

### **Not Just Another Day**

By Barbara Sayles, Florida Regional Director

As the sun peeked over the horizon and reflected the colors of the hot air balloon like a massive stained glass cathedral, it was clear it would not be "just another day on the farm." But then, Hank Scott is not "just another farmer."

Donning tees that proclaimed: "I turnip to fight hunger," and equipped with clippers, gloves, and sunscreen, volunteers arrived just as the balloon sailed across the sky. The eager group



included Society of St. Andrew staff along with board members and staff from Second Harvest and the Florida Association of Food Banks.

This day would mark the culmination of a month-long project. For no other reason but a generous heart and a spirit of giving, Hank had planted 20 acres of turnips, not to harvest for a profit, but to donate for the hungry. The amazing staff and family of Long and Scott Farms had generously donated much time and attention to this project, not because they had to, but because they care about their neighbors who struggle with hunger. Hundreds of volunteers had been in the field over the past month to pick, pack, and load box-after-box of nutritious vegetables to distribute through hundreds of agencies to people in need.

As local news media captured the laborers in the field, and a local chef busily prepared delectable turnip dishes, we were reminded again that one person can make a real difference. This generous act of one farmer directly affected the lives of more than two million people.

As volunteers and staff sampled turnip coleslaw, turnip pancakes, and even mashed turnips, tractor-trailers began to line up at the dock. These trucks

would be filled with turnips that, in just a day or two, would be on the plates of people in need. Yes, today would be an extraordinary day on



Continued on Page 5

# From the Sheep Shed

By Steven M. Waldmann, Executive Director

This past Easter Saturday, a woman named Margaret received about 1,000 pounds of sweet potatoes for her local feeding agency. She said many of those sweet potatoes would be used that very same day. But that isn't the beginning of the story.

Sometime last year, a farmer in North Carolina prepared his fields and then planted sweet potatoes. Many other farmers did the same thing throughout the Southeast and other areas. The farmer cultivated and cared for those fields over the summer and early fall months as God provided rain and sunshine. The sweet potato plants grew well and provided a large crop that was harvested last October. Other farmers harvested their crop of sweet potatoes as well, which added to the bounty.

After harvest, some of the sweet potatoes went directly to market and grocery stores, while most of them went into cold storage. This crop of sweet potatoes would provide nourishment to families in America throughout the year. As spring settled in, the cold storage facilities began looking ahead to the new crop of sweet potatoes that would be harvested this September and October. To make room for this new crop, they had to empty out their cold storage facilities of the many tons of sweet potatoes that were left unsold. Most of these sweet potatoes were used to feed pigs and hogs or were sent to landfills and dumped, as excess, as millions of Americans went hungry.

SoSA was able to redirect one of those loads destined for a landfill and sent it to a church that had agreed to simply bag up the potatoes. The 44,000 pound load was dumped in the church parking lot, creating a mountain of sweet potatoes. About 110 volunteers from the church and community gathered around to stuff the potatoes into bags and share in a little fellowship at the same time. SoSA provided the bags and arranged for feeding agencies covering about half the state to come and pick up this nutritious bounty.

That was when Margaret received some of those potatoes and used them that same day to provide nutritious meals to the hungry in her community. Instead of going to waste, that load of potatoes provided over 132,000 highly nutritious servings.

That story is repeated thousands of times throughout the year and across the country as SoSA saves truckloads of fresh produce, and also gleans leftover crops right in the fields after harvest. We do it with highly nutritious produce of all types.

