



Society of St. Andrew
GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

2023 Impact Report

Alabama Gleaning Network



Living our Mission

The Society of St. Andrew's mission is to bring people together to harvest and share healthy food, reduce food waste, and build caring communities by offering nourishment to hungry neighbors.

The Alabama Gleaning Network (AGN) continues its work seeking and rescuing fresh produce in order to alleviate community health and hunger issues while also helping to reduce the environmental impacts of food waste. Our fundamental premise is that all the food necessary to meet the nutritional needs of all people in the U.S. is available but only partially utilized. Each year, 40% of U.S.-grown fruits and vegetables are never eaten.

Food loss occurs across the supply chain, from farm to fork, and about 58% of produce loss occurs before consumers even catch a glimpse of it. In fact over 9.1 billion pounds of produce loss occurs "upstream" during agricultural production, harvest, postharvest, processing, and packaging. This includes crops that are not harvested because the buyer fell through or the market price is too low to make harvest worthwhile, as well as produce that is graded out at the time of harvest or packing due to cosmetic grading standards.

In 2023, the AGN reduced the environmental harm equivalent to taking
443 vehicles
off of the roads for 1 year.

According to the EPA, every ton of produce left to rot emits as much greenhouse gases in its decomposition as the annual emissions from 2.25 passenger cars, and 82% of those greenhouse gases are emitted in transit to landfills from farms and retailers.

Last year the AGN reduced the environmental harm equivalent to taking more than 443 vehicles off the road for a year, as fresh produce was rescued and eaten, not left to rot.

The AGN connects the dots between available fresh produce from farms, orchards, or distribution centers with volunteers and feeding agencies to distribute to hungry individuals across our state. Alabama farmers are extremely generous and hate to see good food go to waste. However, harvesting, packaging, and transporting a crop that will not generate income just doesn't make financial sense. The AGN provides farmers a mutually beneficial means of moving unmarketable food out of their way, making it easier for them to donate excess than to till it under or dump it in landfills- both of which cost them money (and emissions) in fuel and labor.

We utilize volunteer gleaners to harvest donated crops by whatever means is best for the farmer. AGN staff lead and train volunteers in farm and food safety, and the fresh fruits and vegetables are taken to nonprofit feeding agencies nearby.

Measuring Impact

2023

In 2023, over 1,148 individuals, farmers, agencies, and organizations donated their time, energy, or financial resources to The Society of St. Andrew's Alabama Gleaning Network to assist in its produce rescue and distribution program, which puts fresh fruits and vegetables on the tables of our hungry neighbors across Alabama. This food could have gone to waste in landfills or rotted in fields without volunteers generously donating their time to gleaning, packing, and transporting it to local feeding agencies.



1,586,980
Servings

704

gleaning events

84

food donors

766

dedicated
volunteers

>198

tons prevented
from waste

396,745

pounds of
nutritious food

117

receiving
agencies

1,148

contributing
partners

~158,700

individuals
served

Serving Neighbors

Hope by the Pound

148,233

Pounds from Farm Pickups

Sometimes, a crop may be harvested and packed in bulk in a farmer's commercial cooler awaiting transport to a packinghouse. If a buyer falls through, farmers may need to quickly move this food to make space for the next crop. SoSA staff are on-call to handle the logistics of bulk pickup, transport, any repackaging necessary, and distribution to feeding agencies nearby.

22,526

from Farmers' Markets

Many farmers travel miles to sell their foods at farmers' markets across the state. Unsold items may not have a long enough shelf life to warrant transport and storage after a market. SoSA staff train volunteer gleaners to gather leftover produce from farmers as the markets close. This food is taken immediately to feeding agencies nearby and is often served that same evening.

15,365

from Gleaning in Fields

One major area of food waste in America is in farmers' fields, where growers may have an overabundance of a particular crop or produce that is unmarketable due to cosmetic standards. Gleaning is the gathering of crops that may otherwise be left in the fields to rot or be plowed under after harvest. Gleaning involves picking, digging, or gathering crops left behind during the season and after commercial harvest. SoSA staff train volunteers on farm and food safety and work with farmers to open their fields to volunteer gleaners.

165,712

from Salvaged Loads & Crop Drops

Often fresh produce is refused by food distributors, restaurants, or processing facilities due to cosmetic standards, or a warehouse will have an excess they cannot sell quickly enough. Truck drivers must either dump the food at landfills to empty the trailer or find a place to drop it off. Rather than waste the load, we redirect this food to the closest hunger-relief agency or centrally located parking lot where we can offload and have many agencies gather to pick it up.

Counting Blessings

1,586,980 Servings

161,487

pounds of
fruit

209,693

pounds of
vegetables

1,389

pounds of
herbs

24,176

pounds of “other”
(baked goods, eggs,
canned items, etc.)

but wait, there's more...

