

## Volunteers scoured Sycamore Spring Orchard for fruit to be donated to local food banks

By KATHY HACKLEMAN  
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MCGILLSTOWN - For Julie Sykes Kaylor, it's all about cooperation.

Kaylor, the volunteer gleaning coordinator for the Society of St. Andrew, led a team of nearly 200 volunteers through a gleaning on Saturday at Sycamore Spring Orchard in North Annville Township.

The crew walked along rows of apple trees and gleaned - that is, gathered produce left behind after harvest - usable fruit that either had been overlooked on the trees or had fallen to the ground.

"Never underestimate what individuals and small groups of people banding together can do," Kaylor told the men, women and children poised for gleaning.

A national effort to feed America's hungry, the Society of St. Andrew is celebrating 10 years of gleaning in Lebanon



*Sunlight streams through the trees as Olivia Fisher, 7, and her father, Bryce Fisher of Lebanon, gather apples at Sycamore Spring Orchard in North Annville Township during Saturday morning's gleaning. Volunteers gleaned essentially, picked over what was left after harvest more than 550 large bags of apples to be given to area food banks, from which they will be distributed to people in need. (LEBANON DAILY NEWS KATHY HACKLEMAN )*

County. Organized by Kaylor after a Harvest of Hope retreat, where she was encouraged to sign publicly a pledge stating she would follow through with an idea developed at a brainstorming session, local gleanings regularly take place at three county locations.

Sycamore Spring Orchard and Eli & Gingrich's Farm Market in Annville, which have been annual participants for all 10 years, were recognized at the start of Saturday's event. Seyfert's Orchard in North Lebanon Township also is an occasional participant in the program.

"Farmers are very generous people, and they don't want to see their produce go to waste," Kaylor said. "The way the program is set up is brilliant. The farmer who has extra produce makes one call to me. Then I have a telephone chain. A lot of people are called. Many show up to glean, and then we distribute the produce to agencies around central Pennsylvania, which get the food to families in need."

*Bags of newly picked apples lie in a row at Sycamore Spring Orchard on Saturday. Nearly 200 volunteers took part in the gleaning. (LEBANON DAILY NEWS KATHY HACKLEMAN )*



On Saturday morning, volunteers scoured the trees for leftover hanging apples and crawled on the ground to find blemish-free fruit that could be salvaged. Their efforts brought forth more than 550 large bags full of fruit, representing thousands of dollars of food.

"It's a lot of produce that normally would go to waste," said Linda Johnson, manager of Sycamore Spring Orchard, which is owned by her parents, Bob and Shirley Hess, and she operates with two siblings, Kathy Eisenhower and Glen Hess. "There's no way we could pay people to pick up this many apples. ... It's wonderful that people can use what would

otherwise be wasted."

After being cautioned that the old saying, "One bad apple spoils the whole barrel," really is true, volunteers were sent out into the orchard to find the remaining good fruit.

Saturday's volunteers who traveled the longest distance to participate in the gleaning were from New Jersey. A group of 13 - "The Lucky 13," as they named themselves - left the Cross Keys, N.J., United Methodist Church long before dawn to arrive at the orchard by 8:30 a.m.

"This is our first time here," explained church spokeswoman Karen Johnson. "We are a church that is very much mission-oriented, and we saw this opportunity on a website and decided to come."

Other volunteers have participated in every one of the gleanings for 10 years. Cindy Funck, Kaylor's sister-in-law, is one of those. She managed the check-in station and made sure everyone was registered and had a signed medical liability form.

"It's a great project," she said. "Sometimes I feel like I should be out picking fruit, but there's a lot of paperwork that needs to be done, too."

Kristin and Brian Parker, residents of the Harrisburg area, can't remember how many gleanings they have been to at Sycamore Spring, but they know it's between six and eight.

"We come because it's a great opportunity to help people," Kristin said. "It's also a great project for the whole family, and it's a way to teach children about service."

Other volunteers represented Cub Scout packs, organizations at Lebanon Valley College and many area churches. There also were individuals and families who chose to spend a beautiful Saturday morning helping to gather apples so that others would not go hungry.

"Gleaning is a joyful event," Kaylor said. "It's a great time for people to get out and get some exercise and spend time with their family and friends, but the big point is that the produce we pick goes to families in need. We flood the Lebanon County Christian Ministries in Lebanon, the Caring Cupboard in Palmyra and the Central Food Bank in Harrisburg with apples. Sometimes we have so many apples that the Central Food Bank can distribute them to food banks all over the area."

For more information about gleaning through the Society of St. Andrew, call 865-9570 or visit the website at [endhunger.org](http://endhunger.org).