It is so simple, yet so very effective. As you read this, we have already saved and distributed over 7 million pounds of perfectly good produce that would otherwise have gone to waste. This is the most we've even done at this early point in the year when the gleaning season hasn't ever really started yet. The need is great and growing, and SoSA is working hard to meet that need as we continue to bridge the gap between excess food and the tables of America's hungry.  $\Diamond$ 

### Gleaning America's Fields

#### SoSA Statistics at a Glance January-April 2012

#### Fresh food salvaged and donated to feed the hungry: 4,338,057 lbs

**Gleaned Produce** Potato & Produce Project **Events** Volunteers

2,007,381 lbs 5,379 6,345,438 19,036,314

**Total Pounds Total Servings** 

#### SoSA stories from around the states

#### **ALABAMA**

Mary Lynn Botts joined our staff as North AL Gleaning Coordinator. She will work with farmers and volunteer groups from the Birmingham area northward. Mary Lynn's counterpart in Central AL is Teresa Jane Seevers.

Program Coordinator Linda Tozer has been busy attending and speaking at gatherings of farmers and growers throughout the state, getting the word out about sharing their excess and unmarketable produce with

neighbors in need.

Cross-regional partnerships grew in the first quarter of 2012, as South AL volunteers helped FL volunteers in Walnut Hill, FL glean mixed greens. Members of a Pensacola, FL church are preparing red mesh bags for gleaners to use this summer in South AL and West FL.

Late winter was cabbage season in AL, as cabbage loads from GA and FL were distributed in Lee County (Auburn area) and Calhoun County (Anniston area) in February

A major area of planned growth in produce salvage and volunteer support in 2012 will be farmers market gleanings in various areas of the state. We are seeking church and community groups to 'sign on' for weekly produce pick-up and distribution.

FLORIDA

Two colleges from MN and IL, came to FL for *Harvest* of Hope in March. They got right to work gleaning an abundance of turnips from Long & Scott Farms in Central FL sacrificing their spring break to work long hours in the fields to help feed the hungry.

➤ A different kind of gleaning – 85 volunteers from Hyde Park UMC and Abe Brown ministries gathered at the Tampa Convention Center to "glean" food left from the Southern Exposure Conference. These "grade A" top quality fruits, veggies, and packaged product were displayed by the vendors, then left behind because it is not economical to ship it back, so the vendors donated it to SoSA to be distributed to food agencies. Volunteers and SoSA staff worked until midnight packing and loading over 50,000 lbs. of quality food that was extremely well

received by all the agencies. "What a gift" one agency shared with us, "we never get food like this; I feel like it is Christmas all over again."

➤ March is "College Month" or so it seems — students from colleges all over the country head to FL on Spring Break and many never see the beach or Mickey Mouse. They are here on a mission, to glean with SoSA. And glean they did - during the month of March almost 900,000 lbs. of fruits and vegetables were gleaned by SoSA volunteers, mostly

college students.

Yew Ching International School gets the award for traveling the farthest to glean this year – all the way from Shanghai, China. Seventy-five students and their teachers gathered in a grapefruit grove to glean citrus for the hungry, some of which they distributed to the Coalition for the Homeless in downtown Orlando when they arrived for a tour of the shelter. SoSA's director Barbara Sayles hosted them for lunch and gave a hunger presentation, after which the students presented Barbara with a check for \$1,000 to be used for the feeding programs of Society of St. Andrew in FL. GEORGIA

The hungry in GA have been fed this winter with truckloads of cabbage, pretzels, and a memorable Sweet Potato Drop on Valentine's Day in Albany, GA. Thanks to our numerous volunteers who shared their Valentine's Day love by helping to bag, box, and scoop over 44,810 lbs. of sweet potatoes to feed the hungry in South GA and surrounding states including FL and AL. It didn't take long. By 3 pm those potatoes were in the hands of the hungry, and on the dinner plates that evening!

Join a summer or fall volunteer gleaning group NOW as we continue to feed the hungry in GA. Farmers and growers are graciously opening their fields for gleaning all around GA and there are opportunities for everyone. Contact us now at 229-386-5800 or email gleanga@endhunger.org.

Can you easily name at least 3 facts about the GA Gleaning Network? If not, then let us share with you; SoSA staff are available to speak with your church, school, or civic group. We invite you to join us in making a difference in the fight against hunger in Georgia. Call us today!

