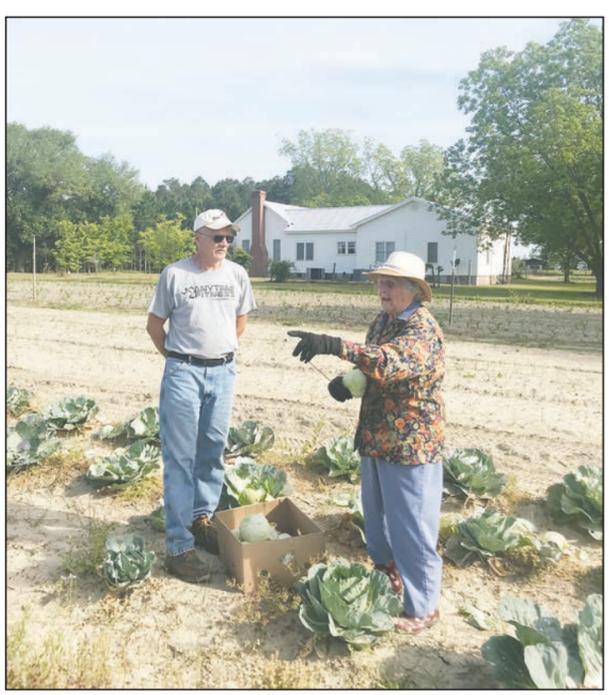


Society



PICTURED LEFT IS PASTOR SEXTON WITH DONATED SWEET POTATOES AND PICTURED RIGHT IS BOB RUMP AND HILDA CARTER IN MRS. CARTER'S CABBAGE PATCH

HELP WANTED

Vet Tech Assistant
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 1799 U.S. 1 North, Alma, GA 31510.



Gleaning the Harvest

By Helen Burkett Prencke

Earlier this year I wrote several stories about the Coalition for a Healthy Appling County (CHAC), which is a five-year grant designed to provide the people of Appling County with healthier food choices, opportunities for physical activity and mental health resources. This grant helped begin initiatives like the Community Garden at the Action PACT (Concerted Services), Tai Chi classes, a community playground and weekly classes about healthy food choices for students at Appling County Primary School.

Another part of the "healthy eating" initiative is the implementation of gleaning local fields. Many people have heard of the term "gleaning," however they are not sure exactly what it means. According to Webster, gleaning means to "gather (leftover grain or other produce) after a harvest." Under the CHAC grant, certified Field Supervisors take volunteer groups to fields where

they collect produce by hand. This gleaning of the fields provides opportunities for all parties involved and even people who may never set foot in the field—the volunteers are able to gain firsthand knowledge of where their food comes from and the labor involved in collecting it, the farmers are able to share their harvest and reduce crop waste that must be plowed under after harvest and local groups within Appling County receive the food that's collected to share with those who otherwise might not have access to these seasonal delights.

This process of gathering the leftovers from the field can be traced back to the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament of the Bible when farmers left a portion of their crops in the fields to be gathered by the poor. Here in the United States, it began in the mountains of Virginia in 1979, with the founding of the Society of St. Andrew. Workers collected food that wasn't considered "market quality" and dispensed it to peo-

ple and groups in nearby counties. This Society has grown since then to now include ten states with strong agricultural production—Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

After meetings with the Society of St. Andrew's state program coordinator from Tifton in the fall of 2018, the decision was made to train a group of eight Field Supervisors in Baxley and investigate opportunities in our local area for interested groups to glean crops. In less than one year, over 1700 pounds of produce has already been gleaned in over a half dozen fields—both in Appling County and fields in surrounding counties—by only three dozen participants. This abundance has been distributed predominantly in Appling County, but also with organizations in the surrounding area. Crops gleaned include root vegetables like sweet potatoes and Vidalia onions, staples like cabbage, corn,

peas and red potatoes and even more delicate produce like blueberries and strawberries. Groups who have participated include not only volunteers, but also 4-Her's, Action PACT (Concerted Services) clients and individuals from Pine-land Behavioral Health/Developmental Disabilities.

To get involved in future gleaning events, either as a volunteer or to share produce from your garden, please contact Becky Collins at the Extension Office at 912-367-8130. To learn more about the Society of St. Andrew and gleaning projects across the United States, visit www.endhun-ger.org.



GROUP SHOT OF ONE OF THE MOST RECENT GROUPS IN RODNEY MAXWELL'S FIELD AFTER PICKING CORN AND PEAS ON JULY 3.



JAMES KENT AND STAN BROBSTON PICKING BLUEBERRIES.

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