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, ……… 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. ◊
Gleaning America’s Fields ~ Feeding America’s Hungry

SoSAS Statistics At A Glance

January-September 2006

Fresh food salvaged and donated to help the hungry:

- Potato Project 9,515,000 lbs.
- Gleaning Produce 13,183,300 lbs.
- Event Volunteers 2,171
- Total Pounds 22,703,000
- Total Servings 68,109,000

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

Planning ahead pays off in AL ~ In June SoSAS-AL got a call that peas would be available for gleaning in 6 weeks. Faith Builders Sunday school class at Harpervile (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 SoSAS. A gleaning event yielded 538 lbs. of purple hull peas that were delivered to 6 agencies. 14 volunteers from the Jefferson Parish Association of Retarded Citizens helped out. Their group leader said gleaning was a wonderful "out of waste" 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 SoSAS-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 SoSAS-FL’s director on ways they can be involved in outreach to the hungry. ... At their annual fundraising conference, the Central Florida Presbytery hosted a round table discussion on the issue of hunger. As a member of the panel, SoSAS-FL’s director offered the 70+ churches represented could assist SoSAS in hunger relief.

This bank is full of blessings ~ "Thank God for farmers, deadlines, volunteers, picky buyers, helpful truckers and thankful feeding agencies," said SoSAS-MS’s director. During its first year in operation, SoSAS-MS has had its hands full, of about 1.3 million lbs. of delicious fresh produce: melt-in-your-mouth sweet corn (17 tractor-trailer loads--see page on 1), blueberries, peppers, okra, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, butter beans, peas, watermelons, cantaloupes and peaches. Even now they are in the middle of the fall harvest of God’s wonderful bounty. ... Many MS porters have signed on to help SoSAS-MS sponsor "Empty Bowls" fundraising and awareness events this fall. For more info, call SoSAS-FL for information about hosting an event, call SoSAS-AL at 662-283-8487.

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 that earning nutritious food is expensive. Produce gleaned in NC this summer is valued at over $12 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. SoSAS-NC made sure that surplus produce reached people in need throughout the summer. ... Welcome to new area gleaning coordinators: Ruthie Truex in the Triad Region; Teresa Hall in the Asheville Region. ... 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 than expected crop this season, and there were no apples in north TX for gleaning. Luckily, our northwest TX HRA and west Texas volunteers were successful in gleanin onions, potatoes, tomatoes 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 a gleaning project that made its debut in the late spring of this year. After they’ve been plowed under for other uses... and they call it progress! Despite this loss, VA is still rich in gleaning orchards and gleaning is now in the middle of the apple gathering season, which is late due to drought conditions at just the right time this year. Even with the extremes of drought and rain during the past year, we’ve gleaned and distributed over 1.4 million lbs. of food: 40-some varieties of fresh produce items, eggs, soup, nut meats, 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 SoSAS Kent Bradford presented info about our Meal for Milleur program and gleaning in OK. After the meeting some of the men from Hydro, OK asked if we’d be interested in gleaning of 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 night then and the others to come to the next day. The very next day 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 and he would have the whole field cut out 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! It would be an addition to the Total Tons this year. From this experience we ‘ll be contacting next year when their crops are ready for gleaning.” What a spirit of generosity from these farmers! What a challenge for the hungry!

A spirit of cooperation ~ A few years ago Chuck Smith of Zoot UMC, Elkhart, IN told HRA “Tater” Jensen, “If you would help me at the North West Ohio Pick-Up Station (Boonview) but we don’t want to do this every day.” About the same time Trinity UMC in Genoa said, “we think this is a great idea, but we can’t help you at the pick-up station and the valley of blackberries. It is too much work for us.” We told them we wanted to do the work you don’t want to do this every day.” Tater put the two groups together to work out a schedule and thus pickle station and the valley of blackberries. It was a win-win for all. Trinity UMC has since lost their volunteers, but Chuck and his 14 gleaners create up cucumbers twice weekly and deliver them to the Boonview Pick-up Station. Many farmers are saying “We’re here for the hunger!”

Bottom Line: In FL, preschoolers are saving miles of pennies to feed the hungry. Handicapped folks in AL glean peas. Chickasaw Co. (MS) Sheriff’s Dept. gleaned melons. Culling gleaned blueberries and showing off gleaned asparagus in MS. Center L. to R.: OK gents pick okra at Kismet. VA youth displays green beans...

The long, hot summer of HOH

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 pounds of gleaned food 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. HOH was presented 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. Be added to the HOH mailing list, email me at sofasoh@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

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, SoSAS remains busy feeding the hungry and preventing food waste. We count on full 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 SoSAS to continue “deliver the goods” all year round, and we have done just that – providing about 32 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 SoSAS 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. ↓
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 volunteered 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 Fritche 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.

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**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 Habitat, 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 get 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.

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**25^2 Challenge**

SoSA’s 25^2 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 25^2) = $625**

Each person or group donating just $5 a week between Oct. 22 and Nov. 19 will reach the goal. The 25^2 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. ☦
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 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. ◊

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 deductable 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________________________
Address________________________________________________________
City_________________ State____ Zip_________________
Phone__________________________ Email____________________________
In honor of________________________
Address________________________________________________________
City_________________ State____ Zip_________________

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

$500
$250
$100
$50
Other $______

Name ______________________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________________
City_______________________________ State_____ Zip____________
Daytime Phone ( ______)_______________________________________
Email ______________________________________________________
Charge my:
❏ ❏ ❏ ❏ ❏ VISA
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Acct. #________________________________ Exp.Date______________
Signature___________________________________________________

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

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