Staying Focused — Saving Food

BY STEVEN M. WALDMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Have you ever been in a situation when you needed to focus but were surrounded by distractions? That is the situation nonprofits faced throughout 2009. And the distractions were threatening because they came in the form of an economy in a serious slump. Many nonprofits closed completely, others underwent mergers, and nearly all faced hard cutbacks in staff and programs. It is difficult to stay focused on what your ministry is about when everyone is “taking flak”.

Like all other nonprofits, SoSA faced the same situation in 2009. We encountered the same difficulties and the same challenges. But we made the decision early in the year to do what was needed in terms of reducing our expenses while collectively staying focused on what SoSA’s ministry is really about. We knew the need for the highly nutritious food SoSA provides would only increase in the tough economic environment; and it certainly did. In short, we were determined to do more when everyone else was doing less.

The results were amazing. With your help we were able to save and distribute more food, host more gleaning events, and engage more volunteers than the previous year while at the same time decreasing our expenses. We did that by staying focused on what matters most in this ministry — preventing highly nutritious food from going to waste and getting it to the tables of those most in need in America.

You see, in good economic times and bad, our nation wastes more than enough food than is needed to feed every hungry person in America. That is not an exaggeration, it is a fact: 96 billion pounds of food is wasted each year while the number of hungry is now around 45 million persons. Do that math and you’ll see that we waste more than a ton of food for every hungry man, woman, and child in the country.

The food resources are there, we just need to bridge that gap between excess food and people that need it. That is what SoSA does every day, all year long, year after year. And with the need increasing we couldn’t do less.

Staying focused meant setting an all time record in the delivery of good nutritious vegetables to the poor who needed food deliveries at all! In fact, SoSA found ways to increase the number of hungry persons served from 2008 to 2009! This is a very significant accomplishment and one that was in danger of going unheralded. I have decided to use these few paragraphs to rectify that.

One of the most frustrating parts of hunger ministry is that when the economy goes south (as it does periodically) two things happen.

1. Demand for the fresh vegetables we provide to hungry people goes up.
2. Our ability to package and ship those vegetables to where they are needed goes down.

When times get hard, things get difficult, the woods get thicker and the hills get steeper. People will react in two different ways. Quite often, the hard times and steep hills will be seen as excuses for doing less than usual, producing poorer results and in general settling for second, or even third best. Other folks will take the hard times and difficult circumstances as a challenge to do more, better, and produce the kind of results that inspire us all. I want all of you who are reading this newsletter to know that the people of Society of St. Andrew belong in the second group. They are simply the best at what they do and this recent recession has proved that, once again, without question.

At a time when most charities are living (sometimes precariously) through economic short falls, and cutting back on vital services as a result, your SoSA leadership and staff have found ways to do more with less. While budget cuts were necessary across the year just past, none of those cuts impacted food deliveries at all! In fact, SoSA found ways to increase the delivery of good nutritious vegetables to the poor who needed them in 2009! This is a very significant accomplishment and one that was in danger of going unheralded. I have decided to use these few paragraphs to rectify that.

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Generally, you cope with this miserable situation as best you can and hope to avoid cutting your food shipments back at a time when they are so desperately needed. SoSA staff have, in the year just past, found ways to actually increase food deliveries at a time when finances were increasingly hard to come by. Part of this was due to good fiscal management and planning, part was due to very innovative staff work at all levels of our food delivery operations, and all of it was due to the incredible talent, commitment and dedication of our people.

One of the benefits of being retired is that I’m now free to praise SoSA people without giving the appearance of “blowing my own horn”. SoSA people, your people if you are a SoSA supporter, have been simply magnificent through the worst economic times since the great depression. They deserve your thanks and continued support until the happy day arrives when there are no hungry people in our land.
SoSA stories from around the states

