SoSA pulls a magic trick!

By Steven M. Waldmann, Executive Director

I was dealing with the state Chamber of Commerce earlier this week regarding some new state employment issues or something and the gentleman on the phone asked me how SoSA was doing in this economy. He asked if we were doing less, or laying people off and I replied “no and no”. He said “What?! Nearly every nonprofit I’ve spoken to in the state is either doing less, laying people off or both, and some are closing their doors completely.” He was simply astounded to find that SoSA was doing more than last year while encountering the same economic conditions as everyone else. With the economy down, donations down and most nonprofits cutting back program activity, cutting staff positions or closing up shop entirely, SoSA has actually done more. In fact, this year SoSA has saved and distributed 12% more food than we did in the first six months of last year. Our number of gleaning events and volunteers are also well above last year. In 2009 that is a real magic trick.

I wish I could say it was due to superior leadership by the Executive Director, but I know better. You see, our staff, volunteers and financial supporters know the hungry in this country need SoSA more than ever. And this network of dedicated and faithful people is finding a way to make it all happen. They are doers, people actually living their faith – not talking the talk, but walking the walk.

Sure donations are down this year, as they are for all nonprofits. And yes we’ve had to reduce our budget to compensate accordingly. But so far we’ve found a way to accomplish that with very little impact on our feeding programs. Part of the magic of SoSA is our 30-year history of good stewardship of food and other resources. When
Bless our farmers and our gleaners!
Please be in prayer for the farmers and the orchardists as they share their bounty with those who are hungry! • The Virginia United Methodist Annual Conference Potato Drop was hosted by Ghent UMC in Norfolk. It took the group of 162 volunteers only 2 hours to bag the 35,000 pounds of sweet potatoes and send them off to hunger relief agencies around the Tidewater region. Thanks to George Langford for heading up the registration table after spending the night in his car so he could help with the bagging! • Willie and Nancy Adams in the Richmond, VA area have been gleaning from local grocery stores and distributing to local hunger relief agencies. In the month of June alone they saved over 25,000 pounds of produce, deli food, and meats. Thanks for your willingness to share so that others may have something to eat! • The North Florida Gleaning Network added a dedicated volunteer to their ranks this summer when 12-year-old Ryan Cox pledged to glean 1,000 lbs. during his summer break. A Junior Honor Society inductee selected by Duke University to participate in the Talent Identification Program, Ryan made this commitment as part of his community service covenant for Confirmation at Mandarin Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, FL. Not only did Ryan surpass his goal, but he also brought his family and friends into the SoSA family of regular volunteers; they gleaned potatoes, zucchini, yellow squash, tomatoes, cucumbers, and more for the hungry in their community. • Bela Organic Hydroponic Farm, near Jacksonville, FL recently formed a partnership with SoSA and has already donated thousands of pounds of healthy vegetables from their packing house. Not only is the partnership providing fresh produce to those in need, it is providing them with the BEST produce. • Our friends at Gateway Trinity Lutheran Church in Ft. Myers, FL continue to host a Farmers’ Market in their church parking lot every Saturday. What started as a one month trial endeavor has turned into a year round event. Farmers set up every Saturday to sell their produce and then donate what is left to SoSA. Church volunteers take this wonderful fresh produce to the Community Soup Kitchen in Ft. Myers. • The Alabama Gleaning Network started up the East Lake Farmers’ Market Basket program on June 20th and it will run through Sept. 26th. Volunteers are needed EVERY Saturday morning to pack and deliver boxes of produce to seniors in Villa Maria. • At Winala Farms in Talladega, AL, Paul Holmes has given his Christian agricultural ministry the name Bushels of Blessings. He grows a variety of produce including pink-eyed peas, tomatoes, squash, cantaloupe, and hydroponic lettuce just for volunteers with Society of St. Andrew to glean. • The Alabama Gleaning Network would like to thank the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham for their recent generous grant. Many Alabamians in need will be fed through their generosity. • The Gleaning Networks in North and South Carolina have already gleaned and distributed 2.3 million pounds of fresh produce in 2009. God is good indeed! • The Lott Carey Youth Seminar is an event that helps young people prove that they can make a difference in the world. This year, the 55th annual event brought hundreds of youth from across the United States to Shaw University in Raleigh, NC. Gleaning was a major part of the event and Kristy Nash, SoSA North Carolina director, said “It was inspiring to see their

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**SoSA Statistics at a Glance**

**January-June 2009**

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

- **Potato Project:** 5,000,000 lbs. up 21%
- **Gleaned Produce:** 6,220,186 lbs. up 6%
- **Events:** 1,217 up 40%
- **Volunteers:** 14,292 up 11%
- **Total Pounds:** 11,220,186 up 12%
- **Total Servings:** 33,660,558 up 12%

