

Society of St. Andrew REPORT

Volume 22

Number 4

Autumn 2006

GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS ~ FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY



Mississippi corn co-op coup

SoSA's Mississippi regional office was fortunate, during this its first year of operation, to make a strong connection with MSCP, a co-op of farmers growing some of the best sweet corn available. The co-op, located in the western part of the state and locally referred to as "Delta Harvest," gave SoSA-MS access to all its rejected crops. And we got 17 tractor trailer loads!



The farmers planted 1,500 acres with a specially developed hybrid sweet corn, timing the planting so corn could be continuously harvested and marketed from the end of June to August. "But if you want to make God laugh," said SoSA-MS regional director Bob Fritchey, "tell him *your* plan."

"Between drought conditions and one of Mississippi's hottest summers on record, the corn just started 'popping'. It was coming in faster than it could be shipped to market and truckloads of sugary-sweet corn were destined for the landfill," Fritchey reported. "Thanks to the wonderful, generous growers, hard working SoSA volunteers, and last-minute truckers who came through for us, SoSA was able to prevent that from happening."

Two years ago the corn co-op started with 500 acres and has plans for the future to double this year's operation. The hybrid variety they use was developed to grow a small corn plant that delivers an incredibly sweet ear of corn. But no matter how well engineered the corn plant is or how well planned the planting and harvesting are, mother nature, wholesale buyers, and consumers all play a part in a lot of sweet corn being rejected.

If a stand of corn doesn't produce an acceptable percentage of ears that are completely filled out to the end of the cob, the whole field is rejected! This is a huge waste but also a huge opportunity for SoSA to put volunteers into the fields to glean thousands of pounds of perfectly good sweet corn.

Once the corn is harvested, washed, packed in crates and cooled, it's ready for shipment to grocery stores. But, if there's a delay in shipping because of a truck shortage, a slowdown in the market, or an overabundance of harvested corn, the packaged corn may again be headed to the landfill. Without SoSA's ability to arrange for refrigerated shipping to feeding agencies all over the country, truck



From the Sheep Shed

By KEN HORNE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Increased productivity is a thing that all businesses, charities and ministries strive toward. It makes a lot of sense. After all, who among us wouldn't like to double our income without doubling our effort! Certainly not me and, I'll bet, not you, either.

Waste is a thing that all businesses, charities and ministries strive to minimize. That makes a lot of sense, too. Who among us wouldn't like the "stuff" we use every day to go twice as far, last twice as long and deliver twice as much before it's worn out?

Society of St. Andrew has built its ministry not only on feeding the hungry, but also on eliminating waste in the bargain. And because all the food we deliver to the hungry (over 22 million pounds so far this year!) would otherwise be wasted, we're *very* productive!

You who support our work in so many different ways can make SoSA even more productive if you will do one simple thing for me. Don't waste this newsletter! When most folks finish reading a newsletter they throw it in the trash. If they are especially conservation-minded, and it's convenient, some folks will recycle the newsletter.

I want to ask you to recycle this newsletter by giving it to a friend. You think a lot of the work we do together to feed the hungry or you wouldn't be reading this. Maybe a friend would, too. Or you might put it out at the entrance to your church or synagogue where someone can pick it up and read about the great work you're helping us accomplish. Or you could bring it to work and give it to a colleague, or leave it in the lunchroom or break area, or well, you get the idea.

Now, not everyone who reads your recycled newsletter will want to get involved with us, but I'm betting a lot will. If all of our friends and supporters would do this one simple thing we could dramatically increase our productivity without dramatically increasing our effort and cost. Isn't that what increased productivity is all about?

One final thought. Because our newsletters are all printed on recycled paper this will be the second time that paper has been recycled. The first time we saved some trees. This time we can save a family from hunger. Please don't waste this newsletter. ♦

Continued - see MISSISSIPPI CORN on page 4

GLEANNING AMERICA'S FIELDS ~ FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

SoSA Statistics At A Glance January-September 2006

**Fresh food salvaged and donated
to feed the hungry:**

- Potato Project 9,515,000 lbs.
- Gleaned Produce 13,188,000 lbs.
- Events 2,171
- Volunteers 22,561
- Total Pounds 22,703,000
- Total Servings 68,109,000

Here are just a few of many stories about SoSA activities across the country!