MISSISSIPPI

The MS office of SoSA has had a great first quarter. We are looking forward to a very busy gleaning season and expanding our program to reach even more Mississippians in need.

We have already salvaged 652,000 lbs. of produce this year compared to 61,020 lbs. in April of 2011.

We are expanding our network of growers and have new growers in the Delta area and in North MS. Through the expansion of our network of growers we are sending produce to several new agencies that we have not worked with in the past.

We have been gleaning strawberries in Meridian and will glean a variety of produce all over the state in the next few months. As always, more volunteers are needed. For more information about gleaning events in your area

### Feeding America's Hungry

please contact Jackie Usey at 769-233-0887 or gleanms@endhunger.org.

NORTH CAROLINA

➤ We continue to grow our SC gleaning network, now working with 96 growers and gleaning in 20 SC counties. In 2011, we salvaged 120,000 lbs. of produce in SC, about three times the amount saved in 2010.

Ashley McCoy-Bruce, our SC program coordinator, is pursuing relationships with community gardens that are

grown exclusively to be gleaned.

Our new partnership with the NC Farm Bureau Young Farmer & Rancher program is introducing us to farmers to SoSA. So far this year, YF&R farmers have donated almost 7,000 lbs. of produce.

Union Grove UMC in Bahama, NC held a yard sale in February to benefit SoSA and raised more than \$600. We're grateful for their time and creative fundraising efforts.

Our Farmers Market Initiative has taken off this season! We are now working with markets in Asheboro, Marion, Huntersville, Louisburg, Statesville, Mt. Holly, Winston Salem, Wilkesboro, and Wilmington to salvage produce for hungry people in each of those communities. Please contact us if you are interested in volunteer opportunities this summer.

#### **TENNESSEE**



Inspecting the citrus

In January, the FL and TN offices, along with corporate partners Play with A Purpose and Bridgestone Americas, joined forces to bring a load of fresh citrus to Nashville from Central FL. Every student at a Title I elementary school in Nashville (along with children at 11 day care centers serving low-income families) received a big bag of tangerines and tangelos to take home.

➤ 180 volunteers joined in mid-February to bag and distribute a load of NC sweet potatoes in Knoxville and nine surrounding counties. This event received great publicity in several area pewspapers

in several area newspapers.

Tonia Anderson joined our staff as West TN Gleaning Coordinator. She will work with farmers and volunteer groups west of the Tennessee River. Tonia's counterpart in East Tennessee is Leigh Travis.

Program Coordinator Linda Tozer is organizing summer green bean drops for Tennessee churches. Opportunities to

be involved in this project abound!

#### VIRGINIA

➤ Spring has sprung. The gleaning network in Virginia is prepared for a busy 2012 season. Many people have joined together to work on opportunities to serve those that are hungry!

Thanks to all who cut bags for the VA Gleaning Network this spring. Special thanks to Peakland UMC and Park View Mission in Lynchburg, Epworth UMC in Thaxton,

Memorial UMC in Appomattox, and Faith Christian School in Roanoke. The bags will be used for gleaning apples and turnips in the Central VA area.

We have a new gleaning coordinator in the Tidewater area. Her name is Sharon Wallace and she will organize all of their gleaning events this year. She can be reached at 757-828-5788 or tidewatergleaning@gmail.com.

There will be gleaning from the Forest Farmers Market for the first time this year. Lynchburg gleaners can help with the collecting and distributing of fresh produce each Saturday during summer and fall.

There will be gleaning to do this summer and fall throughout the state. All are invited to come and glean

in the fields, farmer markets, and orchards

#### WEST

➤ We welcome 3 new markets in the Kansas City area. This year, the Kansas City River Market, Bad Seed Market, and Gladstone Farmers' Market will work with SoSA West to get unsold produce to local feeding agencies at the end of market day.