Sowing Love Seed Project

44,909 pounds from seed yields

In 1989, the Society of St. Andrew began the Seed Potato Project (now The Seed Project) as a self-help program for Appalachian family farms. The program has since been expanded to include seeds for other produce and extends into multiple regions, including Alabama.

The Seed Project focuses specifically on food desert areas, community gardens, inner city gardens, small family farms, church gardens, and high-need school gardens in rural communities. Seed recipients prepare the fields, plant the seed potatoes, cultivate the crop, and harvest the produce.

The Seed Project offers a “hand up” to families and communities, as children, youth, adults, and seniors grow food to feed themselves and share with their neighbors in need and extended families. It is truly a cooperative effort to feed people in need through this innovative self-help program.

The Seed Project’s success is built on a partnership with Seed Programs International, a North Carolina-based nonprofit that has spent decades developing hardy seeds for domestic and international hunger relief programs. This past year, other large retailers have donated additional seed packets to the Alabama Gleaning Network for distribution throughout our state.

In the spring, the AGN delivered some of the seeds to a nonprofit, inner-city preschool so they could start a school garden. The children planted, tended, and harvested the fruits of their labor over the summer. Watermelons were ready just in time for Labor Day weekend. One little girl squealed as she held her watermelon, so excited to take it home to her family. Her teachers had cleaned and cut another one for the class that day. They said this was her (and many other students’) first time tasting a FRESH melon!

2,730
Seed Packs
Distributed

32
types of
vegetables

10
types of fruit

12
types of herbs

Growing our Team

Two full-time staff work to bring gleaned food to hungry Alabamians. Elizabeth Wix is the Alabama Regional Director managing fundraising and outreach, and Adrienne Standridge is the Alabama Program Coordinator managing farmer and volunteer relationships.

Recently the Alabama Gleaning Network expanded its reach by adding two part-time area gleaning coordinators to recruit and support farmers in under-resourced parts of the state. In September 2022, Lesley Weiss was hired as the East AL Area Gleaning Coordinator, and in March 2023, Melissa Julia began her role as the Northeastern AL Area Gleaning Coordinator. Both have extensive experience working at farms and nonprofit agencies, and both will be joining us again in 2024.



Lesley, Adrienne, Elizabeth, & Melissa

COUNTIES	SOSA STAFF	CONTACT
All counties not listed below.	Adrienne Standridge Program Coordinator	205-245-3214 al-glean@endhunger.org
Barbour, Bullock, Chambers, Elmore, Lee, Macon, Pike, Randolph, Russell, Tallapoosa	Lesley Lowe Weiss East AL Gleaning Coordinator	334-497-0781 eastal@endhunger.org
Calhoun, Cherokee, Cleburne, DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, Marshall, Morgan	Melissa Julia Northeast AL Gleaning Coordinator	303-875-5008 northeastal@endhunger.org

Joining the Mission

The Society of St. Andrew partners with congregations, faith groups, and churches from all backgrounds in a collaborative effort to end hunger by feeding our neighbors in need from the abundance we are provided. The Alabama Gleaning Network would like to thank the following congregations for supporting our mission in 2023. By volunteering, raising funds, raising awareness, distributing food, hosting Crop Drops, and bringing people together, your support provides health and hope for those who need it most. We thank you and look forward to continuing our partnership in the fight to end hunger across Alabama. THANK YOU!

Acmar UMC	Gulf Shores UMC
Aldersgate UMC	Headland UMC
Asbury UMC	Homewood Cumberland Presbyterian
Barrett Road UMC	Huffman UMC
Carrollton UMC	Lowe's Chapel UMC
Center Hill Methodist Church	Mt. Nebo Church
Centre First UMC	Northport Methodist Church
Daviston Independent Methodist	Oldfield Methodist Church
Eclectic UMC	Pleasant Grove UMC
Elmore Center UMC	Smoke Rise Methodist Church
Faith Presbyterian Church	St. Mark UMC
Fayette First Methodist Church	St. Paul UMC
First Methodist Church of Hueytown	Union Chapel UMC
First UMC in Anniston	Union Grove UMC
First UMC in Decatur	Wesley Chapel UMC
First UMC in Montgomery	West End Methodist
First UMC in Pell City	Wilson Chapel UMC
Forest Lake UMC	Wilsonville UMC
Grace Christian Church	Woodstock UMC
Greens Chapel Church	

Thanking Partners

The Alabama Gleaning Network would like to thank the following organizations and foundations. Your continued support has a tremendous impact, leaving a broad and meaningful footprint across every part of Alabama, engaging persons of all ages in service to others, reducing food waste, and addressing critical human needs. We thank you and look forward to continuing our partnership in the fight to end hunger across Alabama. THANK YOU!



DAVISON BRUCE
FOUNDATION



The Daniel
Foundation

STRENGTHENING ALABAMA



Alabama Power
Foundation

ALPHA FOUNDATION, INC.

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA 35804



Hill Crest
Foundation, Inc.



**We thank you for
your ongoing support
of our program.**



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