Planning ahead pays off in AL - In June SoSA-AL got a call that peas would be available for gleaning in 6 weeks. Faith Builders Sunday school class at Harpersville (AL) UMC had decided to do a mission project. They took up donations, purchased seed and fertilizer and turned an overgrown vacant lot into a productive pea patch. Come harvest, they called in SoSA. 4 gleaning events yielded 538 lbs. of purple hull peas that were delivered to 6 agencies. 14 volunteers from the Jefferson County Association of Retarded Citizens helped out. Their group leader said gleaning was a wonderful "out of walls" experience for these folks. Not only did they glean but they took 160 lbs. of peas back to their facility to share "the fruits of their labor" with other residents.

FL preschoolers schooled in helping others - 200 little children from Winter Park (FL) Presbyterian Preschool took home "Miles of

Pennies" banks in September, kicking off their year long "Miles of Pennies/ Kids Can Change the World" campaign. They'll do chores weekly to earn change they will donate to SoSA-FL to help stamp out hunger in FL. The children set a goal of one mile (\$850) for the year, but we think they'll do more! They will also conduct food drives to give to needy people in their community. A number of other preschools are also interested and will attend workshops in November to hear from SoSA-FL's director on ways they can be involved in outreach to the hungry. ... At their annual overnight conference, the Central Florida Presbytery hosted a round table discussion on the issue of hunger. As a member of the panel, SoSA-FL's director offered ways the 70+ churches represented could assist SoSA in hunger relief.

Their hands are full...of blessings - "Thank God for farmers, deadlines, volunteers, picky buyers, helpful truckers and thankful feeding agencies," said SoSA-MS's director. During its first year in operation, SoSA-MS has had its hands full...full of about 1.3 million lbs. of delicious fresh produce: melt-in-your-mouth sweet corn (17 tractor-trailer loads-see story on page 1), blueberries, peppers, okra, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, butter beans, peas, watermelons, cantaloupes and pears. Even now they are in the middle of the fall harvest of God's wonderful bounty. ... Many MS potters have signed on to help SoSA-MS sponsor "Empty Bowls" fundraising and hunger awareness events throughout the state and in Fort Walton, FL. For information about hosting an event, call SoSA-MS at 662-263-8648.

The colors of the rainbow are pretty in the fields - More than 30 varieties of produce (3+ million lbs.) were gleaned this summer in fields and packinghouses in NC. This produce reflects the colors of the rainbow: red tomatoes, orange carrots, yellow squash, green zucchini, blue berries, and the violet of blackberries. It isn't news to anyone that eating nutritious food is expensive. Produce gleaned in NC this summer is valued at over \$1.2 million. Much is written about the need for people to eat fruits and vegetables to stay healthy and fit. Less is written about how expensive it is to do. SoSA-NC made sure that surplus produce reached people in need throughout the summer. ... Welcome to new area gleaning coordinators: Ruthie Ervin in the Triad region; Teresa Hall in the Wilmington area.

Less than spectacular but looking up - The agriculture industry is calling the 2006 Texas drought the worst since the 1950's, so gleaning in TX during the summer was not up to par. Blueberries had a less than spectacular season, and there were no apples in north TX for gleaning. Luckily, our northwest TX HRA

and volunteers have been gleaning potatoes, onions and watermelon. We also were able to salvage a rejected load of carrots. Some rain finally fell on sweet potato fields in the northeastern part of TX and harvesting has begun, but the yield is yet to be determined. Things are

looking up, though, in the Rio Grande Valley with sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and citrus now being salvaged.

Apple orchards plowed under in VA - We mourn the loss of three of the apple orchards we glean each year. They've been plowed under for other uses ... and they call it progress! Despite this loss, VA is still rich in apple orchards and we're now in the middle of the apple gleaning season, which is late due to drought conditions at just the wrong time this year. Even with the extremes of drought and rain deluges this season, we've gleaned and distributed over 1.4 million lbs. of food: 40-some varieties of fresh produce items, eggs, soups, nutrition bars, and frozen onion rings. This is already more than the yearly total for each of the last 4 years. We are grateful for God's abundance and for the growing number of farmers willing to share, the dedicated volunteers who glean, and the agencies that give the food to those in need.

The spirit of generosity - At an August UM Men's gathering in Oklahoma, HRA George Cockrum and SoSA's Ken Bradford presented info about our *Meals for Millions* program and gleaning in OK. "After the meeting some of the men from Hydro, OK asked if we'd be interested in gleaning some of their fields. What a surprise!" said George. "The next day they took us to see one farmer who took us to meet others. One grower invited us to glean honeydew melons right then and there (we got 200 lbs.). An orchard owner told us we could glean apples later that day. A third farmer grows watermelons for big chain stores. He told us to come back the next day to glean his #2's, which, when he cut one open for us, was every bit as good and tasty as a #1. We got 1,500 lbs. for the hungry plus 3 melons he sent home with the gleaners. We also met two more farmers we'll be contacting next year when their crops are ready for gleaning." What a spirit of generosity from those farmers. What abundance for the hungry!

