

# The True Measure of Greatness

By Daria Haynie

What makes America great? There are as many answers to this question as there are people. One could say that it is America's military might, or her enormous land mass. Somebody else could say, her bounty of natural resources. All of these replies may be correct, but I believe that what makes America great, is her people.

Veterans have risked their lives to protect domestic and international tranquility. They have selflessly spent years, often away from their families, to ensure that we can enjoy peace and go about our lives without fear. Humbly they have served our country, without any expectation of recognition.

First responders enter dangerous situations in order to save lives. They extinguish raging fires, pull injured people from car wreckage, and keep neighborhoods safe. They work hard, long hours, putting others' needs above theirs.

Our teachers dedicate their lives to educating the young. Not only do they teach math and writing, but they also help kids build character. Educators prepare kids for adulthood by teaching them important life-lessons.

Farmers are also indispensable to the strength of America. Rain or shine, they rise early to tend to livestock and crops. They work hard to feed the country, despite droughts and floods that mother nature throws at them.

Our economy would not grow without the labor of factory workers who manufacture everything from toys to airplanes. American factory workers are team-players and problem-solvers who produce quality products. They perform demanding tasks so that there is no shortage of consumer goods in this country.

Immigrants also contribute to America's strength by developing STEM fields and starting businesses. They enrich our society by introducing new positive ideas and customs. The cultures they bring expand our world and broaden our horizons.

Last but not least are American mothers, particularly single mothers like mine, who juggle multiple responsibilities to raise families. They model for their children virtues of responsibility, hard work, and fairness. Mothers do their best to nurture America's young to become good citizens of the country.

As you can see, our country's greatest riches are not material. What makes America great is her exceptional people, who come from diverse backgrounds but work for the common good. They all love their land and believe in her. They will stand by her through thick and thin.

Tied for 2nd Place at the Pella VFW