

Society of St. Andrew REPORT

Volume 22

Number 2

Spring 2006

GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS ~ FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY



New faces. New places.

Relatively new places, anyway. We refer to the Society of St. Andrew's newest regional office in Mississippi, which was opened in December and reported in the last issue of this newsletter. Then in January we set up a Hunger Relief Advocate operation in Oklahoma, another new place for SoSA. The new part time HRA, George Cockrum, is charged with establishing a gleaning network throughout the state to feed the hungry there.

SoSA's Florida regional office has undergone a complete turnover with the recent retirement of director Dick Mead and the resignation for health reasons of program coordinator Kathy Forth. We thank both Dick and Kathy for their years of dedicated service to feeding

Florida's hungry families and we wish them well.

New faces in Florida and Mississippi

The Florida operation is now under the direction of Barbara Sayles, who is originally from Texas where she learned to glean as a small child with her father so they could have nutritious food during the lean winter months. Barbara has served the Presbyterian Church, USA in Christian Education and Youth ministries for 13 years. She has led mission trips to Peru, Mexico, Romania, as well as in the U.S., and has witnessed first hand the injustice of poverty and hunger. For the past three years she has led groups in gleaning cabbage and citrus with SoSA. "I believe it's because of this connection that God led me to this position with SoSA," she said, "and I feel that with my contacts in the Presbyterian Church, USA we can continue to share in the mission of feeding the hungry."

Nicole Eastwood is Florida's new Program Coordinator. She has seven years experience in Youth and Outdoor Ministry coordinating service projects and mission trips. A lifelong Floridian, she said, "I am excited about helping to eradicate hunger in my state and taking SoSA's mission to organizations and growers around Florida."

The Mississippi office is now fully staffed with the addition of Program Coordinator Jessica Burks, a native of Mississippi. "I am very excited about the opportunity I have to work with SoSA. I feel that for the first time I am working for an organization that is doing what God has asked of me. We will make a huge difference to the people of Mississippi by what we are doing to help end hunger here and throughout this country." □



Barbara Sayles
Regional Director
SoSA-Florida



Nicole Eastwood
Program Coordinator
SoSA-Florida



Jessica Burks
Program Coordinator
SoSA-Mississippi

From the Sheep Shed

By KEN HORNE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



February of 2006 was a momentous month for Society of St. Andrew. By the end of that month we had marked the delivery of our five hundred millionth pound of produce! That means that since the beginning of our ministry we have provided one and one half BILLION servings of vegetables to the poor of our country! This is no small accomplishment! I want to thank all of you who helped us reach this milestone by supporting our work.

Our food is salvaged and delivered due to the support of a small army of financial donors, produce growers, and volunteers. Without your consistent support and tireless efforts we wouldn't have achieved this or any other goal.

Our food is distributed to the poor of this country by another small army of food bankers, soup kitchen and food pantry operators, social service people and faith based ministries from our great inner cities to impoverished rural areas and Native American reservations across the country. Without your consistent dedication to serving the poor our food would never reach them.

All of this is created and sustained by the smallest of all the armies – the Society of St. Andrew staff. Our staff (including part time and full time employees) numbers less than sixty-five people. Each year SoSA staffers in 23 states solicit donations of millions of pounds of produce, coordinate thousands of gleaning events involving over forty thousand volunteers, arrange for this produce to be delivered in hundreds of tractor trailer trucks and thousands of smaller vehicles, all the while raising over two million dollars each year from thousands of donors all across the nation. I can't think of any other organization that can boast this kind of dedication and efficiency.

Passing this milestone is very humbling for me. It generally happens that when a significant milestone is reached, the Executive Director gets most of the accolades. In this case I hope you will see clearly that the accolades should go to our supporters, our distributors, and most of all to our magnificent staff. Thank you all on behalf of the millions of hungry people you have fed over the years, and on behalf of those you will feed in the future. □

SoSA Statistics At A Glance January-March 2006

Fresh food salvaged and donated to feed the hungry:

➤ Potato Project	3,020,000 lbs.
➤ Gleaned Produce	4,413,165 lbs.
➤ Events	300
➤ Volunteers	5,331
➤ Total Pounds	7,433,165
➤ Total Servings	22,299,495

Here are just a few of the stories about Society of St. Andrew activities across the country!

