Society of St. Andrew
GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

2023 Impact Report

Indiana Gleaning Network

Mission & Purpose

The Society of St. Andrew's mission is to bring people together to harvest and share healthy food, reduce food waste, and build caring communities by offering nourishment to hungry neighbors.

The Indiana Gleaning Network's (IGN) work seeking and rescuing fresh produce helps alleviate community health and hunger issues while also helping to reduce the environmental impacts of food waste. Our fundamental premise is that all the food necessary to meet the nutritional needs of all people in the U.S. is available but only partially utilized. Each year, over 30% of U.S.-grown fruits and vegetables are never eaten.

Food loss occurs across the supply chain, from farm to fork, and about 58% of produce loss occurs before consumers even catch a glimpse of it. In fact, the USDA Economic Research Service found that over 9.1 billion pounds of produce loss occurs "upstream" during agricultural production, harvest, postharvest, processing, and packaging. This includes crops not harvested because a buyer fell through or the market price is too low to make harvest worthwhile and produce that is graded out at the time of harvest or packing due to cosmetic grading standards.

According to the EPA, every ton of produce left to rot emits as much greenhouse gases in its decomposition as the annual emissions from 2.25 passenger cars, and 82% of those greenhouse gases are emitted in transit to landfills from farms and retailers. Last year, the IGN reduced the environmental harm equivalent to taking more than 504 vehicles off the road for a year, as fresh produce was rescued and eaten, not left to rot.

The Indiana Gleaning Network connects the dots between available fresh produce from farms, orchards, or distribution centers with volunteers and hunger relief organizations to distribute to food-insecure individuals in their communities. The Indiana farmers and growers are incredibly generous. They hate to see good food go to waste; however, harvesting, packaging, and transporting a crop that will not generate income doesn't make financial sense. The IGN provides farmers with a mutually beneficial means of moving unmarketable food out of their way. We offer our services at no cost, making it easier for them to donate excess than to till it under or dump it in landfills- both of which cost them money (and emissions) in fuel and labor.

We utilize volunteer gleaners to harvest donated crops by whatever means is best for the farmer. IGN staff lead and train volunteers in farm and food safety, and the fresh fruits and vegetables are taken to local hunger relief organizations.

> **In 2023, the IGN reduced the environmental harm equivalent to taking 504 vehicles off of the roads for 1 year.**

2023 Impact

In 2023, over 1,000 individuals, farmers, agencies, and organizations donated their time, energy, or financial resources to The Society of St. Andrew's Indiana Gleaning Network to assist in its produce rescue and distribution program, which puts fresh fruits and vegetables on the tables of our hungry neighbors across Indiana.

This food would have gone to waste in landfills or rotted in fields without volunteers generously donating their time to gleaning, packing, and transporting it to local feeding agencies.

1,803,124 Servings

129

food donors

500+

dedicated volunteers

225

tons prevented from waste

450,781

pounds of nutritious food shared

574

gleaning events

99

receiving agencies

~180,000

individuals served

Serving Hope by the Pound

89,706
from Farm Pickups

Sometimes, a crop may be harvested and packed in bulk in a farmer's commercial cooler, awaiting transport to a packinghouse. Farmers may need to quickly move this food if a buyer falls through to make space for the next crop. SoSA staff are on-call to handle the logistics of bulk pickup, transport, any repackaging necessary, and distribution to hunger relief agencies nearby.

6,151
from Farmers' Markets

Many farmers travel miles to sell their foods at farmers' markets across the state. Unsold items may not have a long enough shelf life to warrant transport and storage after a market. SoSA staff train volunteer gleaners to gather leftover produce from farmers as the markets close. This food is taken immediately to hunger relief agencies nearby and is often served that same day.

39,127
from Gleaning in Fields

One major area of food waste in America is in farmers' fields, where crops that do not meet top-grade quality are left to rot or be plowed under. Gleaning is the gathering of crops that would otherwise be left in the fields to rot or be plowed under after harvest. Gleaning involves picking, digging, or gathering crops left behind after commercial harvest. SoSA staff train volunteers on farm and food safety and work with farmers to open their fields to volunteer gleaners.