➤ In 2012, SoSA hopes to expand its *Gleaning Network* by establishing satellite operations in areas where food is grown/sold. If you grow produce or would be willing to help us work with a grower, farmers' market, produce auction, or other produce vendor, please call 816-921-0856

Our *Gleaning Network* shifted into gear in March, with the earliest Missouri gleanings on record taking place in a hoop house outside of Odessa, MO. Thanks to Ami Zumalt of Red Ridge Farms, SoSA West had gleaners

picking greens twice in March.

Mark Schrader, veteran hunger fighter from the Gateway District of the United Methodist Men in the St. Louis area, is SoSA West's new Missouri Hunger Relief Advocate. Mark has a long history of fighting hunger through the United Methodist Men, and had already been scheduling produce drops in the St. Louis area several years before he joined the SoSA West team.

Welcome to Karin Page, SoSA West's new Program Coordinator! Karin Page joined the team at the end of November 2011, and she hit the ground running. Karin became involved with SoSA West in mid-2011 while working to change the Kansas City codes to allow CSA farming within the city limits. She led her first gleaning as a volunteer in October 2011. She is an advocate of

healthy eating, has a passion for growing food and helping others, and she connects easily with our farmers and growers. In addition to enlisting more gleaners, she is looking for pick-up truck drivers, office volunteers, and leaders who are willing to organize and host gleanings and other produce reclamation activities so that we may expand our *Gleaning Network*.  $\Diamond$ 



Karin Page

## Harvest of Hope

By Scott Briggs, Harvest of Hope Director

Amanda, how long have you been working for the Society of St. Andrew in Florida? "Three years." How many pounds of produce did you save and distribute last year? "Two million pounds." Just how old are you Amanda? "Twenty-two."

Once Amanda (Amanda Rich, Program Director in FL) spoke these words, the room filled with silent awe as this group of college students realized for the first time that Amanda was their own age. For the past week, Amanda had led these students into the fields to glean, bringing in over 23,000 pounds of turnips. They had come to respect her leadership and her passion for saving food to feed the local people. Now they felt a new set of emotions: a mixture of excitement knowing they can make a difference, and sorrow knowing that they could have already been doing something. Every Harvest of Hope event has those "ah ha' moments when the majority of the participants get it - they recognize the problem (hunger) and realize they can be part of the solution. For the Alternative Spring Break participants, Amanda's life showed them they are old enough to change the world.

Another "ah ha" moment happened earlier in the week when Barbara Sayles (Regional Director in FL) told about her life in Texas. She shared her story of being an elementary school librarian in Lubbock, and having her whole world transformed by an encounter with one child. She had walked a young student home to help him find a library book he had forgotten. The young boy brought her into the house. No one was home. Barbara asked him if he wanted a snack. He just looked confused by the question, so she went into kitchen to find him something to eat. "That was the first time I have ever seen an empty refrigerator, not empty like you and I think of empty - expired salad dressings, some condiments, etc – but empty, not a single thing in it." She checked the cabinets and the result was the same - nothing. Barbara came face to face with the reality that there are children in America who really lack food. Barbara, a mother of grown children, changed her life's direction, and now she devotes her life to helping feed the hungry. The college students sat anguished in the realization that hunger is a real problem, and their neighbors really do need help.



One of the great things about *Harvest of Hope* is that there are "ah ha" moments at every event. The exciting part is that we never know where and when these moments will occur. When a group of people gathers to help and serve others, God likes to move in their midst; opening eyes to see the

world through compassionate caring eyes, and stirring hearts to make a difference in the world. *Harvest of Hope* changes lives because God works to create "ah ha" moments using ordinary people who are passionately living out their faith by loving others.