Legacy of caring - SoSA-Alabama will host its first Celebration Luncheon to honor our volunteers, farmers and donors on April 23 at Jasper First United Methodist Church. Pat Ferrell will present a plaque in her husband Jim's memory to recognize the efforts of one of our many partners in ministry. Jim was a tremendous SoSA-AL volunteer and we're thrilled his church family wants to be certain volunteer efforts continue in his name ... Gleaning in AL is getting a boost since Teresa Cole of Montgomery became the Area Coordinator for central AL.

Backyard Bounty in Florida - 2 days of backyard gleaning by over 600 volunteers yielded 48,000 lbs. of citrus that went to local food banks and 96,000 lbs. delivered to agencies in VA and MS. Many FL residents have citrus trees that provide a bounty of fruit. This project, now in its 11th year, gives them an opportunity to share their excess with the hungry.

Roots & Shoots in orange groves - The "Roots & Shoots" program, founded by Dr. Jane Goodall, inspires youth and their families to make a difference in their communities. Each Roots

& Shoots group plans and implements service-learning projects that promote care and concern for animals, the environment, and the human community. Roots & Shoots families recently gleaned 3,500 lbs. of Valencia Oranges in Naples, FL, then each family delivered the citrus to 2 or 3 agencies for the hungry. This was a unique opportunity for SoSA to partner with families as they reach out to the larger community.

New Mississippi gleaning network off to a great start - The SoSA-MS staff is finding that Mississippians are very concerned about their hungry neighbors. They are helping to establish volunteer groups in many communities and a number of growers in north and south MS have already joined the SoSA network with the hope of many more since 2,500 SoSA brochures were distributed, at no cost, to farmers statewide...College students from around the state had their first Potato Drop experience and want to do more in the future! In fact, the Wesley Foundation at Mississippi State will soon host a Potato Drop with participation from campus fraternities and church organizations, demonstrating how SoSA can coordinate local growers, volunteers and feeding agencies into an efficient and fun way to prevent waste and feed hungry families.

The three-legged stool - SoSA's work is often referred to as a three-legged stool - the legs being produce donors, volunteers to gather and deliver food, and those who need the food. Recently SoSA-NC celebrated the work of all three legs with gatherings in western and eastern NC. Some of the volunteers present at the gathering at First United Methodist Church in Charlotte have been gleaning for more than 10 years, including 90-year-old Mr. Willie Green. Willie is a community leader in the Druid Hills community of Charlotte and over the last 10 years he has seen to the distribution of 70,000 lbs. of gleaned produce to families there. Willie has taken this work a step farther by organizing community members to glean for their own households and for others. At the celebration held at Duke Memorial United Methodist Church in Durham, Cookie Coppedge was representative of the many faithful people who respond to the need in their own backyard. Cookie has responded to the need in central Durham through the feeding ministry of Walk In The Light Church, which, over the last decade, has servings of fresh produce on tables of people in need.

Rain finally falling on Texas - Rainfall across Texas early this year has been

near normal, though often coming in flooding torrents. But still, drought conditions of 2005 have eased, giving farmers hope for good crops this year with excess for the hungry and giving Texans statewide expectations of replenished lakes and aquifers...Hungry families in Dallas, Galveston, Jasper, Pear Land, McAllen and Midland reaped the benefit of 5 1/2 tractor-trailer loads of shelf-stable milk, soup and nutritional bars (from the USDA nonfat dry milk product exchange program). In this season of limited TX produce harvests, these nutritious packaged foods were welcome indeed...Citrus crops in the Rio Grande Valley were magnificent. A tractor-trailer load donated by Heald's Farms, something that has become an annual tradition, was shipped to Austin. Bramel Trucking donated the shipping this year.