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**Top l. to r.:** A young gleaner picking delicious blueberries in AL. Ryan Cox proudly displays the fresh produce he gleaned as part of his summer goal. **Bottom l. to r.:** A well attended Potato Drop at Trinity UMC in Richmond, VA. Two tiny tots glean spuds in NC.
Harvest of Hope is off to a great start this summer. As the new HOH director, I have my first three events under my belt and I can honestly say that each event has been amazing. One of the constants of every event has been how inspirational it is to watch, and join with, hundreds of youth as they sweat and toil under the hot sun gleaning produce for the hungry. When people sacrifice their time and effort to help others in such a hands-on and dirty (yes, gleaning is dirty business) way you really begin to understand the scripture about the world recognizing us as followers of Jesus by the way we love one another. Harvesters showed their love of others by feeding the less fortunate; they also showed love by working and worshipping together as one community of faith, despite their varied backgrounds. Kathy Jackson, a long time HOH supporter and volunteer, shared that this year’s Eastern Shore event was “one of the most amazing and diverse groups that have ever attended this event. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists all sharing God’s direction to feed his sheep.”

These events could not take place without the sacrifices of the many dedicated volunteers – thank you! I pray that all the volunteers realize what a significant impact they are making for God’s kingdom. I also need to mention the hard work of our dedicated and capable summer intern, James Hargraves. James is a rising junior at Old Dominion University and has been going on Harvest of Hope events since junior high. His experience and musical talent have been of immeasurable help as I have started my first summer as HOH Director. I am looking forward to events in the fall and hope that you will consider joining us as we Do Something about Hunger! ☶
Milestones from the past 30 years:

A few highlights and milestones from SoSA's 30 years of hunger ministry:
♦ June 8, 1979 – The Society of St. Andrew was founded in Big Island, VA. The Horne and Buchanan families moved into a hundred-year-old farm house and began their ministry of an intentional community modeling a lifestyle of Christian responsibility, and leading “responsible living and hunger issues” workshops across the state. They adopted the name “Society of St. Andrew” from the role Andrew had in Jesus’ feeding of the 5,000.
♦ April 1984 – SoSA became an Advance Special mission program of the United Methodist Church (#801600).
♦ 1985-1997 – SoSA’s international program distributed food and self-help programs to: Jamaica (Seed Potato Project), Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Armenia, Brazil, Liberia, Guatemala, Cuba, Venezuela, Mozambique, India, and Zimbabwe.
♦ 1997 – SoSA’s domestic Gleaning Network surpassed 5 million pounds of fresh produce saved per year and distributed to the hungry across America.
♦ 2002 – Society of St. Andrew initiated and co-sponsored the first National United Methodist Hunger Summit bringing together church leaders and hunger workers across the nation to develop more efficient and effective ways for the UMC to lead in the fight against hunger.
♦ 2008 – SoSA’s Potato & Produce Project surpassed 400 million pounds of potatoes and other produce saved and distributed.
Watch for more SoSA successes and milestones in future newsletters.

Donations to SoSA made in recent months to:

HONOR - Roy Daniel ... Nancy Farley ... Bob & Bea Fowler ... Mrs. Marolyn Geib ... Steven Long Gray ... Ruth Lucy ... Janet Sienkiewicz ... Linda Snipes ... Art & MaryBeth Strom ... Julie Taylor ... Rev. Rhonda Van Dyke Colby ... Dr. Donna H. West ... Wilhelmena Wintemberg ... Robin Yates

IN MEMORY OF - Mr. Aulcie Barnett ... Bill Burroughs ... Jane Carrier ... Frances D’Amato ... Bill Fors ... Jane Jones Hamilton ... Lynda Hewitt ... Reggie Kestel ... Jevine King ... Ester Sue Justis Ligon ... Lawrence McPherson ... Sonny Marks ... Nellie Viola Moore ... Kathleen Rafferty ... Elma Wilson ... Bea Worthington ... Vera Young

The Wonderful World of Potatoes!

By Marian Kelly, Potato & Produce Project Director

Approximately 2.3 million pounds of good nutritious food were salvaged and distributed during the second quarter of this year. The Potato & Produce Project delivered roughly 57 tractor trailer loads of potatoes during this three month period.

Most of the produce was white and sweet potatoes along with several loads of bananas. We were also able to deliver squash, zucchini, and cucumbers to some of our agencies. All this wonderful food made it to 16 different states and provided 6.9 million servings.

Trinity UMC in Richmond, VA really made their recent potato drop a community event by inviting local Boy and Girl Scout Troops. They provided fresh produce to 6 agencies in the Richmond and central Virginia area and paid for the drop with their Lenten offering. Thank you Trinity UMC for following God’s command and making it a priority to feed His sheep.