Hunger is real and you should do something about it!  $\diamond$ 

## Potato & Produce Project

By Marian Kelly, Potato & Produce Project Director

In the first quarter of 2012 the *Potato & Produce Project* has salvaged and distributed over 9% more food than the first quarter of 2011. That percentage equates to approximately 580,000 more servings of food than this time last year. Most of these truck loads of produce were white potatoes, with a few loads of sweet potatoes and 11 loads of seed potatoes. The loads

of seed potatoes are delivered in late February and March each year. Most of this seed is already planted and hopefully beginning to sprout and break through the soil. Thousands of folks will use the seed to grow food for their own consumption as well as sharing with family and neighbors. It is always a joy to share the bounty of our gardens with others

with others.

Transportation continues to be a very large expense in this endeavor. Fuel prices continue to go up and up. We certainly can understand that very well when



we pump gas into our own automobiles. So once again, we say thank you for helping to make it possible to ship over 2,000,000 pounds of food January through March to feeding agencies all over the country.  $\Diamond$ 

# Harvest of Hope events with space still available:

Eastern Tennessee – June 29-July1 Shenandoah Valley of VA – Oct. 5-7 North Georgia – Oct. 12-14 Eastern Shore of VA – Oct. 26-28 Central Florida – Nov. 2-4

Sign up today!

#### **Donations to SoSA in recent months:**

IN HONOR OF - Jim Armentrout ... Mrs. Joann Arnold ... The Vinicius Azevedo Family ... Terry Diso ... Katherine George & John Duclos ... Nancy Flippo ... Mr. & Mrs. A.W. Garrett ... Wellford Garrett ... Hilda Garrett ... Ken Horne ... Pat Inge ... Baird Lewis ... Steve & Susan Hassmer & Will ... Nancy & Byron Moody ... Mrs. Carol Morling ... Mr. Garland L. Page, Jr. ... Rev. Sara Pugh ... Norene C. Ray ... Bill Sluder ... Johnny Thompson ... Sandy Tilley ... James Waltsak ... Dr. William Wright **IN MEMORY OF -** Beatrice Adams ... Les Addison ... Mrs. Frances Bates ... Bud Curtis ... Mr. Francis Decker ... Howard Gardner ... Linwood Hanchey ... Esther Hawks ... David Horbert ... Linda Hudgins ... William Stratton Jones, Jr. ... Raymond Kubik ... Richard Kuhnle ... Vivian Mason ... Allen Mayberry ... Millie Merricks ... Donna Nangle Penrod ... Robert Shaw ... James Smith ... John Slocum ◊

### **Hunger Action Month**

By Rev. Jennifer Vestal Moore, Director, Church Relations

Plan now to observe National Hunger Action Month during September. National Hunger Action Month reminds us to lift up our 45 million brothers and sisters who live on the brink of hunger every day in the United States. Here are some things you can do to observe the day:

Fast and pray each Wednesday at lunchtime (or any

- ➤ day of your choosing) during the month of September to remember those who don't have enough to eat. The money you save can be donated to Society of St. Andrew so we can feed those who don't always eat lunch.
- Design a worship service focused on hunger and the Biblical imperatives to do something about it. Society of St. Andrew has resources you can download for free, www.EndHunger.org/nham.htm Volunteer with a hunger-relief agency. Society of
- St. Andrew coordinates gleaning events in locations across the U.S. Call our 800-333-4597 or check our website: www.EndHunger.org for gleaning offices near you.
  - Give an offering for the Society of St. Andrew
- hunger-relief ministry, out of thankfulness for your blessings and concern for America's hungry. Educate your congregation about hunger. Society of
- St. Andrew offers a 12-week adult study entitled, *The Fast that I Choose*.