Sometimes it's easy being green - Early gleaning of turnips, collard and mustard greens, and sweet potatoes has gotten the VA Gleaning Network off to a good start. Cold storage apples, 417 dozen 'organic' eggs, and 7 truck loads of shelf-stable food products have helped fill the need left by a scarcity of food available to VA agencies. When several dozen of the eggs were taken to a food pantry in her area, Betty Heishman, area Gleaning Coordinator, reports that the person in charge actually cried saying, "We need food so badly!" Another agency reported that their weekly delivery from the food bank contained only toilet paper! The need is great and your help is greatly needed so that our hungry neighbors may be fed and nourished.

Moving right along - HRAs in North Indiana and Northern Illinois report they are "on their way to another record-setting pace," with lots of activity finding and distributing food to the hungry! □

Bottom L. to R.: Kids with a FL Roots & Shoots program (parents and children working together to make a difference) move a wagon-load of oranges. "Root" mom climbs ladder to glean the freshest fruit. Littlest "shoot" just barely makes it into the group photo. College students from various Wesley Foundations around MS unload soup at SoSA-MS's first big event and (above) they show off the SoSA colors! VA volunteers unload pudding from the USDA nonfat dry milk product exchange program at a distribution agency. **Center L. to R.:** "Shoot" balances on a bucket to get a juicy orange, while others load buckets with gleaned

citrus and "root" dad loads bags. NC teens gather greens. **Top L. to R.:** Nutritional bars, part of the USDA exchange program, are delivered to a Raleigh, NC feeding agency.



HOH gets new director

Lauren Holcomb has been named *Harvest of Hope* Director, replacing Shawn Kiger, who held the position for the past five-and-half years. Shawn resigned to become the Children, Youth, and Young Adult Minister at Lane Memorial United Methodist Church in Altavista, VA. The entire SoSA staff wishes him much success in this new ministry.

"I'm excited to be on board as the program's new director," said Lauren. "My first HOH event was in 1997 with my home church, First Presbyterian in Roanoke, VA. Since then, I've participated in many HOH events, served as HOH summer intern in 2001, and during my college years was active with the *Gleaning Network*," she continued. "I worked in Boston until last December, and although I enjoyed living there, something was always missing. I had faith that God had a plan for me but was frustrated that I couldn't figure out what it was. Finally realizing that volunteering, fellowship, and connection to others who care was what was missing, I decided that, whatever I ended up doing, I wanted to have time in the summer to become involved again with *Harvest of Hope*."

"Just when I resolved to look for a new job," explained Lauren, "Shawn Kiger emailed me about his plans and the HOH opportunity. It amazes me that the God of all ages has His timing down so perfectly! I'd say the lesson in all of this is to relax and wait upon the Lord."

"But now that He *has* acted, there is no time for relaxation: we've got potatoes to pick!" Lauren exclaimed. "We're geared up for another great season of *Harvest of Hope* and I very much look forward to meeting many of you this summer!"

There are 12 events lined up for this season and three in July are already full - the Eastern Shore and Ashland, VA week-long events, and the John's Island, SC intergenerational weekend. "We hope to top last year's record of 258,367 pounds of food gleaned," said Lauren, "so hurry and sign up for one of these life-changing mission retreats."

Schedule and applications are available online at www.endhunger.org, click on "Harvest of Hope." For more information call 800-333-4597 or email sosahoh@endhunger.org. □

SoSA's Ken Bradford (left) presents the 2005 "Bud the Spud" Award to Bob Imboden, President of the West Ohio Conference United Methodist Men at the March meeting of the National Association of Conference Presidents. The "Bud the Spud" Award honors the legacy of Nelson "Bud the Spud" Curtis, a great champion of United Methodist Men support for SoSA, by recognizing the UMMen of the Annual Conference that demonstrates excellence in *Meals for Millions* growth over the previous year.



Lauren Holcomb
Harvest of Hope Director



Win some. Lose some.

Even so, millions are fed with good, nutritious food!