The late summer months are historically slow months for the Potato and Produce Project because tractor trailer loads of produce are scarce. We will continue on, however, feeding America’s hungry and increasing our field gleaning during the harvest seasons across the country. Thank you for all your support.

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Leave a Living Legacy

By Wade Mays, Development Associate

The legacy of Winston Dinwiddie lives on and the hungry continue to be fed thanks to his forward thinking and generosity. You see, although Mr. Dinwiddie recently left this world, his deep and genuine concern for the hungry continues, after his passing, through a thoughtful gift to the Society of St. Andrew in his will. Over the coming years millions of hungry Americans will be fed because Mr. Dinwiddie was concerned enough to think of “the least of these” in his will. SoSA, and the hungry, are so thankful for Mr. Dinwiddie’s example.

There are a variety of estate planning options that you can use to follow Winston Dinwiddie’s example of caring for his family and those in need, even after the Lord calls us home. To leave a living legacy simply contact Wade Mays at SoSA’s main office via email at development@endhunger.org or by phone, 800-333-4597.

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Ready. Set. Go! Get moving and “do something” about hunger!

With 37 million of our brothers and sisters going hungry and 96 billion pounds of food going to waste each year, there’s no reason for anyone in the United States to go without enough to eat. Yet hunger continues to be a problem of great proportion in our communities across the United States.

September is national Hunger Action Month. Please consider joining with the Society of St. Andrew and using Hunger Action Month as an opportunity to inform yourself and your congregation about hunger and how each one of us can be part of the solution to ending hunger in America. Use the whole month or choose one special Sunday during the month of September to lift up hunger in the United States during your worship service and make a pledge to “do something” to help those who are unable to help themselves.

In an effort to help clergy, church staff, mission committees, and church volunteers educate their congregations about hunger, the Society of St. Andrew is providing numerous resources, including sermons, children's moments, youth skits, litanies, prayers, and other activities on our website for you to download, review, and use in your local church — free of charge.

In addition, you will also find a ready-made prayer calendar for each day in September. Using scripture, fasting, activities, hunger statistics, and prayer, this calendar is intended to get each member of your congregation engaged in the mission and important work of feeding those who are hungry.

For more information and to request these FREE resources, please contact The Rev. Jennifer Vestal Moore, Director of Church Relations at 800-333-4597 or at church@endhunger.org.

During Hunger Action Month this September, follow God’s word and, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor.” Deuteronomy 15: 7-11

Volunteer gleaning opportunities with the Society of St. Andrew are listed on the new Serve.gov website. This website is the driving force for the United We Serve summer service initiative to promote community service, which was launched June 22, 2009 by President and First Lady Barack and Michelle Obama.

As a member of the Alliance to End Hunger, SoSA was invited to upload its service opportunities to the Serve.gov website so that people across the nation interested in serving the greater good can find volunteer projects near them. The United We Serve summer service initiative runs through the National Day of Service and Remembrance on September 11th.

“There is a very clear recognition with this effort (United We Serve) that service is more than just a temporary measure,” said Max Finberg, Director, Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives for the USDA Office of the Secretary. Indeed, SoSA supporters and volunteers know that ours is a year-in, year-out, year-round opportunity to put their faith into action. When SoSA folk step up to save food from going to waste and donate it to feed the hungry among us, they are proving that we are, indeed, united to serve.

As fortune would have it, we’ve had a spring and summer marked by a higher than normal amount of produce available to us at the same time donations are lower. More magic could certainly have happened. Answer the call of the hungry and be part of the magic that is actually God’s grace.

Prayers of Hope — Advent Devotions

As the light of day becomes shorter and the warm summer evenings quickly become cool brisk nights, our thoughts will soon turn to a beautiful baby who was born in a manger to bring hope to our world.

The theme of SoSA’s Advent devotional program, “Prayers of Hope,” will ask the question, “What do you hope for in the coming of Christ?”

Be inspired by the personal stories of our creative and thoughtful writers as you read through their devotions and what they hope for in Christ’s coming. Through the daily devotions, scriptures, and prayers, use this book to take time to ponder what you hope for as you welcome the Christ child into your home and life this Christmas season.

The daily devotions encourage you to share in Jesus’ call to care for the poor and hungry with donations to SoSA’s hunger ministry. All materials are FREE. Use the back page order coupon to get your Advent Devotions packet or church starter kit and share Christmas with the hungry!

So, what do you hope for in the coming of Christ?"/n

United We Serve

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Magic Trick

Continued from page 1

you feed hungry people at just 2¢ a serving, you make every penny count. So we make sure that our financial and staff resources are focused on feeding the hungry. In fact, 96% of our entire staff is either fully or partially involved in our food providing programs. That’s a big reason why our overhead is just 7% — yet another magic trick by SoSA.

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“What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me?” Psalm 116:12

Donate now –
www.endhunger.org/donate.htm

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