Once again, the Society of St. Andrew was blessed by God’s grace! We were able to salvage even more fresh produce in 2009 and distribute it to those in need while financial conditions were down due to the economy. The Society of St. Andrew is saddened to have recently lost a very important gleaning leader and friend, Jerry Lipscomb, of Zebulon, NC, passed away on November 19, 2009. Jerry has been a faithful gleaner with the NC Gleaning Network since SoSA started that network in 1990. His leadership and dedication will be sadly missed. The NC Gleaning Network saved over 5 million pounds in 2009! The annual Yam Jam in NC saw over 800 volunteers in 2009 who gleaned over 84,000 lbs of sweet potatoes that were delivered to 50 agencies around the state. Meanwhile, the NC Gleaning Network had over 5,500 volunteers in 2009 including children, college students, seniors, and executives from the Salvation Army that was feeding 1,500 people on Thanksgiving Day. Creative solutions to unique problems have always been a driving force behind SoSA’s work! MS was also very fortunate to have an Empty Bowls fundraiser event sponsored by Christ United Methodist Church of Jackson, MS. It was a great day! Involved in food, fellowship, and potato bagging, and plans are already being made to make this an annual event. The FL Gleaning Network had over 5,500 volunteers in 2009 including children, college students, seniors, and executives from Ritz Carlton Resorts. FL even had some of the food recipients – a few who were homeless – volunteer to glean. Without their help, FL would not have been able to save the over 2 million pounds of fresh food that it did in 2009. The FL Gleaning Network had 4 potato drops in October and November through a partnership with the Salvation Army in Tallahassee, FL. There wasn’t just potatoes ancient... through white potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, cucumbers, melons, corn, and cucumbers were provided to over 200 agencies in the Destin, GA and Orange City areas. If you saw the Disney Christmas parade on Christmas morning then you may have seen SoSA gleaning in FL. The theme was “families in the field” featuring a Heirloom pumpkin crew joined with the NC Gleaning Network and the Sheehan family who had been chosen as a family in service. 12,000 pounds of fresh citrus were gleaned that day. Speaking of parades, have you ever wondered what happens to all that citrus from the Citrus Bowl Parade? We know! It is donated to SoSA and distributed through the Bread of Life Food Bank and Second Harvest Food Bank in Orlando so that many people who are in need may receive the delicious citrus.

The AL Gleaning Network is continuing their salvage work at Montgomery area Farmers’ Markets. For more information contact the AL office at 205-838-1927.

SoSA states

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GLEANING AMERICA’S FIELDS – FEEDING AMERICA’S HUNGRY

Fresh food salvaged and donated to feed the hungry:

Gleaning Produce
Potato Project
Events
Total Volunteers
Total Servings

January-December 2009

Top l. to r.: Jerry Lipscomb stands proudly with gleaned produce. Volunteers with gleaned pumpkins in NC. Dick Loman next to a SoSA truck. Bottom l. to r.: Volunteers in MS deliver gleaned produce made from gleaned potatoes from an agency. Potatoes are delivered to an agency in East OH. 2010 Summer Internship

Résumé submissions for Harvest of Hope’s 2010 Summer Intern will be accepted now through April 1st. Applicants should be college-aged or young adults, hardworking, and dedicated to fighting hunger. RGB experience is preferred but not required. The internship is 10 weeks during the summer and involves traveling to HOH events as well as some in-office work. For more information, email Scott at sosahoh@endhunger.org.
SoSA is a top-rated food and shelter nonprofit

GreatNonprofits, the leading provider of user-generated ratings and reviews of nonprofits, announced that the Society of St. Andrew was one of the top-rated charities in their first ever Food and Shelter Awards. The reviews and ratings were provided by those who have actually experienced the work of the charities. SoSA is one of the top five charities with a 5-star rating by our volunteers and donors. Thank you!

All reviews by SoSA volunteers and donors can be seen at www.greatnonprofits.org/foodandshelter/ or at SoSA’s listing on GuideStar.org, the premiere source for donor research on nonprofits, or by clicking on the GreatNonprofits “badge” on SoSA’s home page at www.endhunger.org. You can also write a review of your experience with SoSA at GreatNonprofits.

Here is what some of our volunteers and donors had to say:

Maureen Copan, Raleigh, NC – “I learned about SoSA while attending a conference on hunger and decided to give gleaning a try as a way to do something to help those who deal with being hungry on a daily basis. My first experience was gleaning corn on a late summer day in a beautiful setting. It was very satisfying to see the results of many people coming together to help feed those in need. I have been gleaning again since this first experience and came away with the same high regard for SoSA. The Society of St. Andrew makes things happen immediately. Hungry people can’t wait. The gleaning done by volunteers provides food to take care of people the same day. Both staff and volunteers did their jobs and it was all about getting things done so others could eat.”