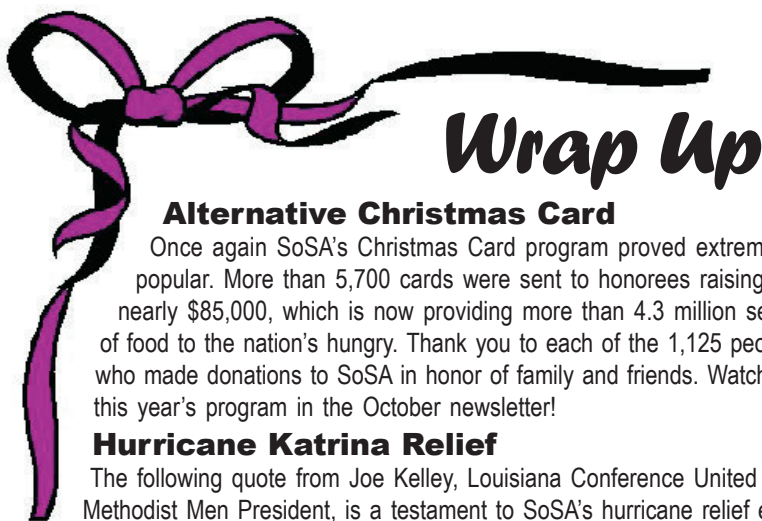
By MARIAN KELLY, POTATO PROJECT DIRECTOR

The first quarter of 2006 was busy for the *Potato Project*, with deliveries of many tractor-trailer loads of donated juice, potatoes, citrus, soups, pudding, nutritional bars, shelf-stable milk, and seed potatoes totaling well over 2.1 million pounds. That's the "win some."

Due to limited product availability and market demand, we "lost some," too. Growers have been able to sell loads of white and sweet potatoes that ordinarily they would have donated to SoSA. This meant that some scheduled Potato Drops had to be cancelled, with the likelihood of more cancellations in coming months. But take heart, a new growing season is under way.

Our nutritious offerings of food were delivered into Ohio, North and South Dakota, Illinois, West Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Montana, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, Rhode Island, Indiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Kentucky and Washington, D.C. A lot of territory was covered and a lot of folks were fed!

The Seed Potato Project is always exciting to us. This year we distributed about 500,000 pounds of seed potatoes that were given to folks in impoverished communities who have gardens to grow their own food. Join us in praying for warm days and soft rains to help these crops grow and yield an estimated four million pounds of nutritious potatoes that will feed those in need next fall and winter. □



Alternative Christmas Card

Once again SoSA's Christmas Card program proved extremely popular. More than 5,700 cards were sent to honorees raising nearly \$85,000, which is now providing more than 4.3 million servings of food to the nation's hungry. Thank you to each of the 1,125 people who made donations to SoSA in honor of family and friends. Watch for this year's program in the October newsletter!

Hurricane Katrina Relief

The following quote from Joe Kelley, Louisiana Conference United Methodist Men President, is a testament to SoSA's hurricane relief efforts along the Gulf Coast: **"People all along the Gulf Coast know the name of the Society of St. Andrew. They (SoSA) quietly delivered a huge amount of much needed food without seeking publicity, and the people who received the food really appreciated that."** SoSA has so far delivered nearly 715,000 pounds of food to areas damaged by the hurricanes and to where evacuees have been relocated.

USDA Nonfat Dry Milk Product Exchange

From January through March, SoSA delivered 68 tractor-trailer loads of shelf-stable soups, puddings, milk and nutritional bars to agencies caring for the needy in 15 states and the District of Columbia. The result is that 2.64 million pounds of much-needed food is now available for the tables of those who need it most. This was a win-win situation because all the food AND all the shipping were donated in this USDA program of exchange of surplus government stocks of nonfat dry milk for shelf-stable food products given to faith-based and community organizations, including SoSA. □

VOLUNTEERS

SoSA has tens of thousands of volunteers all over the country. Whether they give one hour or a hundred, every volunteer is extremely important ... and necessary ... to this ministry. Here we recognize just a few who make it all possible.