A spirit of cooperation - A few years ago Chuck Smith of Zion UMC, Elliston, OH, told HRA "Tater" Jensen, "I think we can help you at the (Northwest Ohio Pickle Station) but we don't want to do this every day." About the same time Trinity UMC in Genoa said, "we think we can help you at the pickle station, but we don't want to do this every day." Tater put the two groups together to work out a schedule and thus pickle station gleaning was covered 5 days a week. Trinity UMC has since lost their volunteers, but Chuck and his 14 gleaners crate up cucumbers twice weekly and deliver them to food banks and soup kitchens. ♦

Bottom L. to R.: FL preschoolers are saving miles of pennies to feed the hungry. Handicapped folks in AL glean peas. Choctaw Co.(MS) Sheriff's Dept. gleaned melons. Culling gleaned blueberries and showing off gleaned watermelons in MS. **Center L. to R.:** OK gents pick excess apples. VA youth displays green beans. Agency client gets gleaned corn in MS. Grandma and grandkid salvage cucumbers in OH. **Top L. to R.:** MO youth traveled to MS to glean tomatoes and peppers for the hungry. A rainbow of NC gleaned peppers.

The long, hot summer of HOH

By LAUREN HOLCOMB, *HARVEST OF HOPE* DIRECTOR

Harvest of Hope had a great, though very hot, summer season gleaning up and down the East Coast from Virginia to South Carolina at five week-long and weekend events.

331 participants gleaned, often in "simmering" heat, 179,942 pounds of produce that would otherwise have gone to waste – great job! In addition, they learned about current events that are affecting hunger and

poverty in the world and here in the U.S.

Each HOH event was an inspiring community experience where God's presence was truly felt and we learned

how to follow His commands to feed and care for "the least of these."

"Harvesters" helped feed many hungry people and touched the lives of farmers, church members in the areas we visited, agency workers, and many others in the process. More "Harvesters of Hope" will continue spreading the word and feeding the hungry in five Fall events.

Keep an eye out for the 2007 HOH schedule, which will be posted on our website (www.endhunger.org) and mailed out in late November. To be added to the HOH mailing list, email me at sosahoh@endhunger.org with your contact information. We look forward to having you join us to **Do Something About Hunger.** ♦

A long, slow summer for fundraising A long, busy summer of feeding the hungry

In any home or business cash flow is always something that must be watched closely. It's no different even in a vital ministry like ours.

Over the summer months, as donations trickle off for one reason or another, SoSA remains busy feeding the hungry and preventing food waste. We count on fall support activity to compensate for that annual summer cycle of continued hunger relief spending even as donations drop off a bit.

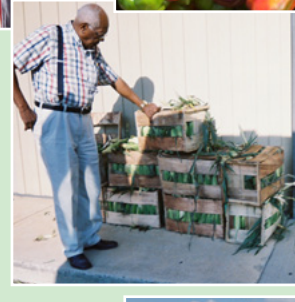
The hungry depend on SoSA to continue to "deliver the goods" all year round, and we have done just that – providing about 12 million pounds of nutritious produce to our nation's hungry citizens during the summer months even when cash flow did not match produce flow.

Now is the time of year for all of us to renew our commitment and support to feeding the hungry here in the U.S. The high fuel costs have also made it a real challenge for SoSA to provide the same amount of food we provided to the nation's hungry last year.

While the need is as great as ever, the cost of meeting that need is greater than ever. Your generosity at this time of year is vital! Those who don't have enough to eat, in communities all across America, are counting on us. With your help we won't let them down. ♦

Right: Junior high kids glean at the weekend event on VA's Eastern Shore.

Below: Teens from Bethany United Methodist Church, Reedville, VA at the Eastern Shore week-long event.



loads of nutritious sweet corn would be wasted.

"When this sweet corn gleaning operation started," said Jessica Burks, SoSA-MS's program coordinator, "I wasn't quite sure how it would go. I had no idea how hard it would be or how hot it would be! For weeks we lined up volunteers to pick in the fields and feeding agencies to receive truckloads of corn. As the heat started to rise, the corn started coming in faster and faster," she exclaimed. "We moved 17 tractor trailer loads of corn in eight days, salvaging 865,300 pounds! Many hungry people were blessed with nutritious, delicious corn, not only

in Mississippi, but in Alabama, Arkansas, Missouri, Louisiana, Tennessee and Texas where we shipped truckloads to very grateful food banks and smaller agencies that rarely receive fresh produce, including some still helping with Katrina relief," Jessica reported.

