

# NEWS RELEASE

## Society of St. Andrew

3383 Sweet Hollow Road • Big Island • Virginia 24526  
800-333-4597 • 434-299-5956 • Fax 434-299-5949

Email: [sosapr@endhunger.org](mailto:sosapr@endhunger.org) • Website: [www.endhunger.org](http://www.endhunger.org)  
Contact: Carol A. Breitingner, Communications Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **National hunger relief organization opens office in South Georgia Society of St. Andrew names Lauren A. King as program coordinator**

**Big Island, VA** – Food going to waste in Georgia has been used for the past several years to feed the hungry throughout the state thanks to the efforts of the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA). Now this national faith-based nonprofit hunger relief organization has opened a regional gleaning office in Tifton thanks to a grant from the St. Marys United Methodist Church Foundation, Inc.

The Society of St. Andrew has announced the appointment of Lauren A. King as program coordinator of its newest office, which opened in January 2007. The office is located in the Activities Center at the First United Methodist Church of Tifton. SoSA, founded in 1979 and headquartered in Virginia, also has regional offices in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and North Carolina, and gleaning operations in 14 other states.

“Hunger is a reality in Georgia and the Society of St. Andrew plans to do something about it by bridging the gap between salvaged fresh produce and hunger relief agencies serving those in need in Georgia as well as throughout the nation,” said Mike Waldmann, SoSA’s Director of Operations.

“12.4 percent of Georgia’s population lives with food insecurity and we are helping to alleviate some of that hunger,” said Rachel Radeline Gonia, regional director of SoSA’s Alabama and Georgia operations. According to an Economic Research Service, USDA 2005 report, Georgia is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the list of states with the highest food insecurity among its residents. “Through the efforts of Art Shoemaker, a part-time SoSA worker located in Albany, over 600,000 pounds of food was saved and distributed across Georgia in 2006,” Gonia continued.

“SoSA is thrilled to have Lauren come aboard as the south Georgia coordinator for SoSA’s Georgia Gleaning Network,” said Gonia. “Lauren has a passion for this ministry. Her leadership will help us build on the success of last year as we have a huge impact on the problem of hunger in Georgia.”

“I hope to be a helpful link in connecting salvaged food to hungry people in Georgia and the United States,” said King. “Bridging that hunger gap requires the help of farmers, volunteers, churches, food pantries, and organizations that want to be an active entity in ending hunger. I believe that once they see how this can be accomplished by focusing on their strengths and resources they will become strong supporters and believers in the SoSA effort. When this is accomplished, I feel that Georgia can become a major supplier of salvaged food to the hungry.”

The Society of St. Andrew (Advance #801600) is a nonprofit organization that saves fresh produce that is not commercially marketable and distributes it to agencies that feed the hungry. Their volunteers glean (picks) fruits and vegetables left after the harvest, and growers and brokers donate tractor-trailer loads of potatoes and other produce that otherwise would go to waste. Each year SoSA saves 25-40 million pounds of fresh produce that provides 75-120 million servings of nourishing food delivered to hungry people in the 48 contiguous states. “SoSA will now begin organizing thousands of volunteers to glean millions of pounds of food from Georgia farms to feed the state’s hungry families,” said Waldmann.

“I will be connecting with the growers as well as building the volunteer base of hands-on people to glean fields and host potato drops,” King explained. “Establishing each of these links is vital to the success of the program.”

A native of Zebulon, Georgia, King was raised on a family-owned farm and appreciates all of the work that goes into producing food and fiber for the sustenance of humankind. King is a graduate of The University Of Georgia Terry College Of Business.

More information about the Society of St. Andrew and its hunger-relief programs is available online at [www.endhunger.org](http://www.endhunger.org), by email at [sosausa@endhunger.org](mailto:sosausa@endhunger.org), or by calling 800-333-4597.

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**Contact:**  
**Carol A. Breitingner**  
**Phone/email at top**  
**and**  
**Lauren A. King**  
**South Georgia Gleaning Network**  
**229-386-5800**  
**gleanGA@endhunger.org**