Phil Toeckle / ILLINOIS

Phil is manager at Avante LLC, a publishing company in Villa Park. Avante has donated the use of their loading dock and forklift for some 20 tractor-trailer loads of juice, soup and milk over the past six months. Phil and his co-workers have made it possible for SoSA to receive loads on just a couple hours notice, no matter what day of the week, from 6am to 7pm. It's not unusual to see volunteers for distributing the food waiting in the parking lot three hours before a load arrives. 40,000 plus pounds are usually unloaded and moved out in less than an hour! Phil and his children have also volunteered at SoSA Potato Drops. What a guy!



David Matustik / TEXAS

David has given of his time once again this year to coordinate the grapefruit drop at Oak Hill United Methodist Church in Austin. It was David's interest in gleaning that spurred his investigation into SoSA in late 2003. A couple of months later he was coordinating Oak Hill UMC's first citrus drop experience. All three years have been a wonderful success with super volunteer participation on cold and/or wet February mornings. Thanks to Oak Hill UMC for their time and commitment and special thanks to David for his desire to make Austin a better place!

Chuck Wheeler / NORTH CAROLINA

On March 8th SoSA's Charlotte (NC) Gleaning Network lost one of its most dedicated and loved volunteers. Chuck Wheeler, a longtime member of Wingate UMC in Wingate, NC, gleaned and distributed food for over 12 years, despite challenging health issues the last few years. Even when he was no longer able to pick or lift, Chuck sat on a bucket carefully bagging the gleaned produce, making sure he had the right amount for every individual on his delivery route. Never content just to drop the food off, Chuck always delivered door-to-door – well over 100,000 lbs. of food to seniors at a low-income housing unit. Chuck's family requested memorial donations be made to SoSA, for which we are most honored. His widow, Doris, said she was deeply touched when a \$135 donation came in a sympathy card. It had been collected and given by the low-income seniors to whom he so faithfully delivered much-needed food. She also reported that news coverage of Chuck's passing and subsequent publicity SoSA received generated a first time donation of Roma tomatoes by a grower. She told us that at his funeral, Chuck wore the SoSA penny pin he got at the volunteers banquet. "We do plan to continue gleaning with the same fervor – it not increased fervor – to show our love for dear Chuck," she said. Rest in peace, faithful friend. □





VBS kids can be heroes in fighting hunger!

Kids are always excited by heroes. The Society of St. Andrew's 2006 Vacation Bible School Mission Project, "Heroes Fighting Hunger," gives them the opportunity to be true heroes, themselves. Through daily, biblically-based story and activity sheets for younger and older ages, children learn about hunger while they provide food to the hungry through donations of their nickels and dimes.

The "Heroes Fighting Hunger" mission project not only coordinates nicely with Cokesbury's 2006 VBS package, but it can easily be adapted to any VBS theme.

Last year 189 churches of all sizes used SoSA's VBS mission project with great enthusiasm and success. Together, participating children raised enough money to provide nearly 750,000 pounds of fresh produce to feed hungry children and adults through SoSA's hunger-relief ministry. Here's what some of the VBS leaders said:

"... the story of the fishes and loaves taught me a great lesson at our VBS. We had a small group of 20 children. The first day they brought in \$16. That was great. The second day God's miracle began to show. We reached \$48. Then it was as though these children couldn't give enough! On the last day it ballooned to \$132.26. The Lord was truly at work. What a glorious example of the fishes and the loaves." Dover, AR

"The last evening a four-year-old girl brought in a full plastic bag - \$14.40 - she could hardly lift it. Her mother said she told her she wanted to give 'all the pennies in the house.'" Portsmouth, VA

"We haven't had VBS for several years but God put it on my heart that we should have one this year. We did! Your free materials gave us enough to build on to have a successful one day school." Eufaula, AL

"When our VBS kids reached the goal of \$50 by mid-week I told them, 'I know we can double this amount.' On Friday we needed \$23 to make \$100. The offering that day was \$23! We adults could take a lesson from the children on cheerfulness in giving to the Lord." Perrysville, IN

"We split our group of 40 children into four groups and made a little competition out of it. At the end of each day we announced not the money but the pounds of food each group raised. They really got a kick out of that and I think it made it more real for them when thinking about feeding the hungry." Marshall, IL

All materials for "Heroes Fighting Hunger" are free. Order a free sample kit today. There is no obligation. Call Susan Allen at the Society of St. Andrew, 800-333-4597, email sosachurch@endhunger.org, or fax your request to 434-299-5949. □

Rise to the Challenge

The Finest Challenge. Each year Alan Shawn Feinstein of Rhode Island divides \$1 million among participating hunger fighting charities nationwide, using it to help them raise funds during March and April. Last year SoSA got \$23,677!