Bob Fritchey is excited about the prospects for next year's sweet corn season. "The Delta Harvest co-op has seen that by working with SoSA they can be both efficient and profitable, and also be generous benefactors to the hungry. Nichols Enterprises, manager of the co-op, has invited SoSA back next year, saying how impressed they were with how efficiently and effectively SoSA worked within their tight harvesting schedules and pressing needs."

The corn co-op project and other gleaning has put SoSA-MS well over its one million pound goal for its first year. Now they are pushing to finish the year with 1.5 million pounds of fresh food saved and distributed to feed the hungry in Mississippi and surrounding states. ◇

25² Challenge

SoSA's **25² Challenge** begins October 22. This program feeds the equivalent of 25 people one pound of food for every day of the year, at a cost of just \$25 per person! To take the challenge, churches are asked to enlist 25 people, Sunday School classes, or other groups in the church to each donate \$25.

25 people or groups X \$25 (or 25²) = \$625

Each person or group donating just \$5 a week between Oct. 22 and Nov. 19 will reach the goal. The **25² Challenge** ends just before Thanksgiving and is a meaningful way to express our gratitude for the abundance we have as we share with those in need. A free bulletin insert master is available. Call 800-333-4597; email church@endhunger.org; online at www.endhunger.org/25_squared_insert.pdf.

It's not too late to take the challenge! Contact us today. ◇



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.

Craig Corwin / ALABAMA

Beginning in early June, volunteers were needed to bag peaches at the Chilton County Agricultural Research Station and to deliver them to recipients each Tuesday and Friday. Craig Corwin, an environmental specialist with Jefferson County Health Department, answered the call. Without fail, Craig would show up every Tuesday and Friday ready to get things done. He was the most faithful of all the volunteers that participated while the peaches were available. Craig stated, "I have enjoyed gleaning with SoSA because every little bit we can do makes a difference."



Sam & Neena Eisenberg / FLORIDA

Sam Eisenberg heard about SoSA in 2000 at a United Methodist Men's gathering and started gleaning soon after. By the end of that first year as volunteers, Sam and Neena had participated in 8 gleaning events and are still SoSA's strongest supporters in northeast FL. They glean, deliver food to agencies, do a day-old bread and baked goods ministry, help build houses with HabiJax, participate in overseas missions work, and more. Sam, who retired 22 years ago from the Corps of Engineers, is recovering from knee-replacement surgery. His solid faith in God and joy in helping his neighbors give him plenty of strength to overcome his medical challenge. Sam is anxious to return to his weekly bread ministry routine and getting back into the fields. "Hanging around enthusiastic people is one of my secrets to a good life," Sam said. "I think a person that has their talents and abilities fully invested, particularly in serving others, has a perfect life-style."

Brent & Zenie Julian / INDIANA

Brent and Zenie Julian, now semiretired, have a passion for gleaning. They travel many miles with their truck and trailer to glean and deliver food to many agencies. As North Indiana Conference United Methodist Men's President for 8 years, Brent was instrumental in getting a SoSA Hunger Relief Advocate (HRA) in the conference and subsequently provided much assistance to the HRA. Brent and Zenie are active in their churches in Warsaw, IN and Arcadia, FL, where they are official "snowbirds." They love the Lord and glean to help feed the less fortunate in Jesus' name. They are a blessing to SoSA.



James Monroe Johnson / MISSISSIPPI

Dedicated gleaners are vital in SoSA's mission, especially for a gleaning network in its first year of operation, as is the case in MS. That's why James Monroe Johnson is so special to SoSA. He has been a wonderful supporter since early spring of this year when gleaning first got started. James' hard work in the Starkville region blesses many people in the community - first by gleaning in the fields and then by personally delivering the salvaged produce to needy neighbors. He continues to be enthusiastic about the next gleaning opportunity and we appreciate his unflagging support. ◇

Kids are heroes fighting hunger!



