'Redistribution of wealth'? I call that 'sharing'

By Joe Selvaggio

NOVEMBER 23, 2015 — 6:14PM

This Thanksgiving, let's sit down to the table and remember what community is all about.

Thanksgiving Day in our nation remains sacred because it is about the universally accepted idea of sharing across lines of culture and race and income level.

Our original image, myth or not, is of indigenous people and Europeans sharing their gifts and bounty.

A second prevailing image is that of the Norman Rockwell painting with an extended and prosperous American family sharing the turkey in joy and harmony.

So I wonder why this universally accepted ideal of sharing seems to draw a more negative reaction in our political world. My Republican friends warn me that I should never use the term "redistribution of wealth." It has a bad reputation. Jon Stewart used to quip something to the effect: If I listened to my conservative friends I would have to tell my kindergarten boy not to share his crayons with kids who don't have crayons. That would make them lazy.

To be fair, I'd say that we often undervalue what such conservatives are saying. There is a danger in having the government spend money we don't have. We must recognize that there is a point when government spending means we will have to tax the citizens too much and they have a legitimate right to protest. Individual initiative will be stifled when too much of our earned income goes to taxes.



"Freedom From Want" is Norman Rockwell's iconic painting of Thanksgiving dinner. (Star Tribune File Photo - reprinted by permission of the Star Tribune)



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COMMENTARY - STAR TRIBUNE - NOVEMBER 23, 2015

While presidential candidate Bernie Sanders declares himself a socialist, I think he should say that he is first a capitalist. Capitalism means that individuals should have the right to own stuff and keep most of the income they earn from their work. Without self-interest, and even, at times, excessive self-interest (greed), we would not create the wealth needed to feed, house, entertain and defend ourselves. But after the wealth is created, we need a responsible government to “redistribute” it — or share it — with those who are not able to earn enough money for themselves. All governments do this to some extent. Why deny it?

The richest one percent of the world will soon own more than half of the world’s wealth, according to a recent Oxfam study. The rich have gone from owning 44 percent of the world’s wealth in 2009 to 48 percent last year. If this continues as projected, they would own more than 50 percent of total global wealth by the end of this year.

Economists argue whether such concentrations of income and wealth are sustainable over time. But studies by the Congressional Budget Office, the Census Bureau and Pew Research Center highlight emerging problems. For instance, Pew researchers found that after the recovery from the Great Recession started, mean household net worth for the upper 7 percent rose 28 percent between 2009 and 2011, while mean net worth for the bottom 93 percent actually fell by 4 percent.

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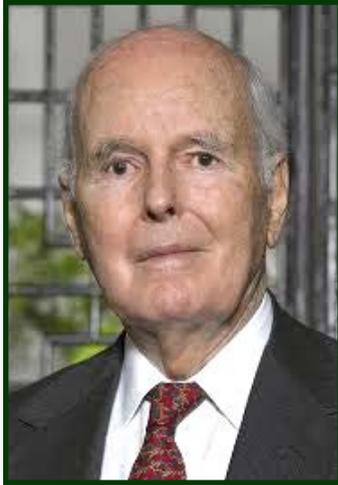
Can you imagine how much worse inequality would be if governments were not busy redistributing the wealth citizens have made by their personal initiative? From parks in poor neighborhoods to universal education to roads for everyone to safety nets for housing, income, and health, we need redistribution from the wealthy to the poor and middle class. Without that redistribution, some segments of society would become so dysfunctional that income disparity would become dangerous to peace and civil tranquility.

We should push “empowerment” programs over “entitlement” programs. People need to work to increase their wealth. But let’s be reasonable. Maybe this Thanksgiving we can take a lesson from our families and apply it to our communities at large.

We don’t help our family members by doing for them what they can do for themselves. Likewise, we don’t help citizens by doing for them what they can do themselves to produce goods and services and create wealth. But on Thanksgiving Day, we should also remember the timeless mythical image. Some brought turkeys and ducks. Others brought cranberries and vegetables. Others made pies. What we celebrate and affirm this week is the pooling and redistribution of the wealth.

- Joe Selvaggio is CEO of MicroGrants





Bruce Bliss Dayton

The world has lost one of the greatest philanthropists of all time, Bruce Dayton. In addition to all his multi-million dollar donations, Bruce took time to contribute to MicroGrants twice each year since our inception. Thank you, Bruce. You will be missed by many.

Bruce Bliss Dayton, 97, businessman, philanthropist, and community leader, died peacefully on November 13, 2015, at his home in Long Lake, MN surrounded by his loving family.



Partnering With People of Potential
1035 E Franklin Ave
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Our Mission: To spur economic self-sufficiency by giving strategic grants to low-income people of potential through Partner Agencies.

MicroGrants.net 612-200-8174

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SAVE THE DATE

MicroGrants' 10-Year Anniversary Celebration

10 years!

Wednesday, May 18, 2016
6:30 - 9:30 pm
The Minneapolis Club



An exciting 'talk show' format featuring former Mayor George Latimer interviewing special guests Judson Dayton, Sondra Samuels of NAZ, Peter Heegaard, MG board member Mitch Pearlstein, and our own Don Samuels along with Joe Selvaggio. Our customary great music, delicious food and lively personalities will dominate the evening.



On December 6th, MicroGrants donor Asam Aal and Joe took time to go to the Governor's mansion to welcome new immigrants to America.