The more money donated to SoSA from March 1 thru April 30, the larger a share of the \$1 million we will receive. The million will be divided proportionately among all participating agencies, exponentially increasing each donors gift! So now is the time to be as generous as possible to help stop food waste and feed the hungry! □



National Hunger Awareness Day is the grassroots movement to raise awareness about the solvable problem of hunger in America.

Tuesday, June 6, 2006 will mark the fifth year of observing this movement. Hunger organizations all across the nation will conduct activities in local communities to bring attention to the hunger issue.

SoSA, a co-sponsor of National Hunger Awareness Day, will host dozens of gleaning events and engage thousands of local volunteers to save and distribute fresh produce to thousands of feeding agencies nationwide.

For more information and ideas on what you can do on June 6, visit www.hungerday.org. □

38 million Americans aren't sure from where they will get their next meal. Imagine not knowing how or where or when you will eat again!

It's the little things...

► Small Sunday school class learns they can make a difference!

The 3-11 member "Weavers" Sunday School Class at First United Methodist Church, Odessa, TX, ordered SoSA coin boxes for use during Advent. They used SoSA's "Hunger" Bible study, did the stone soup lesson and were surprised to add up \$163 from their spare change collection boxes. "We are so amazed at how many servings of food you can provide for such a small amount that we plan to give our entire congregation the opportunity to collect spare change and send it to your ministry. Thank you so much for the opportunities you offer for even a small group of busy and distracted individuals to make a difference!"

► Little children and pennies!

Rehoboth United Methodist Church in Wirtz, VA sent \$235.60, which was given by the children during Children's Sermon each Sunday. "This project is quite popular with the children here," they reported. Their donation will provide about 5,000 servings of food to the hungry.

► The lowly baked potato!

Volunteers in North Carolina delivered gleaned potatoes to an elderly couple living on a small, fixed income in a county with one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. At the door, they learned that the man was taking chemotherapy treatments and the only food he could keep down was baked potatoes! Yet another little miracle of service to others!

► Potato salad.

In the same North Carolina community, a rural church was re-packing potatoes into smaller bags for distribution to homes, removing the potatoes that would not keep for a week. The women of the church then used the culls to make potato salad, which was delivered to seniors they knew would not make potato salad – mostly widowers! □



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REPORT

Society of St. Andrew

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VBS kids can be heroes in fighting hunger!

Get SoSA's **free** VBS Mission Project for your Vacation Bible School. Through daily, biblically-based story and activity sheets for all ages, children learn about hunger and how Jesus wants them to

respond. They become heroes as they provide food to the hungry through donations of their nickels and dimes. All materials for "Heroes Fighting Hunger" are free. Order a sample kit today. There is no obligation. Use the coupon below; or call 800-333-4597; or email church@endhunger.org.

Please send me a FREE "Heroes Fighting Hunger" starter kit today!

Contact Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Church Name _____

Mail to: SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW
3383 SWEET HOLLOW RD, BIG ISLAND, VA 24526

(NL 4/06)

We serve God when we serve those in need

So many live in need without enough food to eat.

So many suffer the aftereffects of natural disasters.

So many of us have abundance well beyond our basic needs.

We are called to help the poor and hungry.

You can help bridge the hunger gap and feed America's hungry.

Make a generous donation today to the Society of St. Andrew.

"Choose this day whom you will serve." Joshua 24:15

"I was hungry and you gave me food." Matthew 25:35

Yes, I'll help Bridge the Hunger Gap. Here's my donation.

☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other \$ _____

(Make check payable to Society of St. Andrew)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Charge my: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ AmEx

Acct. # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Mail to: SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW
3383 SWEET HOLLOW RD, BIG ISLAND, VA 24526

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