Vacation Bible School (VBS) kids in 30 states adopted the Society of St. Andrew as their mission project this summer and became "Heroes Fighting Hunger." By collecting pennies and other coins, young "heroes" from 145 churches raised over \$32,000 to feed hungry people across the nation. Throughout the VBS week, kids learned about hunger and heard Bible stories about caring for the poor. Their enthusiasm for fighting hunger generated enough pennies for SoSA to save and donate more than 2 million servings of nutritional fruits and vegetables to agencies feeding the hungry. One church told us, "... (we) challenged the children to 'glean change' for hunger. They were



Little "Heroes" with their pennies collected during VBS.



encouraged, with their parents' permission, to search under sofa cushions and car seats, in the laundry, etc., for lost and/or forgotten change to contribute to the mission. We assured them that no amount of change was too little and that God could use them to create a large amount out of a little just like Jesus and the disciples were able to feed 5,000 people with only two fish and five loaves of bread that were provided by a small boy."

SoSA thanks all the VBS children and churches for "gleaning their change" to provide a miracle of food to feed the hungry. ♦



SoSA's Advent devotions guide shines a light on God's signs and wonders

This year's program, *Signs and Wonders*, will guide you through Advent with daily scriptures, reflections, and prayers

while offering an opportunity to share in Jesus' work of feeding the hungry. SoSA is honored and grateful to have Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, of the Mississippi United Methodist Conference, contribute the devotional readings for each of the Sundays of Advent. You'll be blessed by Bishop Ward's inspiring words. The week-day devotions encourage you to share in the call of Jesus to care for the poor and hungry as you prepare to celebrate his birth. As part of these devotions, SoSA asks that donations be collected for its hunger ministry. All materials are FREE. Use the back page coupon to order your Advent Devotions packet or church starter kit and share Christmas with the hungry! ♦



Offer God's Peace at Christmas

while you feed the hungry and finish your gift shopping in the next 10 minutes with Society of St. Andrew Gift Donation Cards!

Each \$10 gift card in honor of someone special feeds 750 people!

We will send your honoree(s) our Christmas Gift Donation Card - *twelfth in a series* - designed exclusively for and donated to SoSA. The full color 5"x7" card features original art and scripture about God's peace. This one-of-a-kind card announces your generous gift to feed the hungry in the name of your chosen honoree(s). You'll receive the card, too, with our thanks and confirmation of the number of people you honored. It's the perfect gift for the person who has everything! No other \$10 gift could do so much, for so many, with so little! So finish your shopping today! **Use order form or: phone 800-333-4597; fax 434-299-5949; email: card@endhunger.org; or online at www.endhunger.org/card.**

Christmas Gift Donation Card

Minimum donation gift for each card is \$10

Do not send cash through mail. Donations tax deductible as allowed by law.

Make check payable to "Society of St. Andrew" or

Charge my: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ AmEx

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

PLEASE PRINT

Total enclosed or charged: \$ _____

Your Name _____

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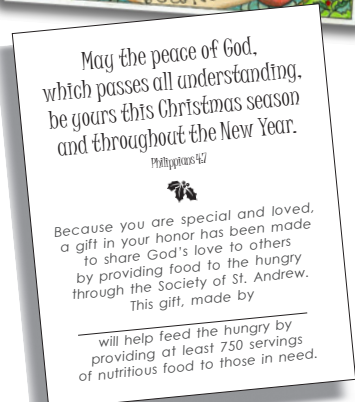
(Use separate sheet for additional names and addresses)

Orders must be received by Dec. 1 to ensure delivery before Christmas.

We will make every attempt to expedite late orders. Mail to:

Society of St. Andrew, 3383 Sweet Hollow Rd., Big Island, VA 24526

(ACC-NL)



Society of St. Andrew

Telephone: 1-800-333-4597

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Society of St. Andrew REPORT



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DEVOTIONS FOR ADVENT

This year's program will guide you through Advent with daily scriptures, reflections and prayers while offering an opportunity to share in Jesus' work of feeding the hungry. For more details see the article on page 5 of this newsletter. Order your packet or church starter kit today by mail, phone or online. Mail the coupon below; or call 800-333-4597; or email church@endhunger.org.

All materials are free!

Please send me a FREE *Signs and Wonders* starter kit today!

Contact Name _____

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3383 SWEET HOLLOW RD, BIG ISLAND, VA 24526

(NL 10/06)

*SoSA works
on your
behalf to
fulfill God's
mandate to
us all to feed
the hungry*

We are all called by God to help the poor and hungry. You can bridge the hunger gap in America between those who don't have enough to eat and the quarter of a Billion pounds of good, nutritious food that goes to waste every day. Make a generous donation today to the Society of St. Andrew.

"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)

☐ Send information about SoSA's Electronic Funds Transfer service

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Charge my: ☐ VISA  ☐ MasterCard  ☐ AmEx 

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(NL 10/06)

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