For more information or to order National Hunger Action Month resources, visit our website www. EndHunger.org; call 800-333-4597; or email The Rev. Jennifer Vestal Moore at church@endhunger.org. Jesus said, "You give them something to eat!" Matthew 14:16. Join Society of St. Andrew and let us follow these words of Jesus so no one goes to bed hungry ever again. \(\rightarrow

# United Methodist Men honored for hunger relief

By Wade Mays, Meals for Millions Director

In 2011, SoSA's HRA's led 2,067 volunteers to farms where they gleaned 2.55 million servings of free surplus food for the hungry. Conference, local church, and district teams of United Methodist Men provided another 8.4 million servings of fresh produce through SoSA's *Potato & Produce Project*.

During the March 1-4 meeting of the National Association of Conference Presidents of UM Men in Nashville, the Indiana Conference received the Bud-the-Spud Award for showing the highest percentage increase in Meals for Millions giving. UM Men in Indiana nearly doubled their giving level, from a little over \$10,000 in 2010 to nearly \$20,000 in 2011.

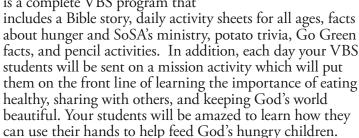
The Detroit Conference was honored with the Meals for Millions Award. They received this award for providing \$22,476 for hunger-relief efforts in 2011, the highest in the denomination. The Society of St. Andrew is grateful for the partnership with the United Methodist Men as we seek to end hunger.  $\Diamond$ 

### **VBS** — It's a Miracle!

By Rev. Jennifer Vestal Moore, Director, Church Relations

IT'S A MIRACLE! can be used either as a stand-alone program, or as a mission emphasis to compliment your church's Vacation Bible School program.

Each day, your students will be introduced to one of Jesus' miracles; from walking on water to helping the blind to see. IT'S A MIRACLE! is a complete VBS program that



Besides the fun and educational aspects of this mission project, the goal for each VBS is to raise enough money through student offerings for 1,000 pounds of fresh produce that will end up on the plates of hungry children and adults. At a nickel a pound, that's a goal of \$50. Some pastors have been good sports and promised to eat a worm, shave their legs, get pied in the face, or "live on top of the church" if their students exceed their goal. Why not see if your pastor is willing to do something crazy that will challenge your VBS students to strive to feed more hungry children.

Last year, over 500 churches used SoSA's VBS program. VBS kids enthusiastically answered Jesus' call to feed the hungry by donating over \$28,000 – enough to provide more than 1 million servings of food to feed our hungry brothers and sisters. The fresh food will be donated by SoSA to feeding agencies across the nation to feed hungry children and adults.

All materials are free and available now. There is no obligation. You can order your materials online at www. endhunger.org/vbs.htm. Or contact The Rev. Jennifer Vestal Moore at 800-333-4597 or church@endhunger.org; If your materials do not arrive within two weeks of ordering, please call our office.

Jesus is a God of miracles! Come and see how Jesus changed the lives of those he encountered and how he can change your life. ◊

#### Not Just Another Day - continued from Page 1

the farm where VIPs and regular folks, young and not so young, from different political parties, people of means and people who struggle to put food on their own tables, would join forces for one common goal — to glean these fields and feed the hungry. Twenty acres, 900 volunteers, and 700,000 pounds of turnips later, everyone would agree that yes, one person truly can make a difference. Words can only begin to express our heartfelt gratitude to Hank Scott, his family, and the dedicated staff of Long and Scott Farms for their commitment and passion for our neighbors in need.  $\Diamond$ 

Society of St. Andrew

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www.EndHunger.org





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What's inside?	
Not just another day	1
From the Sheep Shed	1
News Across the Nation	2-3
Harvest of Hope	4
Potato & Produce Project	4
Vacation Bible School	5
Hunger Action Month	5

# IT'S A MIRACLE!

VBS Program



IT'S A MIRACLE is designed as a mission emphasis to your church's VBS program or as a stand-alone program. It can be easily adapted to any VBS theme. To obtain a FREE VBS kit, please contact 800-333-4597, Church@EndHunger.org, or go online to http://www.EndHunger.org/vbs.htm.

Please send my FREE VBS packet today!	
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