315,797
from Salvaged Loads & Crop Drops

Often fresh produce is refused by food distributors, restaurants, or processing facilities due to cosmetic standards, or a warehouse will have an excess they cannot sell quickly enough. Truck drivers must either dump the food at landfills to empty the trailer or find a place to drop it off. Rather than waste the load, we redirect the food to the closest hunger-relief agency or centrally located parking lot where we can offload and have many agencies gather to pick it up.

1,803,124 Servings of Nutritious Food

450,781 total rescued pounds

271,066 pounds of fruit

172,777 pounds of vegetables

78 pounds of herbs

6,860 pounds of "other" (baked goods, eggs, canned items, etc.)

Seed Program
294,556 pounds from seed yields

In 1989, the Society of St. Andrew began the Seed Potato Project (now The Seed Project) as a self-help program for Appalachian family farms. The program has since been expanded to include seeds for other produce and extends into multiple regions, including Indiana.

The Seed Project focuses on food desert areas, community gardens, inner city gardens, small family farms, church gardens, and high-need school gardens in rural communities. The recipients prepare the gardens, plant the seeds, cultivate the crops, and harvest the produce.

The Seed Project offers a "hand up" to families and communities as children, youth, adults, and seniors grow food to feed themselves and share with their neighbors in need and extended families. It is truly a cooperative effort to feed people in need through this innovative self-help program.

The Seed Project's success is built on a partnership with Seed Programs International, a North Carolina-based nonprofit that has spent decades developing hardy seeds for domestic and international hunger relief programs. This past year, other large retailers have donated additional seed packets to the Indiana Gleaning Network for distribution through the Project.

Seeds in Indiana were shared with 46 recipients in 16 counties. Recipients included schools, community gardens, master gardens, local non-profits, extension offices, libraries, and garden clubs. These smiles show how much seeds can teach our children AND help them learn how to grow and love fresh vegetables!

12,191
Seed Packs Distributed

17
Types of vegetables

9
Types of herbs/flowers

Our Team

Two full-time staff work to bring gleaned food to Indiana. Dawn Barnes is the Indiana Regional Director, and Audra Boarman is the Indiana Program Coordinator.

Meagan Hipsky is our part-time Area Coordinator, and she is a student at Purdue University in Lafayette.

The national office is led by Executive Director, Lynette Johnson, who has been a part of the organization since 2010. Since becoming Executive Director in 2017, she has led the Board of Directors through a re-visioning process that resulted in a new mission statement and a new strategic plan.

Gleaning would not be possible without volunteers and Indiana has some great ones!

Thank you to the many hard-working volunteers who give their time, sweat, and energy to gleaning each season. We could not do it without you!

SOSA STAFF	CONTACT
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Our Corporate and Foundation Partners

The Indiana Gleaning Network would like to thank the following corporations and foundations. Your continued support has a tremendous impact, leaving a broad and meaningful footprint across every part of Indiana, engaging persons of all ages in service to others, reducing food waste, and addressing critical human needs. We thank you and look forward to continuing our partnership in the fight to end hunger across Indiana. THANK YOU!
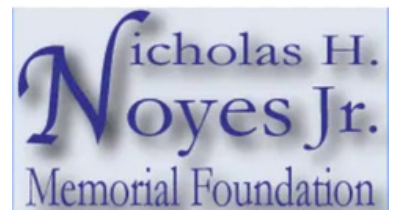
Our Faith Based Partners

The Indiana Gleaning Network would like to thank the following congregations for their financial contributions to SoSA's mission. Your continued support has a tremendous impact, leaving a broad and meaningful footprint across every part of Indiana, engaging persons of all ages in service to others, reducing food waste, and addressing critical human needs. We thank you and look forward to continuing our partnership in the fight to end hunger across Indiana. THANK YOU!

Bethel Ministries of Fort Wayne

Bethel UMC

Burket Bible Church

Centerville UMC

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana

Door Village UMC

Epworth UMC

First Christian Church Valparaiso

First Christian Church Noblesville

First UMC Richmond

First UMC Portage

Geist Christian Church

Gethsemane Lutheran Church

Grace UMC

Justifying Grace Christian Ministries

Linwood Christian Church

North Vernon First UMC

Northminster Presbyterian - Indianapolis

Otterbein UMC, Greenfield

Patoka Methodist Church

Pittsboro Christian Church

Poplar Grove Church

Saint Paul UMC

Shiloh-Wesley Chapel UMC

Solid Rock Church of Warren

St. Mark's UMC

West Street Christian Church

We thank you for your ongoing support!

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