Jarrett McLaughlin, Prairie Village, KS – “I grew up in North Carolina where SoSA has been active for many years. Some of my best youth group memories involve the annual “Yam Jam” where we met on a Saturday morning to pick sweet potatoes. Now I live in Kansas City serving a church, and I was so surprised to see that the Society of St. Andrew had set up shop in the Midwest right here in my own city. In much the same way that Jesus took a little and made it into a lot at the feeding of the 5,000, SoSA also takes very limited resources and transforms them into an abundance. Our own church’s food pantry has received hundreds of pounds of fresh produce that we could put right into the inner city where it is so sorely needed for good nutrition. It’s also an excellent service opportunity for volunteers of all ages. Participate. Get involved … you won’t regret it!”

Christine Randall, Mars Hill, NC – “Wow, there are so many positive aspects about this organization. In addition to the apparent ones that result from feeding people in need, I will focus on the opportunities it provides for people with disabilities to become contributing members of society. Mark, a young man with autism, has also been participating with me a little over a year now in SoSA gleaning projects. He has picked hundreds of pounds of apples, cabbage, cucumbers, peppers & tomatoes. He has positively socialized with fellow gleaners, farmers and recipients of the donated food. Through all of this, he has acquired a heightened sense of belonging and genuinely knows he’s needed by his community. Most importantly, he is now relied on (often the opposite for those who happen to have a disability). In a nut shell, SoSA feeds the hungry, while at the same time allowing those who are ‘hungry to help’ their community in a way that is successful for them.”

Potato & Produce Project News

By Marian Kelly, Potato & Produce Project Director

The Potato & Produce Project delivered a variety of produce and white and sweet potatoes to feeding agencies in St. Charles, IL, Williamsburg, KY, New York, NY, Philadelphia, PA, Franklin, TN, Virginia Beach, VA and many other places across the country. Over 10.7 million pounds were distributed in 2009 through the Potato & Produce Project. We hope that these loads of food have helped to ease someone’s burden a little. Our mission here at the Society of St. Andrew has always been about salvaging food, but first and foremost it is feeding America’s hungry. The need is there for good nutritious food for the hungry and the supply of fresh produce is very abundant. So we will continue to follow this commission that our Lord has given to us – “You give them something to eat.” A very special thank you to all who have helped us feed the hungry over the years.

Donations to SoSA in recent months:

IN HONOR OF - Lois Barnes ... Loretta & Ed Bolen ... Bill & Dorothy Branson ... Paige Campbell ... Bub & Fran Carleton ... Sam Dillard ... Bruce & Bette Forbes ... Susan Hamilton ... James Hewitt ... Betty & Bruce Hughes ... Bishop H. Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr. ... Mr. & Mrs. William R. Hurley ... Mrs. Jack Irby ... Donald Kear ... James H. Long, Sr. ... Devin MacRitchie ... Dillon MacRitchie ... Ms. Brianne Lyda McDonald ... Andrew J. Nawn ... Douglas Kurt Schwein ... Rev. Michael Teixeira ... Billy Tew ... Mrs. Sandy Tilley ... Joanie & Buddy Wood ... Stanley Young

IN MEMORY OF - Jack Bartlow ... Mrs. Anna Beavers ... Fred R. Christensen ... Jesse Payne Conner, Jr. ... Rev. Carroll Freeman ... Kenneth Fuessley ... Lynda Hewitt ... Mrs. Marion Janney ... Evine King ... Esther Sue Ligon ... Jerry Lipscomb ... Annie Livengood ... Nellie Gray ... Porter Logan ... Herbert & Mildred Martin ... Ms. Peggy McCarter ... Ragine Meade ... Kenneth Petrie, Sr. ... Ms. Elaine Reidan ... Mr. Bill VanDiver ... Vaina Vaughan ... Frances P. “Bud” Weber ... Kurt Zimmerman...
number of gleaning events at nearly 4,000. That’s 11
gleaning events every single day of the year – we were even
out gleaning on Thanksgiving Day! That is staying focused
while others were fretting. Nearly 34,500 volunteers stayed
focused by helping in all those gleaning events. Quick,
think of another organization that has that many volunteers.
In the end, nearly 26,500,000 pounds of fresh produce were
distributed resulting in over 79,300,000 highly nutritious
servings. It was all done for, literally, pennies a pound.

That is what you make happen as a partner in this
amazing ministry.

Already, as you read this, we are continuing these efforts
in 2010 because the need is so great. So regardless of the
challenges, distractions and worries swarming around us,
we continue to stay focused on and faithful to what SoSA’s
ministry is all about. You … and the hungry who live
among us … expect nothing less. So do we at SoSA.

Out of this World!
VBS Mission Project
BY REV. JENNIFER VESTAL MOORE, DIRECTOR OF CHURCH RELATIONS

Ready. Set. Blast off! Come along and discover through
scripture, trivia games, and really cool activities how awesome
our God is!

The Society of St.
Andrew’s 2010 VBS mission
adventure program is
designed to supplement your
VBS program and help your
students learn about hunger
in the United States and
how Jesus wants us to help.
Student sheets; containing a
short scripture story,
facts about hunger and our
ministry, potato trivia, and a
pencil activity, are included
for each day as well as tips for keeping God’s world beautiful.

To order a free copy of the Society of St. Andrew’s
“OUT OF THIS WORLD” VBS mission program email
me at church@endhunger.org or phone 800-333-4597. An
order form is also available on our website: http://www.
endhunger.org/order_material.htm.

Spring Break 2010
Do Something about hunger!
BY SCOTT BRIGGS, HARVEST OF HOPE DIRECTOR

Let’s play the word association
game. If I say “college students”
and “spring break” what is the first
word that comes to your mind? You
win the prize if you said “gleaning”.
March 8th – 12th will be the second
annual Harvest of Hope Alternative
Spring Break event. Last year 22
students joined together to glean
over 12,000 pounds of produce that
went directly to feed the hungry
in Northern Florida. In a couple of months thousands of
‘typical’ college students will go to Florida to drink and …
Sadly, most of their week will be a forgotten blur. Thankfully,
there are some extraordinary students who want to make a
difference in the world. This event offers these conscientious
students the opportunity to make a difference; few things
in life are as significant as putting food on the table of those
who are hungry. For information contact Scott Briggs at
sosahoh@endhunger.org. Join us in Winter Park, FL as we do
something about hunger — something you will remember.

Jesus Is ...
Devotions for Lent
BY REV. JENNIFER VESTAL MOORE, DIRECTOR OF CHURCH RELATIONS

In keeping with the traditions of Lent, the Society of St.
Andrew invites your congregation to participate in a program of
spiritual reflection, prayer and giving.

Our Lenten devotion program challenges readers to take
seriously the scriptural injunctions to care for the poor, while
it also provides an opportunity to feed our hungry brothers
and sisters. As you make the journey to the cross
this year, use this devotion booklet to see Jesus in
all kinds of unique ways through the eyes of guest
writers while remembering how much Jesus loves you
and the incredible sacrifice Jesus made for each of us.

To obtain a free sample church packet or personal
packet of our devotion and
giving program and the
Good Friday Fast, use the
order form on the back of this newsletter or call 800-333-4597,
or email me at church@endhunger.org. An order form is also
available on our website: http://www.endhunger.org/lent.htm.
There is no charge for the program.

We hope your congregation will participate and make hungry
Americans a priority during Lent. Through your involvement in
the Society of St. Andrew’s ministry, you and your church can
provide nourishing food to those most in need, especially during
these cold winter months and economically challenging times.

Rise to the Challenge
THE FEINSTEIN CHALLENGE 2010

Each year the Feinstein Foundation divides $1 million
among participating hunger fighting charities nationwide,
using it to help them raise funds during March and April. Last
year SoSA got $19,869.
The more money donated and pledged 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 donor’s
gift! So now is the time to be as generous as possible to help
stop food waste and feed the hungry! You can pledge now
and pay later in the year, but please pledge before April
30. Use the coupon on the back page. Thank you!

Please Help!
Jesus Is ... Lent Devotions

As you make the journey to the cross this year, use this devotion booklet to see Jesus in all kinds of unique ways while remembering the incredible sacrifice Jesus made for each of us.

Use the information below to order these free materials or contact our office at 800-333-4597.

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

Donations received between March 1st - April 30th are counted toward the Feinstein Challenge!

☐ $500 ☐ $365 ☐ $250 ☐ $100 ☐ Other __________

[Make check payable to Society of St. Andrew]

☐ This is my pledge for payment later in 2010.

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

Please send my FREE Lent 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

(ML 02/10)